Minutes of Student Computer Ownership (SCO) Committee Meeting on 02-Sep-2008

Attending: Christos Alexopoulos, Lori Critz, Miles Edson, Jon Giffin, Lisa Spence, Alex Taubman, Bruce Walker

Absent or Excused: Monty Hayes

Ajai Karthikeyan, Jarek Rossignac, and the freshman student representative did not attend as they had not yet joined the committee.

We elected a committee chair for the 2008-2009 academic year. Christos nominated Jon, Bruce seconded. No discussion or alternate nominations. Motion carried: chairperson will be Jon Giffin.

We discussed the tension between student flexibility in choosing hardware, an operating system, and applications, and faculty needs for specific software requiring specific system configurations. Similarly, we discussed the challenges introduced by multiple operating systems and multiple versions of even a single operating system. OIT is looking at virtualization as an avenue for greater flexibility; Lisa offered to push this focus within OIT. This solution is limited by the current lack of a campus-wide license for Microsoft Windows, the software of greatest need.

We plan to prepare a position paper arguing in favor of campus-wide licensing of VMware virtualization software and Microsoft Windows operating system software.

We discussed general software availability for students. We concluded that the campus should identify student software needs and should create a well-defined policy or stance on student software licensing and distribution. The SCO committee can act on behalf of students in these matters; this may be a topic for continued discussion in upcoming committee meetings.

We considered moving towards specialized hardware and software requirements based upon a student's degree program or anticipated course load. The committee plans to investigate this option; the investigation will consider mechanisms to acquire needs information from instructional faculty and mechanisms to present the information to students.

We discussed moving course software demands towards the purchasing model used for textbooks. Students would purchase software for courses through the GT bookstore in the same way that they currently purchase texts.

Next meeting to be held in October.