Fall 2009 IT FORUM
A response by the IT Committee to online feedback leading up to the forum

**Feedback:** We should provide support for student PCs  
**Response:** IT cannot provide a help desk for students. IT is prevented from working on personal equipment. One alternative would be to set something up through an academic department. Tom Childress, in the Electronics Department, is already involved in such an initiative, though it is informal. It is unlikely that they have the resources for any significant expansion. We may want to do some legwork and look at whether this program could or should be expanded--what would be the logistics and would it be sustainable if it were to become more formalized?

**Feedback:** Request for more installations of Dragon Naturally Speaking (speech dictation software) and more info on where it is available.  
**Response:** Dragon Naturally Speaking (DNS) would not lend itself to installation in multiple labs for the following reasons. Firstly, the software requires extensive customization to recognize the particular voice patterns of the user. To attain the greatest speech recognition accuracy, this customization requires long bouts of dictation by each potential user. It is designed to become gradually more accurate with repeated use by the same individual. Security software in most labs resets the computer to a default state after restarting; any customization done to DNS would be undone upon restarting the computer. Additionally, Voice dictation does not lend itself to a “quiet” lab environment and the background noise of noisier labs would not lend itself to accurate voice recognition.

**Feedback:** LRC should be open longer hours.  
**Response:** This is a budget issue. The LRC has reduced its hours to response to staffing shortages resulting from budget cuts.

**Feedback:** There is too much noise in LRC.  
**Response:** Talking is permitted at the public access computers on the 2nd floor of the LRC, but loud and disruptive behavior is not tolerated. It is in general difficult to manage noise in the computer labs and to serve the competing interests of collaborative work and quiet study.

**Feedback:** Too many different formats being used (html, Word, PDF, etc.) on the SCC web site.  
**Response:** Similar feedback was reported in the college accreditation report. As a result general web usability will have a renewed focus in the coming semesters. The college website no longer requires multiple logins. The formats reflect the source of original documents. It is a feature of Ingeniux that a document can “stay” in its original location (to be updated as needed) and be “pointed to” by Ingeniux to ensure up to date information.

**Feedback:** The Ingeniux template used to support easy website creation is too narrow, and makes it difficult to create content.  
**Response:** It is possible to create different templates to accommodate this, though the Public Information Office, who is responsible for the look of the college web site, might object to different widths being used. Jeff Karlsen will explore changes to the template with Quinn Nakano (college webmaster) and Elaine Ader (IT Dean).

**Feedback:** Wi-Fi network should be faster.  
**Response:** At the time this feedback was received the wireless network was transitioning from an open public network to one requiring authentication. The recent transition to an
authenticated network and bandwidth shaping of certain network protocols should result in increased speeds.

**Feedback**: Wi-Fi networks should be more reliable.
**Response**: At the Time of this feedback, the college Wi-Fi network was undergoing a transition to require authentication. We hope that it is now reliable and campus IT will respond to any reports of outages. Without more information about a specific problem, issues these are hard to diagnose.

**Feedback**: College is needlessly clamping down on e-mail communications between faculty and students.
**Response**: The Los Rios CCD is taking account of the requirements associated with FERPA. However, District legal counsel seems to have a different interpretation of e-mail privacy issues than was reflected in Catherine Fites' suggestion of a highly restrictive policy. It may be that iMail will need to be used more exclusively for official e-mail communication. Instructors should be explicit about how they are going to be communicating with students and include such information in their syllabi. The Committee agrees that there needs to be a clear policy governing these issues. Our hope is that the seeds of such a policy will emerge from DO's response to a recent formal student complaint.

**Feedback**: The College Disability Resource Center (DRC) should provide Macs to support Art and Graphic Communication classes.
**Response**: This would be expensive both for hardware and software (Adobe Creative Suite). The DRC does not have any free space, so a Mac would need to replace an existing PC. This should go through the Unit Plan process if the DRC decides it is necessary. There are already two ADA-compliant computer station in the Graphic Communication Lab.

**Feedback**: Publicly accessible computers in the Learning Resource Center are too slow.
**Response**: All computers in the LRC have been upgraded within the last two years. If a student runs into a particular problem, please let staff know at the time so that the problem can be addressed.

**Feedback**: The College should provide more Macs because they are better for disabled students.
**Response**: Ryan Glen (Disability Resource Center Educational Media Design Specialist) indicated that Macs do in fact have better accessibility support in the OS than PCs, even with the addition of screen readers such as JAWS. Questions were raised about what we are mandated to provide; this is to a certain extent a matter of interpretation. These issues are best worked out by the Disability Resource Center and should be reflected in their unit planning process.

**Feedback**: Password requirements are needlessly complex and need to be changed too frequently.
**Response**: Security threats are real, and these precautions are needed to make campus accounts sufficiently secure.

**Feedback**: We constantly need to log in to different systems.
**Response**: What we have now is unified authentication; the same user name and password works across multiple systems. There have been discussions about moving toward single sign-on, when there would no longer be a need to log in separately for separate services. There is some concern that single sign on may leave sensitive systems needlessly vulnerable, as logging in to your computer would automatically grant access to financial aid records, online grading systems, budgetary information and the like.
Feedback: E-Services/PeopleSoft has many unintuitive aspects, particularly during the registration process.
Response: Kim Goff (Admissions and Records Supervisor) reported that Student Services will meet with PeopleSoft to work on changes, which we should see in Summer. Unfortunately the "shopping cart," which causes much of the confusion, will remain.

Feedback: We should conserve power by turning off computers at night.
Response: Computer Services has installed an energy management software package on existing computers that will allow computers to go into sleep mode after a certain amount of non-use. Computer Services is currently evaluating the best settings to use with this software prior to implementation.