Administrative Advisory Committee on Computing
Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2005

Attendance:
Members Present: Barr, Borello (for Ramirez), Brar, Hendricks, Mason, Melvin, Overgaag, Ross, Sletteland, Sparling, Stewart, Stover, Yelland

Members Absent: Colvard, Drury, Elfrink, Holleran, Maraviglia, Pietsch, Ramirez

Guests Present: Jerry Hanley, Sandra Harris, Dale Kohler (for Craig Schultz), Johanna Madjedi, Mary Shaffer, Richard Walls, Tom Zuur

1. Approval of the Minutes:
The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written.

2. Announcements:
   - PolyComm Update – Ross said good progress was made on calendar last week and thanked everyone for their help. A few remaining issues, such as connections being dropped periodically, should be resolved shortly. Problems resulted from data discrepancies, e.g., users who had left Cal Poly but were still in the system. Processes for ensuring accuracy and reconciliation of data are needed and will be discussed with the Security Committee. A “lessons learned” feedback session with the LAN Coordinators is planned. Quotas will be enforced on the new system and users need to recognize and understand they are responsible for downloading and archiving messages to local and removable storage media. Rules for deleting trash and spam folders are being considered. ITS will be seeking committee advice on record retention policies. Larger quotas are possible on a cost recovery basis. Ross will post an updated schedule on the web today and email the link to the committee.

   - ADA Compliance Update – The Academic Senate will continue its first reading of the proposed resolution at its next meeting. Faculty members are concerned about the potential impact on them personally. Hanley wants to avoid incurring a legal ruling that would impose even harsher rules than the law requires. The campus needs to be proactive in developing a plan to migrate and mitigate campus IT resources in a thoughtful and transparent way. He met with Epson about providing closed captioning for projectors which is not currently required by law. The campus could work directly with publishers to provide electronic textbooks as early as possible, which would benefit students in general by ensuring higher returns for used textbooks but also require faculty to submit orders as early as possible.

3. Status of the Infrastructure:
Madjedi presented the annual report on the state of the infrastructure. At this meeting, she reviewed the current state; the future state will be addressed at the next meeting. By understanding how the pieces fit together, AACC can better advise ITS on priorities and requirements which impact the infrastructure. She introduced Richard Walls, Coordinator, ITS Central Systems Administration.
Madjedi noted how the *Cal Poly Strategic Computing Architecture for ITS Central Systems* fits with other key ITS documents. The first emphasizes the need for a reliable, integrated, robust environment to support all university services, including the concept of DEV-TEST-PROD. The technical architecture document by Ross is about integrating applications through the portal and with Oracle. The third document by Schultz is about how learning management integrates with University business. The ITS directors are working to create an integrated package showing how each relates to the other. The first one, distributed at the meeting, has not changed much since AACC last saw it.

Madjedi reviewed several diagrams. The first shows how EMC Central Storage connects to different servers (data, application, and web) in high availability, robust production with duplicate test and dev environments, and production. This has not changed a lot either. The green boxes show functions that appear in the Application Monitor on the portal. OCS will be moving into robust production.

The next diagram (*ITS Infrastructure – Logical Relationships*) shows existing high availability environments (Central Authentication Services, Enterprise Directory), environments planned for redundant design this year (Portal, Single Click, Application Servers) and within two years (Identity Management, Database Servers) and their relationship to Account Provisioning and Source Data. Madjedi described how the various functions work to validate one’s access to a service. Accounting provisioning will be implemented with OCS. How can the campus evaluate how well it is working? The new elements will make it easier to add new systems provided the business logic is defined consistently.

On the next diagram (*Services on ITS Managed Servers*), green highlights the services on Application Monitor and blue shows back-end infrastructure services that are required to make the other services work. Columns indicate related applications, DEV-TEST-PROD status, users, availability, manufacturer, and the name of the server. Madjedi said it shows the campus is moving in the right direction by setting up environments to be as strong as possible. CSA currently supports 150 servers, mostly Dell and Sun plus HP and the IBM mainframe. Operating systems include Linux, Netware, Windows, HP-UX, zOS, and Solaris. The goal is to stay as consolidated and standard as possible from an OS/server perspective; consistent images/processes make it easier to support and secure.

The *Service Availability* diagram does not reflect performance, e.g., email is slow, but whether a service was available or not. Most applications are above 99.99. Some applications do not allow for automatic failover and can never be 99.999. Stewart questioned the uptime for Blackboard. Madjedi reviewed a chart showing number of outages; average and longest times to restoration; hours of downtime; and availability. This does not include planned outages. The goal is to determine the impact of an outage in the future, but an acceptable standard has not been established. Yelland said 98% uptime is the stated goal for PeopleSoft; a goal of 99% was suggested. Zuur questioned the data source and suggested it may not reflect work being done by vendors and functional departments that limit access to the service but not the server. “Other” includes Remedy and Resource 25. There is a need to identify critical service periods in which to avoid outages.
Campus Network Metrics shows outages for the year by what was affected (e.g., one building, multiple buildings, internet access, wireless access, other access). Post TII statistics show the campus has an aggregate growth capacity of 15%. Physical construction has been completed; electronics will be completed in mid-February. Standards and guidelines for network attached devices were reviewed with AACC and approved by IRMPPC in December. TII was to provide improved network management tools to LAN Coordinators to address patching, notification, aggregate reporting on trend data over time, etc. Network Administration will be publishing an online toolkit for LAN Coordinators by March 1. The port access inventory tool (Planet) to aid LAN Coordinators in troubleshooting problems will be included once issues at the system and vendor level are worked out. Until then, ITS will provide manual reporting on behalf of campus departments. It was suggested that something about supporting services such as DNS and DHCP and devices with physical but not actual connectivity be reflected, e.g., wireless authentication via physical hardware address. Network login is being tested in the Residence Halls. The software checks for current anti-virus and OS patches before permitting users to connect to the network.

Deficiencies with system status were discussed. Users are trained to go there and AACC would not want to lose that as a tool. Madjedi recognizes this is a priority. Efforts have been made to develop standard language and identify logical dependencies, but the project was sidelined by OCS, registration, Blackboard, and other priorities. Providing mechanisms to communicate with users as a whole and LAN Coordinators specifically will be a priority in this year’s sweeps. The system status channel on the portal is ready; the issue is how to populate it. Automation is a goal but a long way out; getting out consistent and understandable messages are more immediate goals. The initial rollout will also define the process of ownership and accountability for messages.

Members were asked to provide Madjedi with feedback on the format of the presentation. Members were also asked to identify critical business timeframes for each application. Madjedi will address future directions at the next meeting. The full presentation will be posted on the AACC website for future reference.

Minutes prepared by Mary Shaffer