

IRC Meeting Minutes
May 11, 1999

Present: Amelia Rauser, Karl Broekhuizen, Alice Dean, Fran Hoffmann, Susan Zappen, Bob DiSieno, Ruth Copans, Mehmet Odekon, Jane Graves, Leo Geoffrion, Ken Hapeman, Mike Gittelman, Stanley McGaughey, Ann Henderson, Jennifer Taxman, Phyllis Roth

1. Minutes of May 4 were approved.
2. Leo Geoffrion asked for the council's response to Tom Lewis' comments about the email policy. No issues were raised.
3. Phyllis Roth attended the meeting to discuss the coming months of preparation for the discussion of Information Resources at Skidmore and the positions most closely involved with these resources (i.e., College Librarian and Director of CITS). The goal is to have the task force in place and begin meeting this summer, the positions advertised by early fall (by October) with an anticipated starting date of Summer 2000.

Karl Broekhuizen and Phyllis Roth will write the charge with input from CFG. The charge will be in assessment language. CFG recommended that the task force (most probably a subcommittee of IPC) have faculty members elected from each of the four following committees: CEPP, Curriculum Committee, IPC, and IRC. Bob DeSieno will chair the task force. There will also be representation from CITS and the Library. In order to keep the task force to a manageable size, Phyllis Roth acknowledged the need to have persons from various departments research the issues to be brought to the task force by a representative.

A present or past IRC member on the task force can bring the historical view from the council. Jane Graves suggested there is sufficient representation from IRC, the library, and CITS. The council felt there was still a need for a faculty representative.

The task force report will chart the objectives for information resources at Skidmore for the next 5-8 years. The task force will not make any decision, but rather present the report to President Studley in the fall for her decision.

Ruth Copans asked if the charge would be affected by possible changes in the administration. Phyllis Roth stated that the charge should include a number of scenarios on the best way for the organization to work. An example, if the college has a Provost, is a Chief Information Officer needed?

A discussion of the issues to be brought to the task force took place. Susan Bender will forward issues from the college librarian search committee. Leo Geoffrion stated that one key issue would be how to cope with increasing demands for support with information resources. Karl Broekhuizen stated that we must be mindful of the current functional responsibilities that exist in both the library and CITS. The library has many responsibilities not affected by computers and CITS is responsible for areas such as telecommunications and hardware. Bob DeSieno stated the information resources 'wash' over all areas. Susan

Zappen stated that information resources in the library are much more than the computers, the computer is just a tool used to access those resources.

Alice Dean asked about the possibility of a merged organization. Ruth Copans stated that the library and CITS have co-existed successfully and questioned if a CIO is really needed. Bob DeSieno suggested that a history of how the library and CITS have worked together would be helpful for the task force.

Ken Hapeman stated that it is easy to define the ideal position, but often hard to fill. Ken mentioned the CLAC survey of computing organizational structures. Only 3 of the 56 reported an all-encompassing structure.

The following reports will be shared with the task force: Middle States (last review of the library), the IRT Report, and Brian Hawkins report. Ann Henderson suggested giving the task force the same questions posed to Brian Hawkins.

Mehmet Odekon inquired about the CITS structure, separating administrative and academic computing. Karl Broekhuizen explained the history of computing and CITS at Skidmore and that the current structure is not atypical for institutions similar to Skidmore.

Ruth Copans asked Leo Geoffrion if he would be troubled with the structure should administrative and academic computing split. Leo replied that it would be difficult undoing what has been integrated over the past 10 years, one would need to separate what is no longer separate. The dominant trend in college computing is to move away from having separate operations. Stanley McGaughey mentioned the issue of resources, there are often too few to meet the needs of users.

Bob DeSieno cautioned the council about being too comfortable with the current structure. Even though all has worked well in the past, we still need to ask hard questions about the possible organizational structures. The council felt that there must be a demonstrable gain and justification for whatever decision is made.