

IRC Meeting - October 20, 1998

Present: Bob DeSieno, Karl Broekhuizen, Leo Geoffrion, Ken Hapeman, Chris Doherty, Susan Zappen, Ann Henderson, Roy Meyers, Mehmet Odekon, Viviana Rangil, Ruth Copans, Alice Dean, Frances Hoffmann, Stan McGaughey, Colleen Bodane.

I. Minutes From October 6, 1998

The minutes were approved as submitted.

II. Bob introduced the major item on the agenda , responsible use of campus information technology, as being complicated and connected with copywrite issues, which will be discussed at a subsequent meeting of IRC. Discussion today focused on two topics: appropriate use of IT, and related privacy rights.

Bob asked, 'What constitutes unethical use of information technology?' A policy on ethical use of IT will need to include 1) what rules do we wish to enforce, and 2) which campus organizations would enforce the policy?

Leo said that the Social Integrity Board has ruled on three cases involving misconduct in computer technology, but they only had jurisdiction over students.

Ken reported that CAFR has been reluctant to assume a role in enforcing policy on appropriate use of IT (though IRC has received from the DOF a declaration by CAFR expressing willingness to serve when improper use of IT is intertwined with issues of academic freedom and rights.)

Mehmet declared that the campus should use elements of the existing governance system to handle policy on appropriate use of IT.

Leo raised the issue of examining electronic files of people suspected of violating appropriate use of IT and reminded the Council that there are no rules or guidance from the governance system to instruct people on what is permissible. In this circumstance, no action is available to check on possible violations.

Fran asked whether the issue was one of academic freedom, and if there was existing case law on this issue?

Susan said that she attended a workshop through Cornell that dealt with computer policy and law. They advised using existing campus bodies to handle IT use issues. There should be no distinction between paper and electronic files.

Alice said she believed that CAFR's role was to hear cases brought to them, and not to set policy.

Leo said that the original e-mail privacy policy written in 1991 had been presented and approved by ACC. It was intended to provide policy on e-mail problems. The campus has been reluctant to employ this policy in the few occasions of apparent violations of proper use of IT.

Susan said that at other colleges/universities the complaints about improper use of IT can go to any administrative level including the president's office. At some institutions, they have set up response teams to deal with problems quickly.

Ken noted that there was not an equitable approach to improper use of campus IT. For example, there are well defined approaches to dealing with violations by students, but no apparent means for dealing with violations by faculty.

Mehmet recommended that the concerns of IRC be conveyed to CFG, and that the Council request a response and guidance from CFG.

Ken reminded the Council that the policy approved by ACC is on the WEB site, and Leo said he believes that the ACC approved policy applies college-wide.

Mehmet expressed his reservations about going into people's files, and wanted to refrain from establishing a policing system.

Fran said that there are existing campus judicial structures. What is needed is a strong message from this group that this your responsibility. The second issue is the gathering of evidence which is separate.

Stan asked whether a faculty member could hide behind academic freedom if the faculty member was involved in a death threat?

Bob summarized by saying that it looked like there was enough passion to put something together. He asked for three people, and included himself as one, to draft policy guidelines and convey them to CFG for their review and response.

Leo volunteered to help Bob with this task, and Bob asked Mehmet to join the group because he is a member of CFG.

Bob said that they will draft a document as an approach to a policy, and asked if there were other agenda items for today.

The next meeting will be November 10th in Dana 181 at 3:30 p.m.. The October 27th meeting was eliminated from the schedule. Discussion of the proposed IT budget for FY 2000 is on the next agenda.

Colleen Bodane