

Minutes

Kansas State University Faculty Senate

Committee on Technology Meeting

October 16, 2001 - 3:30 p.m. - Room 202, Fairchild Hall

Our next FSCOT meeting is November 27, 2001; 1:30 pm KSU Union 205. Janelle Corkill attended our meeting and Web access is starting to sound more like it could become our first action item (see item #1 below). I am expecting Jane Rowlett to address us next time on Choice of Portal Software. I have attended our College's Web advisory committee and our Technical Advisory Committee to our Dean Richardson. The reactions have merged with our ongoing business.

1. Web access for handicapped (Janelle Corkill Chair). Janelle attended our FSCOT meeting and described the efforts of her committee focusing solely on making it easier to address our Web access for handicapped issues. 3 members (Ann Murray, Larry Havenstein and Gail Simmonds have been attending for me.

Janelle and Jane indicated that the standards that they're helping develop will encourage confluence of our efforts and those of the readers - handicapped assisters. Further discussion revealed that many tables have problems, but line drawings have less problems as long as captions are adequate. Most of the problems lay with PDF, and publishing houses that put out PDF electronic journals have allegedly solved with Adobe 5. Our web-access committee reacted that it was probably not this simple, but that they'd keep watching.

Janelle went on to describe that accessibility issues related to direct handicapped in our class room, and to any new web material used in education. Text descriptions to describe figures were said to resemble Flash. In the end her committee will have made available to us style sheets that make new composition much simpler. Guidelines newer than our combination of w3c and Sec 508 are not as yet available. When available they will be sent to our deans for our pickup.

Just yesterday, Janelle attended a Dean's council meeting and learned that Vet Med was roughly > of the way to making any adjustments required to make us compliant with Web access at that meeting. Our Web access committee was encouraged by the College's progress and it was described more fully for the committee. We have made significant progress, but are not quite > there.

People can't load the newer types of programs or readers on MacIntosh. MacIntosh users (specifically Eric Motta) believe a much higher level of creativity derives from MacIntosh and that they're being forced into an IBM box. Helpers at "computer centralITAC" have duly noted the problem but done nothing. I suggested he make his case to our committee and gave him the date and location of our next meeting. Our Web access committee thought there were Mac adaptations, but we have direct experience mostly with IBM

Our parliamentarian, a student worker expressed the opinion that this was a big waste of time, and might actually hurt the handicapped and didn't understand why we were doing it. I mentioned the mandate of Topeka and our federal government. Our Web access committee agreed and felt the

reasoning adequate. Most businesses will be adapting these guidelines and making websites accessible to the handicapped. Rather than toughening the handicapped by excluding them, we are advised to work with them to address their needs.

We were asked by our newest member, Bob Brent (replacing Sonny Ramaswamy; we miss you Sonny, but Bob you're great!) were we simply "dumbing down our computer programs for the many non-handicapped users in an effort to get user friendliness for the few handicapped. It is not supposed to work this way. After researching this a little further, it appears that access is a negotiated compromise for the handicapped, better than they had before, acceptable to build on, but in no way equal to what we have.

Finally, Beth Monteleone raised what seemed to be a most important question of this discussion, "How would you help a blind (handicapped) person in your classes. We agreed to think about this and to continue discussion on this topic. My initial reaction to this is that all of life is about access to experts. A student in my class has access to me, the expert. I would begin by discussing the issues in as many ways as needed to put the handicapped person on an even footing with other students.

Both the instructor and handicapped student must understand what has been done for maximum benefit. The improvement must be a significant improvement and push the envelope of what is possible. Any advance must receive critique from the student, instructor and her/his peers. Such critique will reveal ways to improve future performances. I expect that we might find that the students joined this discussion so that I could learn from my students as well as providing expert advice. We will discuss this more at our next meeting, and ask for any thoughts from faculty senate at large.

2. Schedule 25 (Ruth Dyer, Chair). We have one committee representative committed to attending these meetings and reporting back to the committee as a whole. They are forewarned to invite the committee chair to visit FSCOT meetings at their earliest convenience so that our involvement may be more productive.

Another committee member raised the issue of Technology Classroom policy that seems to fold into Schedule 25 with respect to little I understand about it. Their view is that the department put considerable resources into development of the classroom and now has no control on scheduling, because the classroom has become attractive for others.

We had no time for a report this month, because of discussion of web access for the handicapped. Would you please e-mail me what you learned by attending committee meetings for Schedule 25? I will report what you send me to faculty senate at our next executive and full faculty senate meeting.

3. Choices of Portal Software (Jane Rowlett Chair). Tweed Ross attended this month's meeting of the selection of portal software meeting. He has the slide handouts Jane thoughtfully prepared and showed to us, and will mediate between their discussions and ours on these and related issues. To derive maximum benefit from her presentation, Jane promises to give us the website where we can look at the slide presentation and prepare questions for her presentation at our next meeting. As of 10/24/01, this presentation was not as yet available on the web.

We had no time for a report this month, because of discussion of web access for the handicapped. Tweed, would you please e-mail me what you learned by attending committee meetings for Portal access? I will report what you send me to faculty senate at our next executive and full faculty senate meeting.

4. We did not discuss intellectual property (main responsibility of Vicki Clegg, Chair FSFAC) this month, but committee members interested in this policy were to have sent comments to Vicki or myself (I forward any comments to chair person Clegg). My Web access committee will call Vicki Clegg and get the address of the Intellectual Property write up, so that they can make comments directly to her.

No new issues were brought forward at this meeting. Gary Leitnaker contacted me to serve on the subcommittee for IRMC. He is checking with Dr. Unger to see if IRMC needs an FSCOT representative. Dee Takamoto our past FSCOT chairperson continues her membership on IRMC. CITAC (I was on the executive board and chaired a subcommittee on the future of information technology in the last year and was reappointed to CITAC as of 10/22/01) has not met. Dr. Unger has asked to receive copies of our minutes so that she can advise us of emerging issues and has agreed to attend as time permits. We welcome her advice.