

Facilities, Support Services and Technology Committee

November 13, 2013

Minutes

Present: J. Artiss, J. Sawasky, R. Ackerman, I Avrutsky, H. Matthew, T.R. Reddy, D. Golodner, R. Pfaff.

Guest: T. Michael, L. Lieberman.

Absent with Notice: B. Madigan, B. Morrow, J. Withey

Absent: M. Barnes, K. Kumasi, R. Marback, K-H Yang

Meeting began at 10:00AM.

Next Meeting: December 11, 2013, 10:00AM, Rm. TBA FAB

I. Mail Delivery Issues:

Timothy Michael, Assoc. VP Business Operations and Leo Lieberman, Manager, Mail and Receiving Services attended the meeting to address a number of issues pertaining to mail delivery, especially at the SOM. They described how by purchasing a \$200,000 robot, negotiating agreements with the union they were able reduce staff, consolidate mail/shipping/receiving services and moving into a new facility they were able to project a net savings of \$140,000 annually. Mr. Lieberman stated that a significant part of the problem was that when people change offices that they do not always notify the mailroom. Mr. Michael added that when the operators attempt to manually correct the address from information in Banner they encounter thirty-four (34) different address fields. J. Sawasky agreed to look into reducing this number. Mr. Lieberman, who recently joined WSU having left similar responsibilities with Coca-Cola in Atlanta, presented the attached report.

II. Report from the Chair

The chair reported that FSST may be joined by the C&I committee at the December meeting in order to jointly address renovations to State Hall with R. Nork.

III. Approval of Minutes of the October 9, 2013 Meeting.

- a. Approved as circulated.

IV. Old Business

- a. Report on Telephone System Meetings

Ivan Avrutsky and Jeffrey Withey attended the November 5 and 6, 2013 meetings that were hosted by C&IT. Their report was presented by I. Avrutsky and is attached.

b. Renovations to Manoogian Hall Second Floor

As the FSST representative, H. Matthew attended a meeting hosted by Dean S. Yee on November __, 2013 to discuss the most current renovation plans. In addition to Dean Yee and her staff the group of attendees consisted of about 25-30 faculty members from various departments; mostly Languages, Physics and Engineering. Renovations are scheduled to begin in May 2014. No walls will be moved, the intent is to better utilize the current space; floor plan is attached. New furniture, audio/visual equipment, floors and ceilings are the main changes. The FSST committee members had some concerns pertaining to keeping white boards clean; there will be no smart boards. There is a desire to keep two rooms as flexible while the others will have fixed chair/desks. Obesity is an issue, larger furniture is being installed. There is a recognized need for ready availability of multiple power outlets. A follow-up summary from Dean Yee is attached.

c. Power Issues

J. Artiss informed the committee that he had asked Provost Winters about these issues and was informed that the University was moving off of the Detroit Power grid and onto Detroit Edison. The process is likely to take two years. Administration is currently prioritizing the order of buildings as the entire campus cannot be done at one time.

d. Prioritization of Issues to be Addressed

J. Artiss informed the committee that he and S. Sawasky had met and grouped the list of issues in a manner that would reduce the number of visits by University administrators. The revised list is attached.

V. New Business

a. C&IT Desktop and Workgroup IT Support – Organizational and Service Changes

J. Sawasky presented the attached report.

b. Law School Renovations

R. Ackerman requested the committees support for renovations to the Law School. The Chair requested an e-mail detailing what is being requested.

VI. Adjournment

Report on Telephone System Meetings

Ivan Avrutsky and Jeffrey Withey

Meeting notes

Nov. 5, 2013 and Nov. 6, 2013

As a FSST representatives, we attended the Nov. 5 meeting (Avrutsky) and Nov. 6 meeting (Withey) organized by C&IT as a part of efforts on transformation of the current phone system in the University. The meetings were attended by representatives from Schools and Colleges and other University units and by Jim Barbret, WSU Comptroller (Nov. 6).

Joe Sawasky and Kathy Guarano from C&IT provided basic statistics on the current system.

At present, we have a Centrex phone system from AT&T. It supports over 9,000 telephones across campus, provides services such as voice-to-email and virtual phone numbers, liked by many faculty. Overall, however, it is a decades old development, missing some features available in modern systems, and rather expensive. AT&T is planning to phase out this service in the very near future, so transitioning to another system is essential. University is looking to replace the current phone system with a phone-over-IP. A consulting company Vantage Consulting has been hired to help selecting the vendor and the configuration of the new phone system.

Vantage representatives, Geoff Tritsch and Brian Woroby, continued the discussion.

It has been stated that Vantage does not have any financial interest in companies or products they help to select as a replacement for the phone system. They have expertise in the subject and understand in what way the academic institutions' requirements for phone system are different from those of business organizations.

The type of product Vantage is advocating for is "Unified Communications" (UC) – a software-defined phone closely interacting with the e-mail system. The system can be flexible enough to provide desirable features for faculty across the campus. It does not have to be a one-fits-all solution, but can be adjusted to meet the needs of different University units. The soft-phone system uses data network as oppose to dedicated wires. Elevator phones, fax machines, blue light phones will remain as they are and will use a gateway to connect to the system.

To select an appropriate configuration, Vantage representatives asked attendees what they like and dislike in the current system, and what new features they wish to see.

Voice-to-email was mentioned as a useful feature. A question was asked if the email could also contain a transcript of the voice mail. An example of service provided by Comcast was given.

Vantage responded that integration of voice-mail and e-mail is an inherent part of the soft-phone system and this feature will certainly be preserved. As for the transcript, automatic voice recognition is not yet good enough to generate acceptable quality transcripts. If this feature is needed, it will be either automatically generated set of words from the voice mail or a higher quality transcript prepared with some human involvement and additional cost and security concerns associated with the process.

Another question on voice-to-email service was on the synchronization issue: can both voice-mail and its email copy be deleted by one click on either a phone or computer screen? Vantage responded it should be possible with the new system

Representatives from some departments (English) noted that many faculty have abandoned phones in the offices because the service became too expensive, and the students do not call but rather text, and faculty have other ways to communicate among themselves. In other units (Nursing and Chemistry building) it is considered vital to have phones operational, especially because cell phones do not work in some areas on campus.

Current way of setting up the voice mail is considered to be confusing by, apparently, many faculty. If the voice mail is not set up right away, the chance is it will never be set up.

Accessing the voice mail from office phone is inconvenient: too much of redundant information to be entered – this can be addressed with a new system.

Blocking unwanted phone numbers is a desirable feature – should be possible to address as well.

The new system would permit much easier dialing and retention of phone numbers- copy pasting and/or clicking on a number, automatic addition of received calls to a contact list, and a log of past dialed and received calls, similar to what currently functions on most cell phones.

Vantage proceeded with further description of soft-phone systems. Among the advantages are unified messaging using voice- and email, perfectly synchronized. A question was asked if a caller ID could show up on the computer screen – yes.

Some savings are expected because the desk phones will no longer be needed. The soft phones can use the hardware (speakers, microphones) built-in into the computers. Some argued that actual phones are needed at front desks only. Others that use phones a lot prefer that they keep a desk phone of some kind. New desk phones in this system would be portable and multifunctional, as opposed to the current unitasker desk phones. Direct faxing should also be possible to these phones or to a computer version of the system.

Another advantage of soft-phones is mobility. The call can be answered using i-pad, your cell phone, or some other device, while keeping your University identity and not revealing your personal phone number. While on campus, using such service will not deplete your cellular minutes.

Comments from the attendees: as long as the business calls can be kept separate from the private calls, it should be OK to eliminate the desk phones and ask faculty to use their cellphones in this way. A problem that arose from this, however, is the poor quality of many cell phones. The new generation VOIP phones have much better call quality, possibly exceeding the quality of the current land line system.

A question was asked if a text message can be sent to a list of students – yes, but your private phone number may be visible. Apparently, calls and voice mail are processed differently from texts.

One more advantage: video capabilities. It is a part of many soft phone systems. There is no compatibility between the systems though – to take a Skype video call you will still need Skype.

Soft phone allows for remote work – you can be anywhere but answer your office phone. It has been noted, however, that some university policies may restrict work from home.

Faculty who have both office and laboratory phones with different numbers may want to keep this system in place to eliminate unnecessary calls to their office. Also, in a lab environment there are often multiple users of one phone so that flexibility is important.

Among the issues that need to be addressed are following.

First, in case of power failure, maintaining some phone operational is a vital safety issue.

Second, there should be a system in place that would allow for tracing locations for the 911 calls.

Risk Management and University Police need to be consulted on the issue.

A major issue that will arise with a new system is that it will require major upgrades of the university wifi capability. The current wifi is quite poor in many buildings and adding a VOIP phone system would make it completely unworkable. Many buildings may require significant rewiring as well.

Joe Sawasky wrapped up the meeting stating that the overall goal is to bring a modern and less expensive system to the campus, presumably starting Fall 2014. Some pilot installations will be done before that.

Dean Yee Follow-up Summary

MANOOGIAN HALL 2ND FLOOR RENOVATION

FACULTY COMMENTS

10/16/13

- I. Faculty representatives from Colleges teaching on the 2nd floor including CLAS, Engineering, Communications (FPCA). No one from Education attended the meeting.
- II. Concerns were expressed about infrastructure of the building. Jennifer Sheridan Moss contacted Deb Brazen directly.
- III. A majority of the rooms should be standardized but flexible
- IV. Faculty wanted to be sure that the overall number of seats not be reduced so that larger classes could still be accommodated. However, there was interest in some variation in the seating types and design of the rooms.
 - They did not see the need for the large cushy chairs
 - Flexibility in the rooms was of utmost importance
 - The orange moveable chairs, with storage for backpacks were very favorably received, as were the moveable chairs with the tablet arms that moved from left to right
 - Concern for chairs that were big enough to accommodate larger students
 - A bar stool type chair for the faculty member was recommended
 - No breakout rooms needed, make seminar rooms on the 1st floor slightly larger and then could be used for smaller classes
- V. There was support for the design of rooms like 409
 - Would like to see 4 students at a table rather than 5 for purposes related to test taking
- VI. Benches in the hallways for students are needed
- VII. More Power is needed, everywhere including the center of the rooms
 - Asked if power plugs could be built into the floors
- VIII. Light control needed in classrooms, motion detection causes problems, especially if watching a movie and someone gets up
 - Dimmers, or other controls for dimming the lights for technology needed
- IX. Clocks need to be working and on cell phone time
- X. More robust wireless throughout
- XI. Chalk Board vs. whiteboard. Need lots of space to write on, prefer (overall) whiteboards as long as maintenance is provided
 - Need maximum writing space
 - Some instructors mentioned they liked the huddle boards in State
 - No one from Math was there to discuss chalk
- XII. Technology needs
 - Pull down projection screens cover too much wall space
 - Like the idea of monitors, want to be sure to have sufficient monitors so students can all see

- Liked multiple screens and any screen on all approach-matrix mixing but pods not needed
- Need better sound systems and soundproofing
- Doc cam in all rooms/standard instructor station
- Interactive whiteboards/smartboards were mentioned, but some did not think they worked well

XIII. Special Needs

- Foreign language needs room to show films, have copy of proposal
- Video recording in classrooms for Comm1010
- No need for overhead transparency projectors or VHS
- Film Studies, rm 226 has special requirements
- Concern that heritage rooms remain true to donor requirements

XIV. Other

- Make sure construction starts after finals
- Building infrastructure upgrade is needed/ temperature, water, noise, etc.
- Concern about money for ongoing upgrades and maintenance
- Different departments may need some different designs. Can certain rooms be assigned to certain types of classes/departments?

The committee then addressed the list of suggestions that were provided by Academic Senate President Lou Romano:

1. *Capital Outlays Budget Request (Contact: Rick Nork). This is the list and justification we send to the state each year to request new buildings. Need to address this at first meeting as request goes to the state in October.*
 - a. J. Sawasky agreed to contact R. Nork.
2. *Parking (Contact: Jon Fredrick, Jim Sears, Lou Romano) See what major repairs are planned, determine how the real time parking capacity software program is working, ask about parking structure maintenance, possible "free" parking for students—parking included in Student Activity Fee on a per credit basis.*
 - a. J. Artiss agreed to seek further clarification from L. Romano.
- ~~3. *Computing, desk phones (Contact: Joe Sawasky) Ask about the reorganization for computing, the status of the new reporting structures for departmental and college computing staff. Suggestions are being made to Faculty to get rid of desk phones and use personal cell phones for WSU business. This seems inappropriate without compensation.*~~
 - ~~a. This item was partially addressed earlier in the meeting. In addition J. Sawasky announced a reorganization of C&IT and will arrange for a ten minute PP on the changes to be presented at the next meeting.~~
4. *Medical School issues (e.g., space utilization, shipping and receiving, liquid nitrogen, dry ice, purchasing, etc.).*
 - a. J. Artiss agreed to seek further clarification from L. Romano.
5. *Report on new building construction, MBRB, student center, undergraduate lab classroom, fountain project (Contact Rick Nork, Jim Sears) A joint committee made recommendations regarding the undergraduate lab building, unclear what will be done. Fountain project has no budget, what is the plan now?*
 - a. J. Artiss agreed to contact Jim Sears to request an update.
6. *State Hall renovation (contact Rick Nork, Margaret Winters) The senate recommended in 2013 that State Hall be completely renovated making it a state of the art teaching facility. Nork agreed to have a joint committee formed to address this. Should work with C and I on this.*
 - a. J. Artiss agreed to contact Provost Winters in regard to this matter.
7. *Master Plan (Contact Rick Nork) The master plan developed in 1998 was updated twice, in 2008 and 2012. The committee should review these plans and determine if we need to do a completely new master plan.*
 - a. J. Artiss agreed to request clarification from L. Romano and to follow up with Jim Sears on this matter.