

The charge to the University Computer and Electronic Communications Committee (FSUCECC) is to “recommend policies designed to meet the educational and administrative computer and electronic communications needs of the campus.” During the academic year 2001–2002, the FSUCECC met six times, considering the following major agenda items:

1. In Spring, 2001, a faculty member raised a complaint about being denied access to the Senate’s own e-mail list; the Senate Secretary asked the FSUCECC for advice. The FSUCECC decided that rather than respond to particulars of the case, it should try to formulate a general policy on access to, and use of, e-mail lists. Such a policy, involving thorny legal, even constitutional, as well as pragmatic considerations, was discussed repeatedly throughout the 2001–2002 academic year. The Office of Information Technologies (OIT) had already promulgated a policy governing e-mail lists maintained on its own servers, and the committee is still attempting to fashion a more comprehensive policy based in part on that one.
2. The Rules Committee requested FSUCECC review of the proposed Minor in Information Technology. The FSUCECC reported to the Senate Secretary and the Program and Budget Council its concern that the proposed minor would create additional demands upon already stressed and inadequate campus computing resources. But the committee concluded, nonetheless, that these additional demands would be just a small increment to currently unmet needs—not enough to militate against approval of the minor—and that the new minor might, in fact, attract funding for new resources.
3. The FSUCECC requested and received from OIT verbal reports about progress on, and capabilities of, the PeopleSoft Student Information System (SIS). The committee was impressed with some of the stated capabilities, including a more user-friendly registration process for students than the current telephone system. It noted, however, that the new instant, guaranteed-registration process, to replace the current pre-registration system, will pose difficulties to which instructors and departments must adapt. FSUCECC members were distressed at how limited SIS support was going to be for faculty instructional needs; for example, SIS would not, in the immediate future, include a full-fledged gradebook or an interface for uploading computer-based student evaluation data already collected by instructors. The FSUCECC was informed that such limitations were due, in part, to the constrained budget for adapting the PeopleSoft software to local needs: the University was spending for adaptation only 1/2 to 1/3 of what has been spent elsewhere. FSUCECC members were also concerned whether advisors would have ready access to computers during counselling periods, and whether faculty will be sufficiently informed about functionality and use of SIS.
4. The committee heard the dismal news about personnel reductions at OIT and especially the loss of 6 to 12 staff members in OIT’s Academic Computing division. It learned that budget cuts were expected to force OIT to target printing supply costs and to reduce software site-license subsidies (the latter of which could result in cost-shifting to individual colleges and departments).