Faculty Information Technology Advisory Committee (FITAC)

Annual Report, February 2024

Membership (Voting):
Todd Cherner, Chair (Education), Wubin Bai (Applied Physical Sciences), Maureen Baker (Nursing), Jason Casden (University Library), Vimal Derebail (Nephrology), Joaquin Drut (Physics and Astronomy), Ruby Pappoe (English and Comparative Literature)

Student members:
Maddox Case (Business Administration), Thanh Nguyen (Computer Science), Cammy Riemann (Information and Library Science)

ITS Membership (Non-Voting): Michael Barker and Suzanne Cadwell

New members added June 2023: Jason Casden, Maureen Baker, Ruby Pappoe

FITAC membership and function:
(a) The Faculty Information Technology Advisory Committee is appointed by the chair of the faculty. It consists of (i) faculty members, and (ii) one or more students serving one-year renewable terms. Faculty members constitute a majority of the members of the committee.
(b) The committee represents to the chancellor and the University community the concerns of faculty and others with regard to information technology. The committee's functions include: considering issues pertaining to the use of information technology in teaching and learning, research, and other professional activities in the University; and advising University officers and offices of administration on faculty needs and interests relating to information technology.

2023-24 Discussion Topics:
FITAC has experienced a change in leadership and membership from last year to the current one, which includes a new chair and six members. This has allowed the Committee to redefine itself while staying true to its mission and charge. The students brought fresh perspectives, and the faculty members exchanged ideas about technology based on their respective areas. However, two main challenges impacting the Committee include (1) inconsistent meeting attendance from all members and (2) a lack of representation from all academic units on campus. In response, the Chair has communicated his concerns and is following procedures for renewing the Committee's membership.

In addition, two main initiatives FITAC has focused on this year are (1) a request form to acquire funds for purchasing generative AI and (2) a tech-sharing program. First, some faculty wish to purchase generative AI tools but need more funds. To be supportive, FITAC has developed a form that faculty can use to request funding from ITS after attempting to secure funding from their program, department, academic unit, and/or through grants. FITAC is currently gaining feedback about the form and hopes to move forward to pilot it, pending the support of ITS. Second, FITAC is exploring how to structure a tech-sharing program focused on technology (e.g., VR goggles, 3D scanners, etc.) purchased by grant funding and is no longer being used because the study has been completed. This technology has value, and a tech-sharing program

would allow faculty in different academic units to use it. FITAC is still exploring ways to structure such a program in an equitable manner aligned with existing policies, and the Committee is hopeful of conducting a pilot of such a program in the fall of 2024.

Lastly, FITAC has been discussing generative AI and how it can support UNC's faculty related to the technology. Several initiatives connected to generative AI are taking place on campus. FITAC is working to identify the best way to be part of that work, with examples of participating in pilots and providing input when asked. In addition, ITS has shared reports about their efforts, and FITAC has offered feedback. The Committee expects generative AI to be a growing area of focus.