

Wayne State University  
Academic Senate  
Minutes of the Facilities, Support Services, and Technology Committee  
Wednesday, October 10, 2007

In attendance: David Cinabro, Brian Edwards, Frederick Florkowski, James Garbern, Thomas Killion, Joe Sawasky, Lothar Spang, Derek Wildman, Russell Yamazaki, and Judy Field, Chair

Absent: Ravi Dhar, Daniel Rappolee

Guest: Patrick Gossman

This year's FSST Committee is composed of six new members. Therefore, the first agenda item was introductions of all the committee members.

Patrick Gossman, Deputy CIO and Director Information Technology Support Services, provided the following information related to BlackBoard: WSU selected BlackBoard in 1999 and now is used by over 30,000 users. Between 2000 and fall 2006 there have been various updates to the system each addressing various glitches and the provision of new service enhancements. In Fall 2006 Blackboard was upgraded to 6.3. The system was fairly stable but had difficulty with the load of final exams. Over the holidays the system was upgraded to 7.1 to address some of the previous semester's issues. Many users were not happy with the format changes that were made to the discussion board feature and were not entirely pleased with the grade book. More performance issues arose throughout the winter. C&IT was able to resolve several issues but not all of them, so C&IT basically monitored the system 24/7 to ensure availability through the rest of the semester.

In August 2007 the 7.3 upgrade was done to the system that allowed for format flexibility and improved performance with the discussion boards. Unfortunately problems continued in September with some severe slowdowns in accessing BlackBoard. Another key change was made, this time in the underlying file system. These problems seem to have been resolved and they are tentatively planning on installing 8.0 over the holidays that will include improvements in the grade book and expanded capacity. We were informed that we were among Blackboard's largest customers and are getting their premier level of service when we have system problems. Gossman reminded us to contact them at the Help Desk (7-4778) or [bbadmin@wayne.edu](mailto:bbadmin@wayne.edu) when you observe problems so they can be quickly addressed. You can also check <http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard> for information and helpful hints.

The question was raised whether we could post from the grade book directly to the banner system. The response was not yet, but C&IT is looking into it. . A couple of questions were raised regarding the SET form: such as could the SET form be sent automatically to the student to respond to and a non-response would prevent the grade from being posted and could the SET form more directly reflect the technology infrastructure the student has experienced. These were identified as more policy issues than technical issues. Another question briefly discussed was email and the number of items that are spam that are still getting through the system. The

committee was informed on how they are constantly tracking the spam and changing the parameters to minimize the number.

Joe Sawasky, WSU's new CIO and Patrick Gossman provided us with a preliminary look at the FSST results of the technology survey they sent out campus wide in September. Once they have completed their analysis of the survey, they will share their findings with the committee. Sawasky also informed us of some other initiatives which will be proposed to the Provost, which includes creating an expanded advisory group structure for C&IT. He briefly mentioned the services provided by the software clearing house.

Sawasky said that C&IT had lost one position due to the FY08 budget cut but a shift in how the C&IT portion of the Omnibus funds were being allocated will allow his unit to continue to work on improving services to the campuses. Networking capabilities available at the Oakland Center were discussed.

Meeting dates for 2007-08: All meeting will be scheduled from 1:30 to 3:00

- Wednesday November 14
- Wednesday December 12
- Wednesday January 16
- Wednesday February 13
- Wednesday March 19
- Wednesday April 9
- Wednesday May 14 (tentative, in case we have unfinished business)