RACC meeting
Minutes of July 17, 2008
3:00-4:30pm Tech MG-51/Wieboldt #421


Agenda:
I. Data Center Projects Status
II. Administrative systems subcommittee report
III. Research subcommittee report

I. Data Center Project Status

Tom Board presented the projects in four categories: 1. completed, 2. under construction, 3. being planned, and 4. under consideration.

1. Completed projects

- LG87 is substantially complete. The contractor is working on a punch list of items identified by the engineering firm. Tom expects that NUIT will begin moving clusters into the room the week of the July 28th, with help from McCormick IT. The target completion is the end of August. Given that LG87 is fully committed, Rich Lueptow asked how incoming faculty could be accommodated. Mort Rahimi expressed willingness by NUIT to explore those needs. Jim Hurley commented that the Office of the Provost, NUIT, and others must have more information about the actual needs. McCormick has been upfront with this, but little has come from elsewhere. Jim also said that faculty offers must be better aligned, in advance, with the resource needs to support them.

- The Chicago backup generator was changed over the July 4th weekend. There is now an additional 50kW of power available in that data center. Mort Rahimi and Jim Hurley underscored the need for schools to make known their needs for central space in order to best allocate resources as they become available.

2. Projects under construction

- The Evanston data center HVAC upgrade has begun construction with the placement of piping below the floor. The project remains on target for January 2009 completion.
• The outside engineering firm continues to design the refurbishment of the Evanston power plant. This project is estimated to be completed by June 2009.

• Facilities Management is upgrading the utility feed to the Chicago data center - doubling it from 800 to 1600 amps. This is scheduled for completion in August. Tom mentioned that distribution of the additional power will become a new project (below).

• Tom reported that work to date on the central research cluster has been focused on vendor briefings from and visits to IBM, HP, SUN, and Dell. Design work on the cluster will be based upon the results of the research subcommittee’s findings. Vicky Kalogera asked if there would be sufficient power and cooling available for the cluster prior to June 2009. Tom said that resources would be reserved for it.

3. Projects being planned (unfunded)

• NUIT and FM will study needs for a new power distribution approach for the Chicago data center shortly after the increased utility power is available.

• An enlarged Chicago data center would be needed to fully utilize the increased utility power. FM has provided a construction estimate to NUIT for planning purposes. This will be compared against other options as they become known.

• Enlarging the Evanston data center into the mailroom is under detailed study by WMA as part of their work on the Evanston electrical project. Jay Walsh asked if the mailroom could be relocated. Tom reported that space had already been prepared for the mailroom to move within 2020 Ridge.

4. Projects under consideration

• Off-campus spaces. Conversations continue with potential commercial space providers. Mort Rahimi reported that there may be an opportunity to occupy space at a UIC data center.

• New construction. Planning for a new data center will be most directly influenced by the research subcommittee’s report.

II. Administrative systems subcommittee report

Betty Brugger reported and highlighted specific points in the subcommittee’s report. Please see the report document on the RACC Web site.
• Betty noted that report particularly highlights issues surrounding disk storage capacity. Interest in retaining information online, policies and compliance rules requiring retention of information, and insufficient means to archive and preserve information have driven expanding use of online storage. Sarah Prichard added that archiving institutional digital assets a major issue yet to be addressed. Jay Walsh noted that retrieval of information from archives would be another concern. Betty said that while the University was coming to some decisions about information retention policies, there was no campus-wide discussion of when or how to capture and preserve information. In summary, administrative functions will need more and more data storage as time goes on.

• Another area of note was identity management, where the report suggests that more standard processes and tools be put in place to handle the increasing need to provide access to non-University persons.

III. Research subcommittee report

Vicky Kalogera reported on the results of the faculty survey. The discussion was wide-ranging over needs for more processing, memory and storage. The final subcommittee report will be completed by the end of July. Please see the slide deck on the RACC Web site.

-- Tom Board