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I would like to ask Senate Council to consider a proposal for the creation of a new standing Senate Committee for Information Technologies. There may already be university-wide mechanisms for faculty input regarding IT that could render this proposal unnecessary; if so, this process could perhaps serve to identify those alternatives.

Rationale: The only formal, structural channel I am aware of for faculty input regarding IT falls under a very limited portion of the charge to the Senate Facilities Committee. Their charge is:

“The Senate's Academic Facilities Committee (SAFC) is charged with the responsibility of providing information and recommendations to the Senate about the alteration, construction, and allocation of all property and physical facilities that may affect the educational objectives of the University. In this regard, it shall be concerned about such matters as classrooms, buildings and grounds, shops and other such real property, audio-visual and television equipment, computers, duplication and printing facilities, vehicle pools, and scientific and musical instruments.”

Note that “computers” are listed there among many other physical assets, but this is a very narrow view of IT. Information technologies are highly integrated into all aspects of the University’s mission. The many systems in use (BlackBoard, Exchange, SWEB, Sharepoint, WWW, etc.) collectively represent a huge investment by the University. It is desirable to maximize their potential and the perspective of the faculty-user is essential to that goal. Therefore, I think it would be useful to have a dedicated conduit for such input that is separate from the broad charge of the facilities committee. The primary function of this new committee would be to create a formal channel for information from the university, as well as input from the faculty to the administration, regarding IT system selection, implementation, administration, and effectiveness. It is my opinion that issues pertaining to the coordination and use of these systems, communication about them between the university and the faculty-user community, their support, and related policy decisions would benefit from a formalized mechanism for faculty input, suggestions, and comments. In addition, a Senate IT committee would be the logical place for vetting future revisions of the ARs regarding IT policies, such as those that came to the Senate last year. Further, this committee could identify candidates for other IT-related committees that require Senate representation, such as University Web Advisory Committee.

We have a standing committee for Libraries charged “with the responsibility for recommending to the University Senate policies to promote the educational interests of the University as a whole with respect to the Libraries” and regarding “matters...which pertain to improving the

effectiveness of the Libraries as a part of the broad academic program of the University of Kentucky.” The Facilities Committee already mentioned acts to “Serve the administration as a source of faculty information and opinion about the need, design, and priority and construction or renovation projects.” I see an analogous role for this proposed IT committee. In addition, there are precedents for IT Senate committees at other universities; for instance, the University of Minnesota has such a committee (see <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/committees/scit.html> for more information).

Possible charge: The following is an attempt to develop a charge consistent with that of other Senate committees:

The Senate's Information Technologies Committee (SAIT) is charged with the responsibility of providing information and recommendations to the Senate about the selection, development, distribution, implementation, administration, and assessment of information technologies (IT) that may affect the educational objectives of the University. The committee is charged with the responsibility for recommending to the University Senate policies to promote the educational interests of the University as a whole with respect to IT, and to advise regarding matters pertaining to improving the effectiveness of IT as a part of the broad academic mission of the University of Kentucky.

Specifically, the committee would act:

1. To serve the administration as a source of faculty information and opinion about IT needs as well as its development, implementation, and effectiveness.
2. To make recommendations to the Senate on matters concerned with policies and administration of information technologies.
3. To advise the administration, review major initiatives and propose new initiatives for the deployment and advancement of information technologies.
4. To coordinate recommendations with the appropriate Senate and non-Senate University committees.
5. To recommend to the Senate such actions or policies as it deems appropriate in the area of campus IT.