Meeting Notes by CeCe Rohwedder
Approved on November 1, 2012

Present: Rian Nostrum, Chair; Matt Bains, Aaron Banister, Anne Denton, Gary Fisher, Jim Hammond, Sydney Hull, Tanya Kramer, Stanley Kwiecien, Tyrell Martin, Galen Mayfield, Marc Wallman, CeCe Rohwedder (by phone)
Absent: William Hess, Dustin Mueller, Anita Welch, David Wittrock
Guest: Jean Ostrom-Blonigen

Rian called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Motion (Kwiecien/Banister) to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2012 and October 5, 2012 meetings as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Review: copies of the “Division of Information Technology Anticipated Student Technology Fee Budgets, FY13-FY18,” spreadsheet were distributed and reviewed. Changes since the last presentation of this document include: the impact of the loss of NDUS funds was moved down and is now a placeholder rather than part of the calculations; a formula error was corrected.

It was noted that the IT Division is matching expenses with revenue, both for equipment and personnel, and that student technology fee funds are utilized primarily for services that are as closely and directly impacting students as possible. Clarification was provided regarding the percentage of the FY13 IT Division budget that comes from the student technology fee. It was also noted that as salaries and fringe benefits increase every year, the percentage of student technology fee funds utilized for such, also increases.

It was requested that a comparison of student technology fee usage be made for FY11, FY12 and FY13; trends would also be identified by such a comparison. This will be provided at the next TFAC meeting, along with details of the FY13 budget.

There was a suggestion that NDSU administration push for an increase in appropriated funds dedicated to IT, so that the students would not have to increasingly bear the cost for IT.

The upcoming merger of DCE, the IT Division and NDSU Libraries will certainly impact the units’ budgets; no financial details are known at this time.

Efforts to save money through the incorporation of new technologies such as virtualization and ImageNow are being made, but such savings are mostly experienced by the various campus entities, not primarily the IT Division. These departmental savings would need to be returned to the general fund for campuswide redistribution, if the IT Division were to receive some of this benefit. More detail on these savings was requested. It was noted that the financial benefit is not the only benefit: improvements of services and processes are also beneficial to departments.

Marc stated that the IT Division is close to stabilizing its budget; when this has been done, the division will be able to focus on what it can do.

Once the bonds being paid by the ConnectND fee are paid off, each NDUS institution should begin to keep a percentage of this fee; however, we have been given to understand that this may not be allowed to happen. Currently, the ConnectND fee is $6.75 per credit, and our student technology fee is $8.12 per credit. NDSU caps fees at 12 credits.

Awards Process for Fall 2012 and Spring 2013: It was noted that one of the functions of TFAC is to research and enable new technologies for the campus, and this will be difficult to accomplish if...
the group will not have opportunity to invite action plan proposals. Such proposals are often pilots and thus help identify potential pitfalls and problems before an investment is made in a new technology. NDUS is making the decisions and selections on some of the technologies we use.

Marc indicated that the Provost suspended action plans this year in order to avoid reductions in force in the IT Division.

Possible Student Technology Fee Increase Request: the campus cap for fee increase requests that do not require SBHE approval, is that they total not more than 1% of tuition. Marc stated that a review of what our peer institutions have for student technology fees will be presented at the next TFAC meeting.

Funding Needs: copies of the “Funding Needs for NDSU IT Services” document were presented and reviewed. It was noted that Google would be cheaper than WFS for students. The costs of our Tegrity needs are being calculated.

A recent study of the usage of computer clusters, conducted by NDSU’s student government, resulted in the recommendation that no clusters be eliminated; a copy of the study results will be made available to TFAC prior to its next meeting.

The question was posed regarding whether there are plans to cut costs anywhere; for example, whether refreshing every four years instead of every three, would save money. Marc replied that such plans have been considered, but the additional costs incurred for having to fix the more frequent problems of older machines counteract the savings of less frequent refreshing. Additionally, students’ expectations of computers available to them are high, and we try to meet them. More and more students bring their own devices to campus, which results in wireless becoming a greater need. Switching from Blackboard to an open source Learning Management System would also save NDSU money, but the University System would likely try to prevent us from making a change like this.

Next Meeting: another TFAC meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible to continue today’s discussion.

Motion to adjourn (Hull/Bains). Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.