Report on the Computing Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) Meeting

The Computing Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) met on April 6 to discuss the state of computing services within the college as well as future directions for computing for Engineering. As usual, the committee was pleased with Jackie Carlson’s and the rest of the DECS staffs performance in dealing with a very challenging role.

The biggest challenge facing computer services in the College of Engineering is the lack of computer lab and meeting spaces for undergraduate students. DECS is continuing to develop remote desk stop services (RDS) to help alleviate this problem. The usage of RDS has been increasing steadily and past issues of poor connection speed have been remedied. A seat finder application is also being developed so that Engineering students can find available seats in a computer lab on their mobile device.

A system center configuration manager for managing large groups of computers is being implemented. A classroom management software package to aid teaching and enhance the classroom experience is also ongoing. Lab printers are on a refreshment cycle and this year new color printers were purchased. The 3D printing capacity has increased and new capabilities are being investigated such as larger model build and higher resolution printers.

There has been an increase in security issues and monitoring both across campus and within Engineering. As a result increases to security monitoring within the building include: intrusion prevention (ongoing), network vulnerability (ongoing), virus scanning (ongoing), encryption (coming soon), and two-factor authentication (coming in the future). Students and faculty are also being encouraged to migrate to network storage to protect data against ransomware attacks.

DECS is looking into virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) for hosting a desktop operating system within a virtual machine (VM) running on a centralized server. VDI is a variation on the client/server computing model, sometimes referred to as server-based computing.

Finally the M:drive storage quota will be increasing from 1GB to 2GB.