

Senate Computing Usage Committee - October 5, 2012

Members in attendance: Frank Beatrous [FB], Arif Jamal, Fran Yarger, Kenny Dotty, John LaDue, PJ Dillon, Vincent Arena [VA], Joe Constantino, Jinx Walton [JW], Alexandros Labrinidis [AL], Alex Jones, Susan Sereika [SS], and Irene Freize [IF]

Excused: Luis Vargas

Meeting started at 10:03am

1. Moment of silence for John Close

A moment of silence was observed in honor of John Close, who was a long-time member of the committee, and [passed away](#) during the summer.

2. Discussion about new Online OMET Teaching Evaluations

- Vice Provost Andrew Blair [AB]
- Nancy Reilly, Director of OMET [NR]

[AB] University Times has accurate summary of process and background of switch to online evaluations.

Two years ago Provost Beeson asked ACIE to begin examine possibility to switch to online system. Previous OMET Director was adamantly opposed to it, mostly because of the issue of lower response rates.

However times are changing, everything nowadays is done online. It would be embarrassing that we are killing all these trees.

Provost gave charge, first year CIDDE did a national benchmarking study. Pros: efficiencies / Cons: faculty buy-in
Study found Pitt was behind the curve on this. A big percentage of peers have moved to this direction (including CMU).
Confidence to move forward. Recommendation at end of year, to have a pilot study the next year.

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Full report of ACIE ([Moving from paper-based to online-based evaluations](#)) can be gotten online from omet.pitt.edu

Pilot study was well-designed. The principle approach: Oakland match pairs (43). Voluntarily (for faculty and students). One course online in the fall which was matched in the Spring to the same course and same instructor in the previous fall. In the regional campus, they were administered both online and on paper for the same class and same term, but different sessions.

Looked at response rates and means of outcomes, including the overall teaching effectiveness score. No statistically significance from the outcomes (looking at the averages). Practically the same. However, as predictably, the response rates were down. 53% online vs 75% on paper, as expected.

[IF] has the study looked at students or classes? In other words, would there be an issue with smaller, advanced classes?

[AB] That has been identified as a potential problem, but the numbers are still impressive. So the recommendation was to move forward to online, but do so carefully, with an opt-out for one year. This was adopted by the Council of Deans. The recommendation would be mindful of response rates. Every types of incentive has been looked at. First year there are no incentives. Most powerful thing one can do is to have faculty engage the students and highlight the importance. ACIE will monitor the implementation this year, as charged by the Provost.

[NR] As of yesterday morning, 2882 total, 2041 for online surveys, 71%; the rest on paper.
Request process administered online, through my.pitt.edu

[IF] It was a bit difficult to identify the option for paper-based option.

[AL] Perhaps say "paper-based" instead of "calendar option" to make this more obvious.

[AL] problem with low participation in small class sizes, what are minimum attendance requirements?

[NR] for in-paper, 7 is the min threshold to collect statistics for a class (but still have the open-ended). Has to be at least 4 in the class to distribute the survey (for student confidentiality). OMET does not schedule a survey unless there are 5 students taking class.

[SS] How long of a window there will be for the online survey?

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[NR] 3 weeks before end of classes

[VA] is there any control for the period of surveying? Instead of making it up until the last day of class?

[NR] survey windows could not be personalized because of the software

[AB] ok to have instructors do it online in class.

[AL] this is particularly useful for cases where class is in a lab

[AJ] why are the two windows different?

[NR] need longer window to administer physical surveys

[AB] Savings of switch to online is \$35K just for the paper and the students

[AL] why are we using norms from back to 1997?

[NR] we did not have a request from the Dean.

[JW] This is probably something to be discussed at the Council of Deans

[AL] incentives: cannot see grade unless submit evaluation

[FB] bad idea to give incentives (since there is a percentage not attending and should not be forced to offer opinion)

[AL] why not have evals online scheduled automatically?

[NR] faculty need to request it

[AB] this changes from school to school

[IF] can you just implement to opt-out and the default be on?

[AL] suggestion to make it mandatory for different schools (if it is already), with an opt-out option

[NR] it is not trivial to find out from peoplesoft which classes need to be surveyed

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[JW] could this be integrated with peoplesoft?

[AL] certain flag set to on => default=on

3. Elections for Chair/co-Chair for 2012-2013 year

Two candidates volunteered, Alexandros Labrinidis for Chair and Alex Jones for Co-Chair. Slate was voted unanimously by those present.

4. CSSD's Report -- Jinx Walton

[JW] ability to download students photos should be finished by end of October

[JW] faculty information system is a work in progress (over the next few months)

- adding all schools
- adding NSF biosketch
- publication feed
- google scholar and ACM DL, any other sources?

another tool being considered: academic analytics
new forms to some of the options under publications

[JW] faculty technology resources page - primarily for new faculty, was announced at new faculty orientation (off the my.pitt.edu portal)

[JW] read green recommendation to have it be opt-out has been turned down

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only 3600 subscribed and out of them only 600 are faculty.
any ideas on how could we increase adoption?

[AL] have it trickle down the hierarchy through the Deans

[JW] eduroam article in Chronicle. [Eduroam](#) allows visitors to use our campus network, and our faculty/students/staff to use networks from other universities when visiting

Meeting ended at 11:00am
Scribe: Alexandros Labrinidis