*MINUTES*
2/28/97 Meeting of the
IUN Faculty Organization
Computer Committee

Present: G. Assibey-Mensah, D. Blaney, K. Brock, N. DeLeon, W. Dorin, J. Gerzema, I. Hozo, R. Kini, B. Scott (Chair), D. Szarkowicz (for J. Knapp), R. Andree (guest), B. Moran (guest).

Absent: E. Rykken.

The meeting began at 1:30 p.m.

1. Questions addressed to the Computer Committee from the IUN Faculty Organization Executive Committee. Robert Andree, Director of Computer Services, was present to answer questions concerning his unit.
   - A. Status of the IUN Web Page and campus policy. Director Andree briefly re-iterated the current interim web page policy. Copies were handed out to the committee. The current policy outlines the process for: 1) submitting web page material to computer services for posting to the campus web page, and 2) under what conditions departments/divisions/staff units may operate and maintain their own page and receive a link from the campus page.Much discussion ensued regarding the overwhelming need on the campus for a quality web page give the campus and attractive presence to the world, and to support newer forms of instruction that entail use of e-mail and web page materials for communicating with students, other faculty, and the world.Director Andree indicated that there is currently no one on the campus designated as a web master for the campus web page, and that his staff (already overwhelmed with maintenance of the network and hardware and software around the campus) could not take on this responsibility. He indicated that he submitted a proposal to the administration of the campus that this job be taken on by News and Publications, due to its strong marketing implications to the world. After some discussion, that proposal was not accepted. The Committee discussed this need and came to the conclusion that it is imperative for both marketing and instruction reasons to have a campus web master appointed as soon as possible to coordinate current web activity, assist departments/divisions, etc. develop their own pages for both marketing and instructional support, and to assure that the front-end page for the campus is kept current and attractive to prospective students and other outsiders. The chairman was asked to draft a position statement on this issue for forwarding to the campus Technology Council, which is currently reviewing the campus interim policy. That statement is to be reviewed by the members of the committee before being forwarded to the Council.
   - B. Current status of the dial-in service and problems encountered with it. Director Andree briefly outlined the current status of the dial-in service. It consists of sixteen dial-in ports, with no immediate plans for expansion. Dial-in can be accomplished from MacIntosh operating systems, and PC's running either Windows 3.1/3.11 or Windows '95. Director Andree was unfamiliar with faculty/staff having problems attaching to the campus network from outside. He indicated that setup of both MacIntosh and PC's using Windows "95 was relatively easy, and most users should not have difficulty doing so. He showed the committee an Instruction Sheet that his unit hands out to anyone interested in settling up their home machine for dial-in. It covers all three operating systems. He did indicate that the most complicated was for Windows 3.1/3.11, and that neophyte users might well have problems configuring their machines because of the complexities of their operating system. His best solution to problems with Windows 3.1/3.11 is to upgrade to Windows '95. That would significantly simplify the process.Faculty who currently use an outside internet service provider (isp) can connect through that provider to machines on the campus. Simply mapping drives to machines on campus (with Win 95 or MacIntosh) connects the user to drives on machines on campus, including their desktop machine, if left running and set up properly. This method means no toll charges for users outside the local calling area. Questions came up regarding whether we could reach an agreement with local isp's for reduced rates for faculty, staff, and students. Director Andree said that one of his staff members is currently testing several isp's and discussing such issues with

them, but at present they want an upfront commitment from the campus for a specific number of users before they would be willing to quote a reduced price. His staff is continuing to investigate the issue.

- C. Problems with Help Desk and C.S. personnel. Director Andree indicated that he was aware of few problems between his staff and faculty and staff on the campus. He indicated that his people are human beings, and when under pressure they sometimes react accordingly if approached without common courtesy. He indicated that although that is true, he nevertheless tries to train his people to respond to requests with politeness and a caring attitude. However, he also made it clear that he is severely understaffed, and his people are under a great deal of pressure to handle more work than they have time for. He asked that if any faculty or staff member has a problem with his personnel that they contact him directly. He indicated that few people do, so he is not aware of many developing problems.Director Andree also provided us with a list of priorities for his support staff, in order of their importance.**
    1. Downed server(s)
    2. Mission critical services - administrative systems, such as registration machines, bursar's office equipment, etc.
    3. Individual Users - on a first-called, first-served basis, with a small number of exceptions. It is sometimes difficult to schedule repairs when the faculty/staff member has to be present to answer technical questions about the machine's performance. Usually, they can respond to most request within 48 hours. There are exceptions when higher priority items fail.

Vice Chancellor Moran offered a recent article from an educational journal indicating that the pace of technological change and the availability of support staff is at odds all over higher education. Many schools are reporting similar problems with their people. This is not expected to change in the near future. Demand for computer usage in and out of the classroom is increasing faster than most campuses can prepare for and budget for. Although, not a solution to our problem, it clearly indicates that we are not alone with less than adequate number of support staff to meet our needs.Discussion followed about ways to head off future problems between his staff and the rest of the campus community. Very few ideas were presented. Customer Service training sessions are being held all over campus, including for Computer Services personnel. Director Andree indicated that one way he might keep better track of faculty/staff needs and the promptness and appropriateness with which his staff responds is by recording Help Desk calls. This way he can verify that appropriate work orders have been written and the staff has responded within an appropriate period of time.Don Szarkowicz indicated that all the necessary information was currently being gathered to prepare a monthly report for the administration showing what Help Desk calls were taken, from whom, what the problems was, what actions were taken and when the problem was dealt with. He indicated favorable experience with such a system in his days of managing an engineering lab with limited staff and resources. Director Andree was at first reluctant due to the time required, but Drs. Dorin and Szarkowicz indicated they could probably supply an intern student to assist with setting up a database program to track this kind of activity. It was felt that if such help could be provided, that the additional information about the amounts and types of work done by C.S. staff would be very helpful in documenting both adherence to priorities, workload levels in the unit, and other valuable information.No further recommendations were made. Director Andree left the meeting

2. Campus Computer Upgrade Process Vice Chancellor Moran offered to summarize the process for the computer upgrade for us, as Dr. Veeder was unavailable at this time to attend the meeting.It has been concluded that the target for the upgrade process is to bring all faculty computers up to a 486-66+ with a minimum of 8 megabytes of RAM and a 400 MB hard drive. Requests submitted through the Deans for Equipment more sophisticated that this would be handled on a case by case basis requiring written justification for the need. The original target was to be a 386-33 for all faculty, but a Technology Fee Committee decision to upgrade the PC labs to Pentium standards has released 65 486-66+ motherboards and memory for installation into faculty/staff machines. The timetable of this process is uncertain. The laboratory refits are tentatively scheduled to take place over Spring Break, if equipment can be acquired fast enough. If successful, then the faculty upgrades can begin. The upgrade will take place in stages, as so many machines are involved. It is expected that this process will carry well into the summer.

3. Laboratory configuration for MacIntosh Laboratories for the 1997-8 academic year. After much discussing, the committee concluded that the following should be the configuration of MacIntosh laboratories for the coming year:
   1. Clarisworks 4.04 (upgraded to from 2.3)
   2. Daedalus
   3. Adobe illustrator
   4. Wordperfect for Macintosh 3.1
   5. Netscape
   6. Internet Explorer
   7. Pegasus Mail
   8. Microsoft Office Pro 97 for MacIntosh
   9. Cricket Graph
   10. Mathematica 3.0 (upgrade)

No new licenses were needed for any software at this time, only upgrades of Clarisworks and Mathematica.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

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