Faculty Technology Committee reps invited to meeting on possible ITS dept. restructuring

Members of the Faculty Senate’s standing committee on Academic Technology (ATC) were invited to attend a meeting on March 14 to discuss possible “re-engineering” of the Information Technology Services department.

According to ATC members, the faculty representatives were given 24-hour notice of the meeting, so several members were unable to attend. The agenda for the meeting was not published in advance.

According to the faculty representatives, the March 14 meeting was attended by all ITS employees, the ATC members, and Faculty Senate President George Armstrong. The meeting started with an explanation by Human Resources Director Gene Breyer of the four groups of “stakeholders” that have been included in previous meetings to discuss ways that ITS might be reorganized.

Mr. Breyer identified the four stakeholder groups as ITS upper management, ITS mid-management, ITS staff, and an academic administrator group including Academic Vice President Kelz and Information/Engineering Technologies Dean Paul DeNu and Assistant Dean Connie Sketch.

Faculty representatives at the March 14 meeting said Executive Vice President Dorsey displayed a chart that identified a possible reorganization plan for ITS and asked for suggestions on revisions to this initial plan.

Dr. Dorsey declined a request by the faculty representatives to share copies of the chart and the PowerPoint™ slides used during the meeting.

According to the faculty representatives, discussion topics included:

- grouping ITS work responsibilities in new ways within the department structure.
- renaming the ITS department and the Help Desk.
- merging all College lab tech employees into ITS.

Faculty representatives said they were assured that all plans are in the “mulling-over stage” and that additional meetings would be held; however, no additional meeting dates were announced.

Faculty Senate responds to Pres. Wright’s BOT remarks

The Cincinnati State Faculty Senate has sent a letter to President Wright responding to statements the President made in his Feb. 27 presentation to the College Board of Trustees on “Cincinnati State Information Technology Issues.”

The letter, which was signed by all of the members of the Faculty Senate, was included in the report that has been submitted by the Senate for inclusion as an agenda item at the Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for March 26.

The Senate President regularly submits a written report to be included in the published Board agenda. The Senate President also is given an opportunity to make spoken remarks at each Board meeting. This procedure has been in effect for several years.

Senate President George Armstrong said that his spoken report at the March 26 Board meeting will include comments on information technology issues.

The complete text of the Senate’s letter is on page 2.
March 13, 2002

Dr. Wright:

Your PowerPoint presentation on Information Technology issues, given at the February Board of Trustees meeting, was reviewed and discussed by the Faculty Senate. Our initial response is anger at some of the statements you made.

We are particularly upset by the slide that portrays “CS administration vs. CTC faculty” in an “us versus them” confrontation, captioned “get out of my way.” This slide seems to encourage divisiveness based on College history, which is totally contradictory to our published institutional value to “honor tradition.”

This slide also presents ITS as the victims in this struggle, who referee the daily-changing rules. The slide does not reflect the well-documented institutional problem of “process owners” (including ITS) who repeatedly fail to effectively communicate to stakeholders (including all institutional users of information technology services) what the rules are supposed to be.

Your description of the technical problems associated with bandwidth use is troubling. It is our conclusion, after consulting with faculty and staff members who are specialists in various information technologies issues, that most of the problems faculty face daily are not related to the bandwidth of our institutional Internet connection.

Instead, the most common technology-related problems faced by faculty have to do with non-Internet related process or system issues, such as implementation (or lack of implementation) of Colleague R-16 features, constantly-broken copy machines, or inability of ITS staff to generate in a timely manner the log-ins and passwords students need to access the computer resources (Web accounts) that are supposed to be available to them each term.

Use of the Internet by employees and students, for whatever purpose, is not the cause of slow turn-arounds on requests for service. Bandwidth may be a contributing factor to the effectiveness of computer performance in some (not all) computer labs on some days, but bandwidth is not the reason for the majority of daily problems.

The slide and the statements in your presentation that claim that illegal activity is occurring are extremely disturbing to us. In particular, we’re troubled by your statements that unproductive (illegal, immoral or unethical) activities of some employees are hindering or preventing others of us from appropriately using technology resources as we do our jobs.

We would like to see the data you used to arrive at your accusations, and we would like to know what you perceive the solutions to be.

We support the premise that employees who are interfering with the ability of others to do their jobs should be confronted and corrected, but we believe that the causes of most of our technology problems lie elsewhere than in the possibly inappropriate behavior of a few.

In addition we are very concerned about the possible effect of your broad accusations on the reputation of the College and the faculty.

After we have seen the data you used to reach your conclusions, it may be useful to plan a meeting to discuss the College’s technology problems, and to begin to work together to reach effective solutions.

George Armstrong,
Faculty Senate President

I read the comments in the Mar. 12 AAUP Newsletter about the President’s presentation to the Board, and I was not surprised to see that the President is passing the buck back to faculty, rather than to those who are responsible for managing the IT support systems at Cincinnati State.

Maybe the President can explain to us how faculty usage of the Internet is preventing hundreds of Multimedia Information Design (MID) students, paying thousands of dollars in tuition and lab fees, from having access to working Web accounts.

Web accounts are supposed to give our MID students work space on a Cincinnati State computer to create, revise, and store the websites they are learning to design, so students can display their work (and
Letters

--to the Editor, and
to the Cincinnati State
Board of Trustees

I have been trying to think of
the best way to respond to
President’s Wright’s comments
at the last Board of Trustees
meeting. Unlike President
Wright, I believe how you use
words is important, and I do not
want to paint him with the same
broad brush that he used to
paint every employee here at
Cincinnati State.

My anger is not in response to
the President’s “unethical,
immoral, and illegal” statement.
I believe this was a “shoot from
the hip” comment and all the
President shot was his foot. My
outrage is in response to our
President’s hope that we could
“get to adequate” in regard to
Information Technologies.

When did it become the policy
of this College to “get to ad-
equate” in anything? Was it not
so long ago that we were all
proud to be considered excel-
ient?

A few years ago, while I was a
member of the Faculty Senate, I
asked President Wright if he
knew anything about the history
of this College. His response
was, “Who says I care about the
history of this college?” It is now
painfully obvious that he
doesn’t care about the excellent
history of this institution, nor
does he have any aspirations to
continue the goal of excellence
at Cincinnati State.

Former U.S. President Harry S
Truman once said in regard to
his office, “the buck stops here.”
President Wright seems to
believe the buck stops every-
where but his office.

I would hope that all of the
individuals associated with this
College during its glory days,
including Board members, are
appalled by this belief.

In conclusion, I would hope
that the Board would not focus
on the paint job of the faculty
and staff that the President did
with his broad brush, when it
might very well be that it’s the
President’s Office which needs
touching up.

Paul W. Davis
Business Tech. Division

IT support/ continued from 2

instructors can grade it) on the
World Wide Web.

We are nearing the end of
the second year of our new MID
programs, and students still do
not have a stable set of web
accounts that work efficiently
and consistently.

Currently, the student ac-
counts are housed on the third
different web server assigned in
less than two years. MID in-
structors are teaching students
the third different version of the
process for uploading their class
and homework materials to the
server.

I have been informed more
than once by ITS personnel that
these student accounts would be
set up automatically each term
for students registered for Web
Development classes, using a
program written by a consultant
hired to do this work for the
College. All the ITS staff needs
to do is collect the registration
data from Colleague and “run
the script.” The student accounts
are supposed to be available to
these students within the first
week of the term.

It is now week 6 of this term
and—as in past terms—we are
finally ironing out the problems
with the current students’
accounts. I was told that the
script did not run when it was
supposed to run. The result is a
big problem for students and for
faculty, term after term—and
this problem does not seem to
be related to anything having to
do with bandwidth usage on
campus.

I could go on listing non-
bandwidth problems we experi-
ence repeatedly while teaching
about multimedia software
applications in our “premiere”
Multimedia lab, room 228C—
but I won’t.

The technology problem in
this institution is not traffic on
the Internet coming into and
going out of the College. The
problem is failure to design an
effective system for communi-
cating about classroom technol-
ogy problems and for getting
those problems resolved effec-
tively so we can deliver the
quality courses we should be
delivering to our students.

Colleen Meyer
Information Tech. Division

If, during the past few years,
anything has slipped and is not
up to expectations, the buck
should stop with President Ron
Wright. Our institutional weak-
nesses may be attributed to one
of several things: (1) the Presi-
dent has appointed people to
positions which are beyond their
capabilities; (2) He has not
committed enough resources to
adequately get the job done, or
he has committed the College
resources to the wrong priori-
ties; (3) He has not provided the
leadership to keep the College
on the path of excellence; (4) He
has not created a quality envi-
ronment that would tap into the
ideas and passions of the
faculty, middle administration,
and staff.

In conclusion, I would hope
that the Board would not focus
on the paint job of the faculty
and staff that the President did
with his broad brush, when it
might very well be that it’s the
President’s Office which needs
touching up.

Paul W. Davis
Business Tech. Division
Cincinnati State AAUP
Chapter Meeting

Thursday, March 28
Conference Center Room 342

Starting at 2:30 pm

• Get your one-of-a-kind Cinstate AAUP sports shirt
• Pick up your copy of this year’s Bargaining Issues Survey
• Enjoy refreshments and conversation with other faculty members

Starting at 3:00 pm

• Business meeting, including:
• Introduction to Bargaining for faculty who haven’t been through it before (and refresher for those who have)
• the State of the Union as we approach Contract Negotiations Summer 2002