

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tamara Machmut-Jhashi, Associate Provost

FROM: Subramaniam Ganesan, Chair of the Senate Academic Computing Committee

DATE: July 18, 2008

Subject: 2007-2008 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, Anne Becker, Laila Guesseous, Gare Moore, Terrie Rowe, George Preisinger.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the Committee met every month on the last Friday during 12 noon to 1 PM and accomplished a number of activities. We evaluated the use of Oakland's Moodle and phasing out of old WebCT. The transition was discussed in the first meeting 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 move as soon as possible the students and alumni to Gmail. The Gmail system offers a number of attractive features. These include an increase in storage space and the potential to keep a "@oakland.edu" email address after graduation. In winter 2008, the students email was moved to Gmail and the transition was smooth. Terrie Rowe presented during Spring 2008 the case for moving the faculty email to Gmail. After a detailed discussion through email, the ACC agreed that the move will be better for the faculty. The transition of the faculty email to Gmail is expected in August 2008.

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.

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. A presentation on the potential use of the “Second Life” virtual reality program in higher education was made by Cathy Cheal.

During Winter 2008, Terre Rowe brought to the ACC, the existing version of a 11 page document “use of university information technology”. The document was created in July 2003 and needed a thorough revision. ACC discussed the content of this document and made suggestions for changes. This was a concentrated and dedicated activity by the ACC committee members during winter 2008.

The Committee had a productive year. As the Chair of this Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of the 2007-2008 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.