

Minutes of the Information Resources Advisory Committee
October 1, 2004

Present: David Anderson, Chair; Tom Bressoud, Scottie Cochrane, Joe Fleming, Mike Frazier, Aaron Fuleki, Sandy Mathern-Smith, Tim Miller, Seth Patton, Scott Siddall.

This was IRAC's first meeting of the 04-05 academic year. The chair described his aspiration for IRAC for the year: (1) to maintain an appropriate balance in its work among all of the areas that fall within its purview, and (2) to focus on strategic rather than mundane issues. There was general consensus that this was a good plan.

Four documents were distributed: the committee's charge, from the *Faculty Handbook*; the "suggested elements of a Vision for computing at Denison," which IRAC generated last year; "Envisioning a 21st-Century Information-Rich Environment," the vision statement on IRAC's webpage; and, from Aaron Fuleki, a compendium of strategies adopted by other institutions to deal with internet slowness.

As part of maintaining an appropriate balance among the areas within IRAC's purview, the chair proposed beginning each meeting with brief reports from Auxiliary Services, the library, and computing.

Mike Frazier reported that the telephones and cable are working! He also reported on the AEP fiber project. We have signed contracts with AEP to run the wire that will connect Denison to OARNET's Third Frontier project. That's the good news. The bad news is that AEP cannot promise completion of their work before the end of February, 2005. Two easements also need to be obtained, but we are confident that will happen.

Scottie Cochrane described the Mellon-funded Denison-Kenyon work redesign project in the technical services area of the library. This project seeks to merge some of the technical services operations in the two colleges' libraries in order to free staff time for other work, specifically electronic resources. The work redesign plan is scheduled to be rolled out on October 18, 2004 and implementation is envisioned for July 1, 2005. The larger question of how to approach the cataloging and preservation of digital materials was briefly discussed and then deferred for a future discussion of strategic issues for IRAC to consider.

Joe Fleming reported a pressing issue from computing: the internet is slow. The solution to this problem is not a technical issue, though the 3rd Frontier project and the new firewall project might mitigate the slowness. The root of the problem is the kind of use that is being made of the network, namely peer-to-peer file sharing, mostly among students. The volume of this P2P sharing has slowed the internet for Denison users to less than dial-up speed at some times. The solution to this problem may be to impose a band-width quota on individual users (but not on lab computers, from which P2P sharing cannot be done). The quotas would not impact on-campus academic uses of the network but would limit the amount of P2P sharing individuals could engage in. Quotas could be imposed in a variety of ways, and there may be other solutions as well. IRAC asked

computing to select and to begin implementing one of those solutions now, as the need is urgent, and to bring to IRAC next week its proposed solution for consideration. Mike Frazier reminded the committee of the need to communicate the issue and the solution to students. Joe Fleming will write a statement to students describing the problem and its causes and alerting them to IRAC's consideration of solutions.

Scott Siddall reported another urgent problem: the server on which Blackboard is running is sub-optimal, and we need to begin planning now to migrate to a different solution for Blackboard. There may be costs for hardware and staff. Computing was asked to make a proposal for how to deal with this problem.

IRAC meets again in one week's time in the same place to receive the reports on quotas and to develop its list of strategic issues to discuss this year.