

Minutes
Kansas State University Faculty Senate Committee on Technology
April 1, 2004 - 2:00 PM - K-State Union 205

Members present: Haddock, McHaney, Knapp, Rintoul, Ross, Simmonds

Guests: Mel Chastain, Lloyd Walker, Neil Erdwien

(Simmonds participation in the meeting was limited by video conferencing problems.)

Mel Chastain, Director of the Regents Educational Communications Center, reported on KAN-ED and K-State initiatives with KAN-ED. KAN-ED is a statewide venture involving hospitals, libraries, K-12 schools, and institutions of higher education. It is a "network of networks" created by leasing telecommunications facilities and equipment to create a statewide backbone. The network is composed of peered sites from carriers such as SWB and Cox Communications and managed sites in areas where there has been little broadband coverage. Jerry Niebaum put together the plan that designed the technical network. The objective is to create a statewide network that will allow members to access quality high-speed content and services and to engage in video conferencing. Some KAN-ED content is free and some is provided on a cost-shared basis. KAN-ED is leasing telecommunications facilities and equipment to create this network. One of the challenges has been to provide access to all areas of the state. About 75% of KAN-ED members will be connected by the end of this summer. KAN-ED was created by an act of the Kansas Legislature in 2001. It will sunset in June of 2005, but can be renewed if its value and benefits have been proven. The universal service fee that is paid with telephone and cable bills provides about \$10 million a year toward support of KAN-ED. Governance of KAN-ED is through a user advisory council, regional delegates, and an administrative staff reporting to the Board of Regents. K-State sought and was awarded a contract to produce a portal for KAN-ED. A pilot portal was delivered to KAN-ED in December 2003 and will be made available to the membership and public this spring. K-State is involved in a number of additional initiatives with KAN-ED including video trailers, Spanish for Kansans, and IDIQ framework for interaction.

Lloyd Walker, Project Manager, Data and Information Administration began his portal report by noting that work K-State did on the KAN-ED portal and lessons learned are being leveraged into development of the K-State portal. The decision that K-State would host the KAN-ED portal occurred during the spring of 2003. A prototype was first developed followed by a pilot portal for members to determine what requirements are needed. A full version KAN-ED portal will be in production this spring. This is the same process being followed in the development of the K-State portal. A prototype for it was created in January 2003, with the help of a consultant from Oracle. The K-State Portal Pilot Project phase got underway in October of 2003. Actual design work is scheduled to begin this month. Portlets that will be included in the K-State pilot portal: Netscape Calendar, Digital Library, HRIS, DCE Survey System, KEAS, Collegian, KATS, People Directory, K-State Online, E-mail, and some Campus EAI Portlets. Campus EAI is a

consortium of universities that facilitates collaboration between institutions in regard to certain products. One Campus EAI area of interest to K-State is LDAP. Testing will be an important aspect of the pilot project. Various focus groups will be used in the testing phase. One such group will be for Scholars and Faculty. Haddock noted that he had asked for volunteers to participate in a faculty user advisory group at the December 2003 Faculty Senate meeting, but had received no responses. Rintoul suggested that Faculty Senate Committee on Technology should logically serve as the focus group when it comes time for testing. Other interested faculty would of course also be welcome to participate. Ross asked that the record show that he is very concerned that adequate resources are provided for the portal. If it is a priority for the university to have a portal, money and people need to be assigned to accomplish it. Other FSCOT members agreed with this view. Walker stated that development and test servers have been purchased and are here, though they are not yet all being used for portal work. He also distributed a Portal Position Statement that is available at the following URL: <http://www.ksu.edu/InfoTech/news/vpast/2004/portal.html>

The statement does a good job of explaining the difference between a portal and a website. Walker felt that it was a positive development that the issue of portals came up in the recent student government elections. FSCOT encourages interaction in the coming year between the student portal project and the university portal team.

Neil Erdwien, Computing and Network Services Web Technology Manager, reported on the Portal SWAT Team activities. It was decided early in the process to use the Oracle portal product because there were no out-of-pocket costs. However, during the course of the KAN-ED pilot portal implementation, limitations and inadequacies with the Oracle product were encountered. A primary problem is lack of import/export functionality. There were numerous other problems, so a "Portal SWAT" was formed to look at long-term solutions. The intent is to evaluate available portal software and reach a conclusion as to whether Oracle's product is the best strategic fit for K-State. A large list of products was looked at, and narrowed to six products that truly focused on portals: Sun, IBM, Oracle, uPortal, Vignette, and Weblogic. The Portal SWAT is to deliver a recommendation report this month. Walker announced that the LASER project had provisions for the hiring of two portal developer positions mid-way through the project. The search process for those two positions has just begun. The hope is to have the individuals in place by the end of June. This will greatly facilitate the creation of the pilot portal.

Haddock reported on the April 29th Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting. The resolution drafted by FSCOT on online grade submission was distributed. Dr. Andrew Barkley and Registrar Monty Nielsen spoke to the issue. All parties support the capability to submit grades online but differences exist regarding timelines and implementation requirements. Some Executive Committee members expressed concern that limited resources might be used to implement an interim solution and additional resources would later be expended to implement a full solution. Others wondered if there were higher priority technology projects that might compete for the limited pool of IT resources. Names of individuals associated with this issue who were previously unknown to FSCOT were mentioned. Executive Committee moved and

approved an amendment to the resolution. The following resolution will be on the agenda for the April Faculty Senate meeting:

**RESOLUTION
ONLINE GRADE SUBMISSION**

Whereas online grade submission could provide a significant gain in efficiency to Kansas State University, could enhance the accuracy, storage, and transmission of grades, could be particularly beneficial to faculty who manage grades for large classes, could be made available on a voluntary basis to encourage gradual adoption, be it hereby resolved that the Faculty Senate of Kansas State University supports the expeditious creation of an electronic means for faculty to submit final course grades to the Office of the Registrar. Faculty Senate Committee on Technology is asked to work with interested faculty and the Registrar to report back by the October 2004 Faculty Senate meeting on estimated time and effort required to implement stopgap measures.

Haddock also reported that Executive Committee approved the creation of a task force on TEVALs and evaluation of teaching. Faculty Affairs, Academic Affairs, and FSCOT are each asked to forward a name to Bob Zabel of someone from the committee willing to serve as a representative on this task force. David Rintoul volunteered to serve as the FSCOT representative to the TEVAL Task Force.

Haddock reminded everyone that he will be stepping down as FSCOT Chair and will be going off Faculty Senate in May. He asked that any committee member who has an interest in serving as chair next year, to please let him know, and he would pass the name on to President Zabel. The Constitution of the KSU Faculty Senate states: "The chair shall have at least one year (preferably two years) of experience on the FSCOT. The chair of FSCOT is an ex officio member of faculty senate with voting rights."