

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

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Consultative Committee

Campus Governance

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Consultative minutes 09/21/2010

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Consultative Committee Minutes for September 21, 2010

Present: James Barbour, Brad Deane, Manjari Govada, Jane Kill, Nic McPhee, Paula O'Loughlin, Mark Privratsky, Laura Thielke, Sharon Van Eps, and Jen Zych Herrmann

For this meeting, Consultative Committee was visited by Director of Computing Services, Jim Hall.

I. Google Conversion.

1. Overview. In the past, UMM has run its own e-mail and calendar systems, which are expensive to maintain and back up. The University will now begin to convert to using Google e-mail and calendar systems, which will be free and will not require hardware maintenance on campus. In the month of October, the staff will begin migrating to the Google services; the staff conversion is prioritized because staff members are frequently required to interface with the TC campus, which has already migrated to Google. The entire campus population cannot migrate simultaneously because Computing Services lacks the resources to provide support to all campus constituencies at once.

2. Faculty transition. Director Hall asked Consultative for suggestions about scheduling the migration for faculty. Faculty members of the Committee warned that the migration should not interfere with increased administrative activity that arises at the end of a semester. The Committee recommended that faculty migration should take place as soon as possible in November so that the process could be completed before the Thanksgiving break. The Committee further advised that faculty be sent an e-mail notice advising them of ways to ease the transition (such as trimming their e-mail folders of outdated materials) and to answer potential questions (such as the persistence of existing e-mail addresses).

3. Student transition. Hall explained that students would likely begin migrating in groups starting in January. The Committee suggested that students who are new to the campus in January should be given Google accounts immediately by default.

II. Potential Changes to Computing Services. In answer to questions from the Committee, Hall explained that part of his new role as Director is to provide a vision for changes in information technology for the campus. Current initiatives and potential changes include:

1. Review of existing organization of Computing Services as it existed in the absence of a Director. Computing Services might also be renamed "Information Technology" to reflect more accurately the changing nature of the group's functions.

2. The institution of a multi-year technology plan, which the campus has lacked in the past. Hall shared with a committee a draft of such a plan, and explained that it will help clarify the priorities, risks, and costs associated with improving technology on campus. He further explained that a clear plan will reduce the possibility of misunderstandings about the relationship of campus technology initiatives and the student tech fee, which he regards as a special projects fund designed to improve student experience.

3. A new emphasis on improving campus communication. Hall explained that his previous experience has taught him the value of using blogs and other online media to improve internal communication (he has already established a Director's blog at www.morris.umn.edu/cs/director/). He is committed to exploring new modes of internal information sharing at UMM.

4. Network and wireless upgrades. Hall conveyed that one of his chief goals is to ensure that students can confidently expect to find a good wireless signal in every room on campus and on the mall. His experience in the Office of Information Technology on the TC campus should help him to realize this standard.

Respectfully submitted by Brad Deane