

**QCC Academic Senate
COMPUTER RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT

To: Phyllis Pace, Secretary, Steering Committee, Academic Senate

From: Philip Pecorino, Chairperson

Date: September 10, 2002

Subject: Annual report of the Committee on Computer Resources for 2001/2002

Members:

Hamid Namdar, Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology
Sandra Marcus, Library
Philip Pecorino, Social Sciences
Mark Van Ells, History
Patrick Wallach, Mathematics and Computer Sciences

Ex officio: George Sherman, Director, Office of Information Technology (IT)

Regular Guest: Bruce Naples, Director, Academic Computing Center (ACC)

Other Guests: Paris Svoronos, Chemistry; Dwight Meyer, Biology and Geology.

The committee met eight times. As part of its regular agenda it receives reports from the Director of IT and from the Director of ACC whenever they are present. The committee thus receives some information concerning computer resources and their uses. Some of this was reported in the newsletter produced by the committee.

NEWSLETTER

Much of the Committee's work has been devoted to communications regarding technology on campus. This has primarily involved publishing a newsletter each semester. The newsletter was presented to the community in an email with a pdf file attached. After three years of such newsletters the preparation and dissemination of a newsletter has been halted by the Steering Committee of the Senate. Professor Norton Reid cited the fact that such activities were not in the charge to the committee. Until the charge of the committee is revised or a new directive is issued by the Steering Committee, there will be no further newsletters. (A request for such a revision was sent to the Committee on Bylaws.)

ADVISORY FUNCTION

At the suggestion of Bruce Naples the Committee voted in the spring of 2001 to serve as an advisory group to the Academic Computing Center; this role has not been actively set in motion.

While Bruce Naples announced to the community that the committee would have a role in the selection of candidates for the Fall 2001 Perkins III Faculty Development Project and although there was a timely offer in June of 2001 to assist in this process there were no further communications from the ACC.

COMMITTEE CHARGE

Pursuing a matter originating with the 2001-2002 committee, by way of a meeting and e-mail vote, the Committee decided to submit another proposal to change the charge of the Committee, the number of members and the name. The proposal below (see A) was sent to the Committee on Bylaws and a revision of it was sent to the Academic Senate for action during the Fall of 2002.

EMAIL SYSTEM

The committee discussed the matter of the QCC Email system with regard to access to the EVERYONE distribution list. The committee was prepared to send a recommendation to the Senate but instead at the direction of the Steering Committee it sent a recommendation to the College Administration. This was reported to the Senate at its April Meeting at which President Eduardo Marti asked Vice President Howard Lapidus to prepare a response for the next senate meeting. There was no such response at the next meeting, however, there was a reformulation of the email system and the creation of the Community Dialogue Distribution list from which participants may withdraw by sending a request for such to IT. This was issued through a President's Office Policy Memorandum (II,1) communicated to everyone. The Committee is not pursuing this matter further.

CODE of USER RESPONSIBILITY

The committee discussed the matter of the QCC Code of User Responsibility for the Use of Computers. The committee compared the existing code to the CUNY code and the Corning Community College Code and found that there were some matters not covered and drafted another version. The committee was prepared to send a recommendation to the Senate but instead at the direction of the Steering Committee it sent a recommendation to the College Administration. This was reported to the Senate at its April Meeting at which President Eduardo Marti asked Vice President Howard Lapidus to prepare a response for the next senate meeting. There was no such response at the next meeting, however, this recommendation led to a President's Office Policy Memorandum (II,2) communicated to everyone. The Senate Steering Committee and Faculty Executive Committee and PSC Chapter have been engaged in communications concerning the enforcement of this code.

MAINTAINENCE and UPGRADING of COMPUTER RESOURCES

The committee took up the maintenance and upgrading of computer resources. It sent a recommendation on a policy to the Academic Senate for the April Meeting. The Senate asked for revisions and the revised proposal for a policy was sent to the Academic Senate for its May meeting at which it was approved. (see A below)

ACADEMIC SENATE WEBSITE

The committee has been called upon by the Steering Committee to consider the Academic Senate website. The chairperson of the committee will serve as Liaison for a period of less than one year while the Steering Committee finds someone to serve as website liaison on a regular basis.

QCC WEBSITE

The committee will be focusing on the QCC website during 2002-2003 in order to supply assistance to the webmaster on its design and functioning.

SAFETY and PROTECTION of RESOURCES from FIRE

The committee voted to send a memo to the Administration concerning Fire Prevention in QCC Computer Facilities (see below-attachment C). There has been no response to the committee as of September, 2002. It is believed that there is a lack of appropriate equipment and training to deal with fire in computer facilities and to safeguard computer resources as much as may be possible with trained QCC personnel taking immediate actions.

WEEKEND SUPPORT for ONLINE CLASSES

The committee voted to send a memo to the Administration concerning support for Online Instruction over weekends (see below-attachment D). The committee was informed by Bruce Naples that there would be no one to monitor the condition of the computer servers for internet access to the classes over weekends in order to restore their functioning if needed. There are long term plans to provide for backup servers or farms but until that happens should the equipment fail over a weekend there would be no one to reset them until the next weekday the college is open for regular classes. In the event of such equipment problem students would be physically prevented from entering their classes because the college does not provide for someone to reopen the electronic doors to their classrooms for them. Fortunately such problems have occurred on weekends only a very few times since the opening of the Online classes at QCC. Since that time, however, the number of classes and students using the online course management program has increased dramatically and such an equipment problem would produce a great hardship for those learners who do much of their academic work on weekends.

COMMITTEE GUIDEBOOK

The committee chairperson has prepared a GUIDEBOOK for the committee as aid to new committee members. It is to be reviewed by the committee and then placed on the committee website to be made available to all new members.

REVIEW of TECHNOLOGY PLANS

The committee briefly examined the QCC Technology "Plan". It shall look at it in greater detail along with the Student Technology Fee "Plan" during the 2002-2003 year.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

For 2002-2003 the Committee will have the following faculty members:

Kolios, A.	Business
Marcos, S.	Library
Pecorino, P. (chair)	Social Sciences
Rogers, R.	Art and Photography
Wallach, P.	Mathematics
Gerson, T. M.	Liaison/Com on Com

Philip Pecorino was reelected chairperson for the 2002-2003. He thanks all members of the committee for their efforts and support. Mark Van Ells has served as co-editor of the newsletter. He now moves on to another committee. Former committee chair, Dwight Meyer, has maintained an interest in the committee's activities and has at time provided valued feedback to the current chairperson.

A. Request sent to the Academic Senate Committee on Bylaws

MOTION: to Change the Committee Charge in the Academic Senate Bylaws

From current charge:

The Committee on Computer Resources shall:

- a. Survey all the computer resources of the College at regular intervals and report to the Academic Senate on the quality and quantity of these resources.
- b. Report and recommend to the Academic Senate on matters involving present and future utilization of these resources.
- c. Evaluate and report to the Academic Senate on the policies, services, and facilities of the Data Processing Center and all academic departments.
- d. Report to the Academic Senate on all computer-related College activities such as registration, faculty research, library, use of local and remote (i.e., CUNY, etc.) computers, educational uses, etc.
- e. Act as a general advisory group on computer resources.

To:

The Committee on Computer Resources shall:

1. As deemed necessary, report to the Academic Senate on developments and problems regarding information technology at the College, particularly as it relates to academic computing and computer resources. Report and recommend to the Academic Senate on matters involving present and future utilization of these resources.
2. Advise and assist the Academic Computing Center with respect to faculty and staff technology training, academic web sites, and general educational use of information technologies. Report and recommend to the Academic Senate on matters involving present and future utilization of these resources.
3. Report to the Academic Senate on all computer-related College activities such as registration, faculty research, library, use of local and remote (i.e., CUNY, etc.) computers, educational uses, etc.
4. Make recommendations and/or institute methods of keeping the College community informed about information technology utilization, developments, and policies.
5. Act as a general advisory group on computer resources and provide liaison members to committees concerned with information technology.

The Committee Name:

If the charge is changed to that proposed, it seems only fitting that the name be changed to Committee on Information Technology.

The Number of Committee Members:

This Committee has experienced problems regarding availability of members. It seems invariably there is a problem of conflict of time that precludes all members from attending meetings. Perhaps more important, there is a need for a pool of people experienced in various aspects of information technology. This pool is needed to make contributions to Committee business such as policy considerations, contributions to the newsletter and now to the task of advising the Academic Computing Center. Because of these considerations we ask to have the number of regular members of this Committee increased from 5 to 7.

B. Policy approved by the Senate in May, 2002.

Whereas, computer resources are nearly ubiquitous in American society and in higher education and;

Whereas, such resources are being relied upon for communication and instruction at QCC;

Whereas, such resources are already essential components of many of the QCC academic programs and fast becoming so in many others;

Whereas, such resources are being used as a means for providing instruction and a means of communication and are as chalk, erasers, copy machines, telephones, slide projectors and other such devices have been;

Be it resolved that:

- A. The Senate maintains that it is the responsibility of the College for the upgrading of hardware and software as are involved in the instructional program and such responsibility for the upgrading of hardware and software will not be placed on individual academic departments.
- B. The Senate recommends and expects that by 2005 the QCC Strategic and Technology Plans will provide for the yearly upgrading of computer resources so that by 2008 there are no such resources that are more than seven years old (exceptions being made by request of the users and for special purposes related to instruction in such hardware).

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C. Memo Concerning Fire Prevention in QCC Computer Facilities

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QCC COMMITTEE on COMPUTER RESOURCES

An Academic Senate Standing Committee

Date: April 18, 2002

To: Mr. Joseph Cunningham, Director of Security and Safety,

Senior Vice President Howard Lapidus

From: Philip A. Pecorino, Chairperson, Committee on Computer Resources

Subject: Fire Prevention in QCC Computer Facilities

The Academic Senate Committee on Computer Resources has voted to forward this recommendation to you and include it in its report to the Academic Senate.

Fires in rooms with computer equipment.

The use of the fire hoses in the various QCC buildings is not the correct response to an electrical fire in a computer facility.

The approach used by the NYFD and recommended throughout the world is to use other chemical fire suppressors, such as described below. (see attachment)

We recommend that a survey of such facilities be conducted and appropriate measures taken. We know of such facilities that have nothing other than a fire hose located somewhere nearby.

We are concerned for the safety of those in the facilities and for protecting the college's resources. We are also concerned for the College should the authorities learn of this unintended lapse in providing appropriate fire response devices.

Thank you.

D. Memo Concerning Weekend Coverage for Online classes

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QCC COMMITTEE on COMPUTER RESOURCES

An Academic Senate Standing Committee

Date: April 18, 2002

To: Senior Vice President Howard Lapidus, Vice President Robert Kahn

From: Philip A. Pecorino, Chairperson, Committee on Computer Resources

Subject: Weekend Support for College Servers

The Academic Senate Committee on Computer Resources has voted to forward this recommendation to you and include it in its report to the Academic Senate.

At the current time QCC has computer servers that host and operate the college website and the distance learning instructional program.

The servers provide for these services, among others:

- **online registration**
- **access to email for faculty and students**
- **websites with instructional materials placed there by faculty**
- **the Blackboard Course Management Program for Online Courses**

Over weekends there are no personnel to attend to these servers should a problem develop. When the servers have “gone down” there has been no access to those services until Monday morning when personnel attend to the servers and take the appropriate actions to restore services. During the period of time the servers are not operating the students in online classes are in effect “locked out” of their classrooms during times when instruction and exercises are scheduled. For students needing access in order to complete their assignments on time this is a major problem.

IT has set up a cluster of servers that reduces the likelihood of their needing attention over weekends. ACC has requested such but has not as yet installed this security measure.

We recommend the following:

During the weekends the College could designate certain personnel, perhaps on a rotating basis, to monitor the servers from off campus and should the servers need attention that person would go to campus and do what was required to restore the services.

In this manner there would be coverage without needing to have someone on campus over weekends when not needed.