

**Academic Services Committee  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
January 27, 2014**

**Committee Members Present:** Sonit Bafna (committee president), Denise Johnson Marshall, Helena Mitchell, Carrie Shepler,

**Not present:** Peter Hesketh, Arjun Meka, Susan Wells Parham, Michelle Powell (Executive Board liaison), Amy D'Unger, and Kristin Butler

Sonit Bafna called the meeting to order at 12:10pm.

There was not a quorum present, so December meeting minutes need to be approved via email at a later date.

Sonit Bafna reported on his December meeting with Robert [Kirkman](#) regarding upcoming changes to faculty and staff organization/classification and possible ramifications of the proposed change of the committee name from Academic Services Committee to Faculty Services Committee.

- Denise Johnson Marshall commented that since the committee is being renamed "Faculty" services, then there might be no need to continue having a student representative. She noted that the student representatives have not participated much, and the name change emphasizes that this membership is not needed.
- Sonit Bafna replied that his point to Robert [Kirkman](#) was that "academic" didn't apply to the category of faculty but to the types of services in which the committee is interested.
- [Kirkman](#) confirmed that the proposal focuses only on changing the committee name and not on changing the purpose or duties of the committee (which have always been somewhat amorphous).
  - There is a separate review of all committees ongoing. No action has been taken so far, but some changes may result down the road regarding our charge.
- Regardless of name, our committee will have both academic and research faculty (new labels). Other committees will be one or the other.
- *The committee members present agreed that the name change is fine, though Denise Johnson Marshall agreed with some reservations.*

Spring agenda:

- Accessibility is an on-going topic of discussion.
  - Denise Johnson Marshall reiterated from our previous discussions that there is no guidance system regarding accessibility for faculty members in place. She suggests that an effort to put in place a system should be coordinated through CETL (Center for Enhancement of

Teaching and Learning) since they interface with educational technology such as clickers.

- Denise indicates that a system, Vendor Profile for Assistive Technology (VPAT) exists, and if it were used appropriately then these issues would not arise. IRB Wise is example of inaccessible product that should have been "caught" using the VPAT system.
- Denise and Helena Mitchell indicate that Dr. Jenny Singleton currently heads a subcommittee of President's committee on access.
- Michelle Powell submitted this addition to the minutes via email:  
*The president has a working committee on the topic of accessibility for students (508 compliance). We may want to hear about any policies/procedures from them. Lori Sundal in EAS/OIT is a member of the committee and as mentioned in the minutes Dr. Jenny Singleton. I think we should see what they are working on as they might already have a structure in place to be collecting this type of information and also have an individual in OIT that has software to check its 508 compliance/non-compliance status.*

*There seems to be some misunderstanding about IRB Wise, it isn't commercially available to campus so a VPAT wouldn't have 'caught' anything since it wouldn't be required. It was built in the early 2000s and has only had minor updates. So even though technically 'exempt' per what we understand the GT policy to be we are working on getting it accessible. Additionally, our offices are working with OIT to ensure that any products we procure do have a VPAT.*

*I really don't think it is appropriate to get into the he said/she said on this, but as soon as it was made aware to us that the IRB Wise system wasn't 508 accessible, we began working on remediating this problem.*

*Please feel free to share with the committee as I want to be as transparent as possible when it comes to ensuring we meet the compliance issue.*

*We want to do the right thing not because we 'have to' but because it is the right thing to do. We believe that accessibility shouldn't be an issue. We were simply unaware of the problem but once informed are working on fixing the issue. I am truly trying to share what I've learned in this experience.*

- Sonit Bafna suggested that the committee should generate a small report collecting all issues such as IRB Wise in one place, perhaps with recommendations of potential solutions. Denise Johnson Marshall

commented that the ASC could partner with other campus committee that could lend support to ongoing issues.

- Sonit Bafna requested that someone volunteer to draft a document. Denise Johnson Marshall asked what information should be included. The committee members present generated a list: 1) issues to address, 2) a list of all systems where issues might already exist and departments that are impacted by them, 3) other people/committees that are already working on these issues, 4) recommendations that specific groups on campus should take certain actions.
- Denise Johnson Marshall volunteered to write a draft document to circulate to the committee and reiterated that CETL would be a good leader to address accessibility issues. If they don't think they have the expertise, then consideration will have to be given to how to give them resources.
- A discussion of other committees and people on campus already working on accessibility issues ensued.
  - Archie Ervin (vice president for Institute diversity)
  - Taskforce on Aging and Disability
  - Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA) and Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC)
    - The former now is run on soft money, and the latter is part of the USG (and so can more easily obtain a monetary boost when needed).
- Services such as continuing education and professional education
  - Sonit Bafna commented that academic services refers to those given to us as faculty in support of what we do (research and teaching) but also services that academia can provide to the community [at large, beyond the institute](#).
  - The discussion turned to the library and MOOCs.
    - Perhaps the library could have a space for community information gathering (info on registering for ACA, etc.).
  - The question arose regarding why MOOCs were not the purview of professional education?
    - MOOCs appeal to people already online. How can we make them appeal to those that aren't already pursuing education, etc.? Courses could be developed on an on demand basis.
  - The group agreed that there should be a coordinated effort provided by Tech to the "outside" community.
    - Denise Johnson Marshall commented that this is in alignment with the model of "One Georgia Tech" and encouraging collaboration.
  - Denise Johnson Marshall asked for an update on the previous ASC effort to look at ongoing education with alumni.

- Sonit Bafna commented that he is unsure, but he will try to follow up on this. Amy D'Unger attempted to speak with the Alumni Association, but she got -no response.
- *Sonit Bafna will start working on a document to outline this idea more fully.*

Denise Johnson Marshall commented that the committee could invite guest speakers to assist in examining the two issues above more fully. A list of potential speakers:

- CETL (Denise Johnson Marshall would like to invite them to the February meeting)
- Someone in Continuing/Professional Education and/or the library (Sonit Bafna will make contact)
- George Write, director of distance learning (to give overview of how MOOCs on campus)
- Paul Baker, associate director C21U (MOOCs)
- Nelson Baker, dean of professional education (MOOCs)

Schedule for rest of semester

- *Carrie Shepler will send out an email with the proposed schedule:*
  - February 24, 2014 from noon to 1pm
  - March 24, 2014 from noon to 1pm
  - April 21, 2014 from noon to 1pm

Response to Master Plan

Sonit Bafna requested that any comments regarding his draft response be sent to him. Amy D'Unger suggested (via email prior to the meeting) that we request a more concrete timeline from the Master Plan committee.

Sonit Bafna adjourned the meeting at 12:56

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

*Carrie Shepler*

Carrie Shepler  
Secretary, Academic Services Committee