

UCSC Learning Technology Committee 2004-05 Report

prepared by Chair Ruth Harris-Barnett

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The Learning Technology Committee met six times during the academic year. During this time, LTC focused on two issues:

I. Instructional Resources on Faculty Portal

John Wallace, information architect for AIS, consulted with LTC to get feedback about the instructional resources that will be listed on the Faculty Portal. LTC offered advice on both content and layout/presentation of these resources. While progress was made on focusing the content of the Instructional Resources “pagelet”, as well as the more extensive listing of instructional resources, LTC noted that both content and navigation options seem to be severely constrained by the software. At this point, our understanding is that two high priorities for LTC—customizability of the Faculty Portal page, and drop-down menus for the pagelets—are not possible with current software constraints. Furthermore, we were limited to reviewing paper versions of the portal, because guest access and a live “beta” version of the portal are not available.

II. Funding priorities for campus instructional technology

In response to a request from Information Technology Committee, LTC began in fall quarter on an ambitious project to recommend funding priorities for instructional technology. This project occupied most LTC meetings throughout the year. As a first step, the committee established a basic list of learning technology services that should be considered, along with potential goals for each (see Appendix A). Most of these areas are already operational at some level on campus. While we would like to stress that all services and programs listed on the table play an important role in instruction at UCSC, LTC has identified certain areas as in need of immediate attention. The committee further recommends that budgeting priorities be developed strategically, creating capacity for anticipated needs.

Immediate priorities

Overall, LTC notes that infrastructure to support instructional technology development on campus is severely under-developed. Basic technology infrastructure must be in place before faculty can be expected to go to the work of undertaking time-consuming course development. Three immediate needs were identified:

1. Complete **classroom equipment upgrade** process initiated by Media Services, bringing all classrooms on campus up to at least the level of the “Media I package.” This will ensure that faculty can expect a minimum standard level of technology for any classroom to which they are assigned.
2. Make **internet connections available in all classrooms**. This will necessitate a change in the funding model for network connections. Under the current model, Media Services is recharged for both the initial hook-up and monthly connection charge for all classroom connections. The Media Services budget is not structured to support the recharge for all classrooms on campus. LTC notes that instruction is the fundamental mission of the

university, and one unit on campus should not be recharging another for basic instructional needs.

3. **Integrate the campus course management system with AIS**, enabling a seamless population of class lists and submission of grades and narratives from the CMS. The course management system (whether the campus elects to stay with WebCT or migrate to another product) will never get really widespread use until these basic functions are automated. The skills of faculty support professionals in FITC can then be used for more substantive course development and faculty training, rather than mechanical tasks.

Expansion of faculty support

LTC strongly supports the creation of a robust faculty support and instructional development team on campus. However, we agree that infrastructure must be in place in order to make instructional development feasible. LTC recommends faculty support staff funding be planned strategically:

4. Some **basic bolstering of faculty support is necessary immediately**, to accommodate growing enrollments (which have not been kept pace with over the past few years), and increasing faculty interest in learning technology, especially as a solution to pressing problems of large courses.
5. **Further expansion** of faculty support should be planned to take advantage of infrastructure expansion outlined above. It is crucial to plan ahead to have faculty support in place as infrastructure is put in place, or this new capacity will go unused.

Additional infrastructure needs

Three further infrastructure needs were identified to respond to growing faculty interest in these areas. While less fundamental than the three areas named above, LTC notes that all of these services are in widespread use on other campuses across the country.

6. **Classroom response systems** (“clickers”). Of growing use in large courses nationwide, particularly in sciences and engineering, as a means of improving active learning in lecture courses. These systems are not particularly expensive, as compared to other technologies. The campus should keep a close watch on the current pilot project in Thimann 3, and consider expanding it to other large classrooms. It will be important to identify one standard product to support, rather than allowing a proliferation of different systems.
7. **Web archiving**. This technology has been shown to improve learning through enabling students to review lectures as many times as they need to. Several courses have been served under Media Services’ pilot program, and more could be served if funding were available for expansion.
8. **Wireless expansion**. The current wireless network has been deployed primarily for use outside of the classroom. Development of a robust wireless service to support instruction (e.g., available in classrooms) would enable development of more innovative classroom approaches.

Establish funding process

LTC was limited in its ability to establish funding recommendations by a lack of information and uncertainty about the process. For instance, priorities were set in the absence of actual budget numbers that might have enabled the committee to weigh cost-effectiveness of various projects.

We were also limited in our ability to gather information widely from faculty (e.g., through focus groups) by the sheer magnitude of the task, and a lack of any staff assigned to the committee. Finally, we weren't sure at what point in the year our recommendations would be most effectively submitted.

Hence, as a final recommendation, LTC would like to see a regular process established for identifying the campus's instructional technology priorities. This process should give faculty a role in setting priorities, and also help them to understand resource constraints as well as communicating to them decisions about what technologies and services will ultimately be available.

LTC appreciates that the process of reorganizing the instructional technology services on campus is currently underway, and would like to continue to play a role in that effort. During the next academic year, we would like to be in a position to offer recommendations on crucial decisions that may be made about IT services, including a review of the course management system. Because of the way LTC is structured, an effective way of involving it in decision-making would be for unit staff to gather and present information, and request LTC input based on the information.

Appendix A
UCSC Learning Technology Funding Categories
 Compiled by Learning Technology Committee 2004-05

Note: Underlining indicates areas identified as needing immediate attention.

Area	Possible Goals	Rationale
Classrooms		
<u>Classroom Media Equipment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Complete scheduled upgrade process</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent suite of equipment for all classrooms
<u>Classroom network connections</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Should be internet access in all classrooms</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently recharged to Media Services ▪ Funding model reform issue
Equipment configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Placement of screens so they don't block writing boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructional issue because it affects how instructor can teach
Audience response systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify campus standard ▪ Install in selected classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improves active learning in large lecture courses.
Student computing labs		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimize hours, equipment ▪ Equipment replacement funds, including monies to purchase laptops for wireless use in labs. ▪ Provide specialized academic software for student access on their own computers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish priorities for lab use: e.g., provide hardware, or support student laptops. ▪ Instructional needs should drive lab funding.
Faculty support / Instructional development		
<u>Faculty support</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Increase support to "catch up" with faculty/student increases over recent yrs.</u> ▪ <u>Increase outreach to faculty</u> ▪ 5-year process: contact all faculty & assess needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faculty indicate they have no time for add'l tech development. ▪ High need (otherwise funding for equipment unnecessary)
Instructional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personnel to help in course technology development ▪ Electronic portfolios for sharing syllabi, teaching materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of technology calls for increasingly specialized instructional design expertise.
Web-based instructional resources		
<u>WebCT</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Interface WebCT with AIS</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crucial if increased web-

		based course development is to take place
Alternative LMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate Sakai, LonCappa, other open-source LMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn from experiences of other campuses, and select best option for our needs.
Web archiving of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solidify funding and allow for possible expansion of program (i.e., more courses or additional functionality) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost-effective enhancement for large courses.
Servers for instructional projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have dedicated servers and support in place for instructional projects (e.g., databases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many new projects hampered by lack of available server space.
Instructional web site accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate faculty ▪ Redesign course web sites to comply with accessibility guidelines ▪ Establish compliance policy/procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal compliance issue ▪ Easier to educate faculty & staff now than have to re-build web sites.
Online courses		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide funding for development ▪ Develop linkage to AIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to determine campus priorities, goals for online.
Wireless		
Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wireless available in additional classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wireless can support innovative pedagogies. ▪ Coordinate with classroom and lab priorities.
Labs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More wireless labs to support group work 	