

Information Resources Council
Annual Report 2006-07

The Information Resources Council met thirteen times during 2006-07. Membership of the IRC was as follows: Phylise Banner, Leanne Casale, Ruth Copans, Beth Dupont, Joanne Devine (spring), Cameron Dunn '07, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress (Chair), Hassan Lopez (fall), Margo Mensing, Tom O'Connell, Justin Sipher, and Mike West.

In April of 2006, FEC, IPPC, and SGA approved a proposal that the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) chair the IRC, a change reflecting the new administrative structure. Since the Dean of the Faculty (DOF), the Chief Technology Officer, the Director of the Library, the Registrar, the Director of the Tang Museum, and the Dean of Special Programs are all members of the VPAA's staff and since these administrators or their designees are also members of IRC, it seemed to make sense to shift the leadership of this group from the DOF's office to that of the VPAA.

This year's IRC continued to serve as a forum for conversation and recommendations about various matters related to information resources and technology. With a very few exceptions, the meetings were open to the entire community. At the first meeting, the Council reviewed IRC's function, role, and membership; noted the IRC presence in the Strategic Plan; and reviewed agenda items inherited from last year's IRC; subsequently, via email, the chair also invited agenda items from the community at large. For this year, the group decided to focus on fewer topics and explore them in more depth. Those topics are listed below with a summary of the discussion in each case

Information Literacy and Research Skills:

At the request of Ruth Copans, the Council devoted several meetings to discussions of information literacy and its growing complexities for both students and faculty. The group considered the formation of a task force to study the issue and commissioned

approved the idea of a Library-sponsored institute for faculty. Next year's IRC will evaluate the summaries from department chairs and determine next steps.

Students and Technology:

IRC devoted two sessions to this general topic. A Skidmore student and employee of Audible.com, described a process to allow students to access lectures online: students would record faculty lectures and post them to Audible.com. Only students who had attended class would be able to access the online lectures. He proposed piloting the project with a few classes. IRC posed numerous questions about the quality of teaching and learning under these circumstances, the likelihood of restricting access, the ownership of the lectures, and the difficulty of getting wide-spread faculty approval. IRC recommended that the student contact SGA to ascertain the level of interest from students and report back to IRC if the students urged further consideration.

A faculty member requested advice about the use of laptops during final examinations. IRC noted that students with documented special needs may use laptops, but there is no institutional policy guiding other use. IRC discussed the honor code, the feasibility of configuring laptops to limit applications, equity for those students who do not own laptops, the procedures followed at laptop campuses, and the likely distraction for both students using the laptops and others in the classroom.

Betty O'Connor with the providers), and we have increasing confidence in the system, even as we are committed to making further improvements. Oracle's purchase of PeopleSoft greatly enhances Oracle's presence in the educational market; Oracle plans to merge its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system with that of PeopleSoft to create a new system (Fusion). The first installment of this new interface will be delivered in 2008; the complete Fusion system will be in place by 2012. The College faces major decisions in coming years as staff members deal with both the questions associated with upgrading the system and the resources required to implement those improvements.

IT Updates:

In January 2007, Justin Sipher presented the IT Capital Projects Requests for 2007-08 and outlined the IT plans to phase in the MicroSoft VISTA operating system. In February, IRC welcomed the new Senior Instructional Technologist in Academic Technologies, Ben Harwood

Membership of IRC for 2007-2008:

Next year's membership is as follows: Phylise Banner, Leanne Casale, Ruth Copans, Beth Dupont, Joanne Devine, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress (Chair), Margo Mensing, Roy Meyers