

GRADUATE STUDENTS' IT SUGGESTIONS

CCFIT December 13, 2004

Note that graduate students are a unique group, using IT as both students and teachers, though most of the concerns listed here come from the point of view of students.

Concerns raised during the November GSA meeting, attended by Caroline Bledsoe and Julia Silvis, in rough order of the amount of head-nodding they generated:

Students want more WIRELESS.

Better Filtering: Spam filters let too much junk through; no one knew about other available filters.

Software: Students wanted improved access to software/shareware (see note below).

Events Calendar: A dramatic arts student requested more digital announcements to raise the profile of that program. Many other students wanted to be able to use Myucdavis to get information out to students; several thought the calendar could be improved (say by moving daily events to the top of the page rather than placing them at the bottom).

Course Evaluations: Students would like to replicate the model in the TTP program of online course discussion and evaluation, a conference room of sorts for guidance on course selection. The scantron evaluations gathered at the end of each quarter could be made available to students online.

Video of Lectures: Students suggested putting lectures online so that one could stream the video if you missed a lecture. Currently, Hart Hall has videos for check-out for a few large classes. Such capability could be valuable for archiving special guest lecture series.

Website Improvements: Students wondered whom to contact with suggestions for improving the general website (www.ucdavis.edu)

Praise: Paying bills online is great, as is Health e-messaging.

Other concerns (expressed via email):

1. TA's would like more flexibility with the gradebook.
2. Many students have requested better wireless and some wondered about the possibility of high-speed internet at home through UC Davis.
3. Some students have trouble authenticating in order to access the library's electronic resources from off-campus. Others wished the authentication could require fewer steps.
4. One student emailed me complaining of the lack of UNIX or Linux or any shareware-supportive facilities here. He volunteered to present a report next quarter if the committee is interested.

Regarding software and shareware: is there a way to allow students to download certain software and use it as long as they are part of the Davis network? My college (Harvard) had this capability, and I really appreciated it. You had to enter your PIN password and be authenticated before downloading, and then activate certain network settings (chooser settings on a Mac). This worked from both on and off-campus computers. Here is a sample list of programs currently available at Harvard:

- Adobe Acrobat 4.0
- ArcView 3.1
- ChemOffice 2000 Ultra 5.5
- DreamWeaver 4.0
- GSView 2.0
- KeyAccess 5.0 (required for many of these applications)
- Mathematica 4.2 (requires license; email mathematica@fas for details)
- MeetingMaker 7.1
- MiniTab 12
- NJStar Communicator 2.23
- Photoshop 5.5
- RealOne Player
- Stata 8

For explanation on the website, see <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/computing/kb/kb0829.html>

Other UC models: Berkeley offers free downloads of software such as Norton and Fetch, and (like Davis) greatly discounted programs such as Adobe Pagemaker, SPSS and Matlab. UCLA has an agreement with ESRI that allows UCLA affiliates to use ESRI software (ArcGIS, ArcView) for free. They must renew their registration every year.