

Academic Computing Committee 2017-2018 Annual Report

Committee Actions

The Academic Computing Committee evaluated computing needs on campus and available computing resources. The committee worked with OU departments to address computing issues throughout the academic year:

- The committee worked with UTS to evaluate PeopleAdmin.
- The committee discussed classroom technology needs faculty have beyond standard classroom equipment with TSCS.
- The committee worked with eLIS to guide students experiencing trouble with wireless networks on campus.

The following general issues were addressed:

- Making eSpace accessible via search on the university website was discussed.
- Michigan State computing cluster is now accessible to OU researchers. The committee discussed the capabilities of the cluster.
- Traditional pedagogies should be supported throughout technology updates.
 - Direct dialog with faculty units is one of the most effective ways to communicate with faculty. Individual technology champions or experts could also be identified in individual units to help the university engage faculty.
- Wireless video projection in classrooms was discussed, but limited interest was expressed by units.
- The committee discussed the recently expanded VPN documentation. The additional documentation is helpful, and areas for further expansion of the documentation were discussed.
- Available data storage for faculty was discussed.
- The university is demonstrating progress in online accessibility compliance. CETL and e-LIS offer workshops, have online documents available, e-LIS and is available to meet with individual departments.

The committee also discussed the following software issues:

- Software licenses continue to increase significantly in price.
- The Scantron to Akindi transition was discussed.
- Breakout session functionality of WebEx was reviewed. The university will evaluate whether or not to continue with WebEx at the end of the current contract.
- The availability of plagiarism checking software was discussed; discussion will continue next year.

Committee Recommendations

The committee discussed what happens to online courses during a campus closure. Faculty feedback unanimously favored keeping online courses open during a campus closure. The committee recommends keeping online activities open during a campus closure, and that such a policy be universally applied and communicated during a campus closure.

- Fully online programs have a strong preference for keeping online activities open; students located across the country are not affected by a snow emergency in southeast Michigan. For example, M3 and M4 medical students may be anywhere in the country.
- Online courses and online activities in partially online courses should also continue in the event of a campus closure.

The committee discussed student access to online resources during a campus closure.

- Most students have their own access to necessary computing resources. In addition to access to laptop or desktop computers, students are increasingly using smartphones and tablets to access online courses.
- Faculty can work with students who do experience trouble accessing online resources during a campus closure in the same way they work with students who have trouble accessing online resources for reasons unrelated to a campus closure (for example, if a student is hospitalized).

Simplification of message is important during a campus closure.

- Standardized text, website, and email messages that are consistent with each other should be used. This standardized language should be consistent with the language used in relevant university policies.

The timing of closure announcements is important.

- More advanced notice would be helpful than was provided for the most recent cancellation of evening classes. If possible, students should to be notified before they begin their commute to campus.