

# Annual Report of the Instructional Support Committee 2004-2005

August 16, 2005

## Membership

The voting members of ISC for the 2004 – 2005 academic year were Katya Gibel Azoulay, Bob Cadmus (chair), David Ellison (fall semester) Barb Trish (spring semester), Susan Ireland, Shuchi Kapila, and Mark Schneider. The non-voting members were Jon Chenette, Bill Francis, John Kalkbrenner, Christopher McKee, Avram Lyon (Student Academic Computing Committee), and Felix Zhu (SGA). Terri Phipps served as recorder and provided valuable assistance to the committee in a number of ways; the members of the committee are grateful for that assistance and for her skill and patience in translating our meetings into coherent minutes.

## Overview

ISC's responsibilities include both encouraging teaching initiatives and providing the support necessary for the successful completion of those initiatives. In more pragmatic terms this involves the distribution of funds for workshops and for projects proposed by individual faculty members and the recommendation of policies that facilitate the instructional mission of the college. During the 2004 – 2005 academic year ISC examined and streamlined its procedures for handling these tasks.

## Funding for instructional support

During this reporting period ISC distributed \$77,865 for instructional projects. Most of this total supported summer workshops and other “institutional” activities while the remainder was allocated to projects of individual faculty members. The Dean's annual report includes a summary of the kinds of projects that were supported. No request was turned down because of limitations on funds.

## Policy issues

**Library planning** – A proposal to renovate the reference area evolved into a much broader process of planning for the future of Burling Library to improve the likelihood that short-term changes would be consistent with major construction in the future. ISC was involved in this process in several ways: through internal discussions, through participation of ISC members in initial planning meetings, and through the participation of ISC members on the library planning committee itself. ISC members Mark Schneider, Christopher McKee, and Bill Francis serve on the library planning committee. This planning process continues.

**Search for Library Director** – This search process was only beginning as the spring semester ended, but ISC expressed its opinion that the Director should have faculty rank.

**Role of ISC in computing policy** – Both ISC and FOC considered the question of whether matters of academic computing policy should be transferred from ISC to a separate committee. The membership of ISC recommended against making that change at the present time because

the library planning process includes information technology planning and it therefore makes sense to keep both of these areas within the purview of a single committee. No new committee was created and ISC reaffirmed its role in matters of academic computing and instructional technology.

**Bookstore** – A member of the committee participated in the interviewing of a new bookstore employee.

**Computer use** – The committee dealt with several issues related to academic computing. Although faculty members of the committee expressed concerns about the Technology Discovery Center, these were not pursued to any significant extent because ITS appeared to be aware of the problems and to be in the process of addressing them. ISC may wish to revisit this issue next year. The character and management of the college's web pages were reviewed and several concerns, especially regarding the mechanism by which material is selected for display on the home page, were discussed with the webmaster. The committee also reviewed and approved proposals from ITS to change the password policy and to install a spam filter.

**AV Center** – The operation of the AV Center was reviewed by ISC as well as by the AV and Foreign Language committees, which share membership with ISC and are more directly engaged in the operation of the center. The AV center has a new interim director and the mission and operation of the center are being refined. The future direction of the AV center is likely to be linked to the plans for Burling Library.

**ISC funding policies** – ISC provides support for expenses involved in meritorious curricular development projects but has struggled for some time with the question of the extent to which faculty should receive stipends for course development. The committee wished to encourage such efforts but also believed that most course development is part of the normal range of activity of faculty members. ISC therefore endorsed the following funding principles: (1) stipends will not be awarded for routine course development, (2) funds will be provided to cover expenses incurred in meritorious course development projects, and (3) stipends may be awarded for course development projects that serve specific strategic interests of the college. Identifying projects that serve the strategic interests of the college is a task that is beyond the authority of ISC so this proposal was sent to the Executive Council, which approved it on a one-year experimental basis and will consider what the priorities might be.

**Internal committee procedures** – ISC has often become so immersed in the discussion of specific funding requests that little time remained for matters of policy and oversight. To rectify this situation a change was made to streamline the processing of requests. Requests for less than \$1,000 that do not raise concerns are reviewed only by the chair of the committee and the Associate Dean who is a member of ISC. The other members are notified of these decisions and any proposals that seem problematic or are above the \$1,000 limit are handled by the entire committee. This scheme was not fully implemented until late in the year but appeared to work well. The committee also worked to regularize and document funding guidelines and procedures to assure consistency both among proposals and over years

### **Other activities**

The chair of the committee reported on the activities in a spring faculty meeting.