OR Senate and TMC/ technology questions for Bob Montgomery

Response from Bob Montgomery 4/9/15

1. What are the chances for upgrading options in D2L?

Montgomery Response:
This is actually a system-wide setting so it affects all users. This needs to be approved by academic leadership. This is why David was told we (IT) could not help him in this particular situation...but that it would be brought to the attention of someone "higher up the food chain". We will take it forward for to Tim Sherwood for consideration.
If approved, the change would be implemented between semesters. With D2L upgrading to the Continuous Delivery "version" over December holiday, it would be an ideal time to make such adjustments.
4/23 Update:
I believe (from what I've been told) that Dr. Sherwood approved the change to D2L to restrict students' ability to edit posts after they are submitted.
We plan to implement the change on May 7 before the start of the summer term and not wait until the upgrade in December.
Kayla Leblanc and Kelly Hyduk are putting the word out to inform D2L-using faculty but I wanted to touch base with you directly since this was a recent inquiry.

2. About the proposed mandatory orientation class for online students, how would a one credit mandatory class be housed in a discipline? Or how could it be run without being housed in a discipline? Courses are normally created and run by an academic discipline.   This question has not been addressed by the DL EMP to my knowledge (A. Walaskay)

Montgomery Response:
This is an academic leadership decision. The DL Committee proposed that an orientation to online learning be required for all students looking to register for an online class. It was discussed at a recent DL Committee meeting that this free online course should be available all year to provide the most options for students. This is under consideration by Cathey Maze and Tim Sherwood at this time.

3. A bit more explanation of the TAUR application on the point below. Is this saying that what happens on the OCC Wi-Fi is not monitored by the college?

Related to administration monitoring what people are doing on the OCC Wi-Fi, there is an automatic application to send the Wi-Fi users outside of the firewall, enforced by an access control list (software policy) that takes you outside the OCC network to protect the College, students and employees.

Montgomery Response:
While there is an automatic routing of the traffic to the Internet, the traffic passes through the firewall. The Administration has the ability to monitor all traffic entering and leaving the college network, both wired and wireless (Wi-Fi).

4. In the past we have discussed some disciplines' need to update equipment more regularly.   Would you like to comment on this process and explain about IT priorities for equipment purchases and how unique programs can be adequately supported?

Montgomery Response:
I believe that the current computer replacement policy is an appropriate balance between cost and

performance. To help offset the impact of using a computer longer we have upgraded the hardware specifications to extend its useful life. For example, the MACs at OR are ordered with more RAM to manage the greater demands placed by the newer software. However, we are investigating the cost/benefit of a schedule which would replace some (faculty, staff, and some classroom) computers on a 6 year schedule and the savings would fund moving selected classroom and labs to a 4 year schedule.

Additional questions generated at the March 2015 campus senate meeting:

1. D2L storage capacity: files with images are a problem. Would prefer to keep as "images" rather than converting to a PDF. What can be done?

   Montgomery Response:
   For the sake of the students, we advise instructors to take into consideration the size of the files they are uploading because students may have difficulty downloading the large files. There are not any system restrictions that prevent users from uploading large files, such as images and other rich media. However, we highly recommend using best practices when developing content. For example, images are not deemed accessible on their own merit. For a screen reader to interpret an image, the instructor must include descriptors for the image. This is just one example of how we encourage faculty to develop their content with universal design in mind. We also have other options for faculty to enhance their D2L course(s) with multimedia. Our streaming server solution is more effective at delivering rich media and is less taxing on the D2L system.

2. Printer hook-up: Not all faculty have printers in their office. For those who have challenges with that (i.e. privacy issue when printing to a publicly located computer or time consuming because it's in a separate building). If the faculty purchases a printer to help them in their office, why can't IT hook it up for that faculty member?

   Montgomery Response:
   If the phrase "faculty purchases a printer" is describing a personally owned device: The college does not endorse nor does it support the use of personally owned devices with the current exception of allowing employees to use personal smart phones and tablets to retrieve college email and/or access the student Wi-Fi (OCC Internet). For printers which are purchased by departments: For several years the IT Department has not installed, maintained, or repaired desktop/inkjet/office style printers due to the poor reliability and high total cost of ownership. We have been working actively with Sarah Rowley and our managed printer vendor to migrate these printers to networked, workgroup printers equipped with print release features to ensure confidential documents are delivered privately.

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