Re: Academic Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) final report (2023-24)

Date: April 15, 2024

Committee Members

Sanish Rai, Chair	Scott Chapman	Stephaine Buchert	Sarah Reynolds
Pamela Randall	Yiwei Zhao	Mike Waddell	Steven Hoehner
Stephanie Watts	Kim Redford	Ashley Leslie	

Report

Computer lab space changes:

Kim Redford reported that computer lab utilization is down. This is the case at Longwood and also a nationwide trend that is a current topic of discussion in higher education and at Educause. Department Chairs from English and Modern Languages and Math and Computer Science have approached IT requesting that the computer labs in their areas be decommissioned and that those spaces be converted into traditional classrooms. Both of those transitions took place over winter break.

Kim shared that most of the computer labs on campus have 24 or more computers that are replaced on a 4–5-year cycle at a cost of approximately $25,000 per lab. Kim asked that committee members take this information back to their departments and start to have conversations about the utilization of the labs in their space. Kim provided the following statistics regarding unique logins in the computer labs for the Fall 2023 semester:

- Chichester G13 – 100
- Hiner G11 – 125
- Hiner G16 – 240
- Hiner G20 – 51
- Greenwood Learning Commons – 843

ITS will utilize LabStats, a software for monitoring lab computer and software usage that will provide more detailed information on the usage to allow for informed decision-making regarding the labs.

Faculty Infographic: Kim Redford shared an infographic that Meg Thompson, former chair of the ATAC, worked on with the committee last year. The infographic includes information about software (Microsoft M365, Adobe Creative Cloud, SPSS, Qualtrics) and services available from ITS and the DEC. It was suggested that we might want to send via email as faculty return for the semester.

Canva/Adobe Express: Committee member Pamela Randall discussed that many faculty and students use Canva and a paid subscription with more features than a free version would be

beneficial. Sarah Reynolds mentioned that Longwood has a paid subscription to Adobe Express which is similar to Canva. Committee members discussed using a survey to evaluate the utilization of Canva university-wide. Ashley Leslie and Pamela Randall designed a survey and it was shared with the faculty. Ashely Leslie shared the results with the committee. There were 70 respondents with 67% utilizing Canva,16 % used free, 16% personal paid, 16% department paid and 2% other. 81% mentioned they would use Canva if provided by University, and 80% would ask students to use it. Only 45% were aware that University had paid subscription to Adobe Express and only 25% currently use Adobe Express. While the survey results show that faculty prefer Canva, current DEC or ITS do not have fund for it. It was discussed to train faculty on using Adobe Express and DEC may offer some workshops after Summer.

Email Exchange Upgrade: Kim Redford reported that IT is in the process of upgrading the Exchange (email) server. Users will notice some changes in Outlook Web Access (OWA) but functionality will remain the same.

Distance Learning Space upgrade: Kim shared that some funding is available immediately for upgrading an academic space for distance learning. The plan is to eventually upgrade one space per college for improved distance learning experiences. At this time Hull 248 has been approved for the upgrade and other departments can also schedule meetings there by contacting the department. Rotunda 352 is also in discussion for the upgrades.

Teaching hardware/software for faculty: Committee members discussed the need for new teaching hardware and software and how to obtain them. Sarah Reynolds shared that the Library has ETF funds for hardware purchases and that departments can let the library know if they need new hardware and they can review it. Kim Redford stated that IT has a pool of Apple and Dell laptops, portable screens, and projectors available for checkout by faculty and staff. A request form for this is found on the Help Desk Solomon website. Members also discussed various other technology needs of the faculty such as the use of two monitors for the office, polling tools with unlimited time slots, better captioning software, teaching hardware and software

Respectfully Submitted,
Sanish Rai