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4-23-2015

Motion for the University of Maine and University of Maine System to provide IT Support for the Academic Mission

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IT Support for the Academic Mission

Background:

Between 2005-2014 the University of Maine and the University of Maine System spent tens of millions of dollars on information technology (IT) with a focus on accounting, human resources, fundraising, marketing and NCAA compliance. During that same period the Unified Fee (established in 2004, previously levied as a Technology Fee) collected some \$1.5 million annually in instruction-related technology fees.¹ Few corresponding funds have been given to support academic IT at UM in its mission to enhance student education. Evidence of the negative effects of such disparity in commitment over the past decade can be seen in the deteriorating and/or inadequate technology-integration of many campus classrooms. Classrooms that enable education to thousands of students each week lack computers (for instruction), adequate hard-wired network access, and computer display technology. Faculty must bring computers (laptops) into their classrooms as well as any speakers, document cameras, or other classroom technology they need. Faculty wishing to access the Internet to enhance teaching must use a wireless network² at speeds across campus ranging 2-10 Mbit/s (download) and 1-7Mbit/s (upload), depending on network traffic and congestion. These speeds do not meet the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) definition of "High Speed Internet."³ Furthermore, although a majority of classrooms have display technologies, many of these are unreliable, insufficient for class size, or too dated to process sufficient information.

Motion:

Motion: The Faculty Senate calls on the University of Maine and the University of Maine System to prioritize proper financial support of academic IT at UM by directing appropriate resources to meet the teaching mission of UM, including directing technology funds collected under the Unified Fee, to provide and tri-annually update:

- 1) Networked computers in classrooms for teaching;*
- 2) Dedicated technology-enhanced classrooms supporting technology-intensive teaching;*
- 3) A high-speed (FCC's current definition) wireless campus network system that provides reliable access for students and faculty in any size classroom;*

¹ Estimate based on 10,000 students per year, 30 credit hours per student per year, \$5 fee per credit hour.

² Wireless access is required because a classroom network port is set to trip whenever a computer is physically disconnected from it. Once tripped, the port cannot be used to access the internet until it has been reset by UMS IT staff

³ The FCC defines high-speed Internet as a minimum speed of 25 Mbit/s (download) and 3 Mbit/s (upload).

[Citation?]

- 4) *Updated and modern display technologies in large classrooms and rooms identified for technology-intensive teaching;*
- 5) *Hardware and site-licensed software sufficient to facilitate research, teaching and student learning; and*
- 6) *Short- and mid-term plans for technology migration into classrooms, to be developed and annually updated jointly by the Faculty Development Office and IT and presented to the Faculty Senate each spring semester, with progress reports to be presented to the Senate each fall semester.*

To ensure timely support to students and faculty this program must be in place prior to the start of the 2015-16 academic year.