M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Tamara Machmut-Jhashi, Associate Provost

FROM: Gary Moore, Chair of the Senate Academic Computing Committee

DATE: April 24, 2007

Subject: 2006-2007 Annual Report of the Academic Computing Committee

Members of the Academic Computing Committee (ACC): Catheryn Cheal, John Halpin, Subramaniam Ganesan, Robert Slater, Ram Orzach, Yang Xia, Vijay Sugumaran, Howard Schwartz, Wallis Andersen, Terrie Rowe, George Preisinger

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the Committee accomplished a number of activities. We continued to participate in the rapid deployment of Oakland's new course management system (Moodle). A majority of classes now use this system and the older WebCT system will be discontinued at the end of the Spring 2007 semester. This transition was discussed at each meeting of the committee. Potential problems were identified and committee members offered suggestions for improvement.

In addition, there was a general discussion led by Terrie Rowe concerning the high cost of the current email system and some potential alternatives. The final recommendation of the committee was to leave the current system in place for faculty and staff, but to explore the potential use of Google as a provider of email for students and alumni. The Google system seemed to offer a number of attractive features. These include an increase in storage space and the potential to keep a "@oakland.edu" email address after graduation. Terrie Rowe will continue to explore these issues.

The third topic for discussion during this year was the addition of a new conferencing program called "Eluminate" to our collection of available programs for online education. This program is designed for "synchronous" communication and has provisions for group formation and real-time demonstrations using various programs available on either the student's or faculty member's computer. The university currently has 25 seats for this program, and several departments have begun to use it effectively. This program will allow a richer experience for online courses with the addition of both two-way verbal communication and live video.

Finally, the committee received a number of reports from members of the academic computing community at Oakland University. Terrie Rowe and her staff updated the committee on the current state of the network at Oakland. This included information about the current relationship with MERIT, as well as plans to discontinue all dial-up access by this summer. George Preisinger presented a useful chart of resources available for teaching with technology at the university. Finally, a very interesting and exciting presentation on the potential use of the "Second Life" virtual reality program in higher education was made by Terrie Rowe. One of the suggestions that came out of this presentation was to explore the potential for a series of "brown-bag" lunches similar to those currently offered by the Teaching-Learning committee to discuss effective use of the newest technology to enhance teaching. The committee should follow up on this early in the next academic year.

The Committee had a productive year. As the Chair of this Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of the 2006-2007 members of the Committee for their outstanding contributions to these important tasks. I look forward to working with all of the members of the Committee again in the near future.