
Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting May 20, 2002

Summary: The OIT Faculty Advisory committee met on May 20, 2002. The notes from the meeting are available below.

Attendees:

Committee Members: Bruce Blumberg, Nohema Fernandez, Stephen Franklin, Alan Goldin, Joy Grosser, Dave Leinen, Carol Hughes, Craig Martins, Hugh Roberts, John Romine, Dana Roode, George Tita

Guests: Garrett Hildebrand, Allen Schiano, Ashley Vikander

Introductions/ Agenda

Committee members and guests introduced themselves. Dana Roode briefly reviewed the agenda and asked for additional agenda items.

UCI Lifeline Modem Pool Policy

Dana Roode reviewed the [UCI Lifeline Modem Policy](#) which establishes a 7 hour/week prime time connect limit in order to maximize use of modems and provide a minimal level of access to the UCI community. Modem pool usage has dropped overall - during peak periods 200 of the 280 modems in the pool are in use. The committee discussed modem pool access including whether or not faculty should be exempt from the prime time connect limit. Dana recommended increasing the prime time connect limit to 10 hours/week and re-evaluating usage patterns in the future. The committee supported this approach and did not feel faculty should be exempt from modem pool limits.

Virus Filtering Deployment

Dana Roode reviewed the deployment of [virus filtering](#). As of May 13, 2002 all messages sent to @uci.edu addresses are being scanned for viruses. The campus community has been very supportive of the efforts. The group discussed improving the content and efficiency of the messages the virus filtering software sends to the users. Dana also indicated OIT is investigating scanning incoming mail for SPAM. These messages will most likely be marked as SPAM and sent on to campus addressees. OIT staff also mentioned the Network_Security_Alerts mailing list which is used for notifications of security threats, advisory on infected computers, as well as general product notices related to network security.

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Off-campus Network Traffic Management

Dana Roode reviewed recent network traffic trends that lead to a significant increase in the usage based component of internet service costs. The causes of the increased traffic can be attributed to "abuse" (such as break-ins to UCI machines where servers are installed without the knowledge of the machine's "owner") and "recreation" (peer-to-peer file sharing applications such as Kaza). OIT staff are monitoring the situation on a daily basis and working toward a better understanding of the activities during peak usage periods that ultimately determine UCI's costs. The analysis and response efforts have been time-consuming.

OIT has instituted very significant bandwidth limits for peer-to-peer applications. Since the bandwidth limitations, there has been one complaint that the limitations were restricting the department from doing University business. This has been rectified.

The group discussed possible policy and procedural directions including registering servers, making workstations invisible to outside entities, obtaining freeware or bulk licensed personal firewalls (e.g. Zone Alarm), refining cost recovery efforts, negotiating a different relationship with Cox, Calren and Internet2, and communicating more with the campus about traffic costs.

John Romine strongly supported blocking outside access to client workstations and offered to pilot such mechanisms in Engineering.

CENIC Optical Network Initiative (ONI)

Garrett Hildebrand provided a brief update on the Corporation for Educational Network Initiatives in California's (CENIC) Optical Network Initiative (ONI). CENIC's Calren2 is the network that connects all the California universities together. A new project now in progress is the Digital California Project (DCP) that adds connections to the Calren2 network from all California counties in support of K-12 schools. The ultimate goal of CENIC is to provide all K-20 schools connectivity to the network.

Currently, CalRen-2 operates over leased, managed circuits from Pacific Bell. CENIC's goal is to end contractual obligations with Pacific Bell and run a private optical network where they control the electronics and thus the amount of bandwidth available to California's education and research community. CENIC expects the speed of connections to increase from 622 megabits/second to 10 gigabits/second over time. CENIC hopes to have the new network ready for transition by the end of the year, but some feel this is unlikely. The major obstacle to overcome is "the last mile fiber problem" of buying, leasing or installing fiber to campuses from backbone network fiber providers. There is considerable effort involved in the UCI situation.

Currently, UCI bandwidth is adequate for applications used by the UCI computing community. CENIC ONI is building for the future to ensure bandwidth for next generation applications that will require more.

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Network Upgrades

Dana Roode summarized the current "edge upgrade" projects including College of Medicine edge upgrade (18 buildings), which is a parallel on-going project. Currently, 2 of 3 floors of the Medical Plaza have been upgraded, cabling is completed in Medical Surge 1 and 2, and OIT is working on Medical Sciences A-F. The School of the Arts has communicated upgrade needs that OIT is looking into. OIT hopes that schools will communicate mission critical networking needs to OIT representatives. OIT also completed an upgrade of Biological Sciences backbone connections to gigabit speed and a new fiber connection to University Tower.

Wireless Networking

OIT continues to make progress on wireless installations, but slower than desired due to staffing shortages. Installations are now being completed for requests made in November. These include installations in Engineering, Biological Sciences, College of Medicine, School of the Arts, Administration Building, and Beckman Conference Center. OIT is also planning for wireless installation in new buildings including Natural Sciences I and Croul Hall. The goal is to finish some wireless in all schools and then look at equipping classrooms and other areas.

OIT' Faculty Focus Group Feedback Gathering

Allen Schiano is leading a project designed to solicit feedback for current and future research and instructional computing, networking, and phone system needs. OIT will be convening focus groups of various campus constituents (faculty, students, staff) to discuss current and future needs; perceptions of current services and support; and perceptions of current communication/ marketing efforts. Allen asked the group for feedback on the format of the data gathering project as well as the questions planned to be asked.

Group members suggested summarizing current services and possible future services for each focus group, re-phrasing the questions to an end user (ethnological) perspective (i.e. When you are using your computer, what type of problems do you have?), limiting and generalizing the questions (with follow-up questions for the moderators to stimulate discussion if necessary), and modifying the questions depending on the particular focus group. The data from the focus group will be used to develop specific targeted surveys to guide OIT in planning and refining services. OIT will complete the project within a year.

The group recommended developing a brief guide to successful computing at UCI (for example listing the top 10 things you need to know).

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Recent Problems with Webmail

At the request of the committee, Allen reviewed recent problems with OIT' Webmail service. The Webmail software application has proven to be problematic; the most recent issues were related to the interaction between Webmail and IMAP. Webmail is extremely popular with UCI students. OIT is currently assessing other web based mail applications to replace Webmail, but no change is likely for a year or more. Dana requested that individuals call and report problems to the OIT Help Desk (x42222) as they occur.

OIT Action Items

1. Increase the prime-time connect limit to 10 hours/week for the UCI Lifeline Modem Pool.

2. Improve messages sent by virus filtering application for content and efficiency.
3. Announce bandwidth limitations for peer-to-peer applications to campus.
4. Inform/educate the campus community about bandwidth costs.
5. Continue assessing replacement products for Webmail.
6. Schedule the next OIT Faculty Advisory Committee meeting in the October-November timeframe.

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