Attending:

J. L. Albert
Tim Bartness
Mary Jane Casto
David Cheshier
Paula Christopher
Susan Easterbrooks
Chip Hill
Yu-Sheng Hsu
Jarrett King
Karen Oates
Yi Pan
Ellen Taylor
Eboni Walker

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved as submitted.

ADA Subcommittee:

(Note: for information on the policies referred to, you can go to http://www.usg.edu/xirtinfo/accessibility_guide.html and http://alt.usg.edu/research/best/accessibility.html Hold control key and right click mouse.

David distributed documentation and presented a summary of the outcomes of the Web Accessibility Policy Subcommittee (WAPS) meeting. As of this date, because ISAT and legal affairs have not signed off on them, the findings are not official or formal recommendations, but are circulated to the committee for their input.

The original policy contained Appendix B, which pertains to legal considerations for internet accessibility. Wendy Hensel suggested that a policy document of the Senate should not contain descriptive language of the legal situation. She believes that the law changes too fast in this area and that it would create a danger in specifying legal terminology in a long term document. The draft document deletes Appendix B.

The WAPS committee’s recommendations are derived from material gathered from other university policies, including Ohio, Minnesota, and California, as well as a review of Best Practices and USG policy. The course of action for Georgia State could be culled from those materials and most of them will be easy to do and low cost. They also in some cases simply reflect current GSU practice, and it seems commonsensical to affirm them in the draft.

Web accessibility issues are now faced by all educational institutions. Without the application of ADA requirements to the Internet, new barriers to effective communication will be created that will have a discriminatory impact upon individuals with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. States receiving funding under the Assistive Technology Act are compelled to comply, and the state of Georgia receives funds through this act. According to the University System of Georgia Web Accessibility Guidelines, the USG is bound by Section 508 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendments. The Section 508 requirements, which are codified by its Access Board (which in turn closely replicate World Wide Web Consortium W3C recommendations) are designed to assure Web accessibility.

So-called “second generation materials” (which include such materials as when a professor posts a class handout as a pdf file) are not required to comply with Level One compliance, but IS&T could place on its website instructions for posting units on how to bring those documents into best practice compliance.

Discussed procedures when non-compliant materials are discovered and where the responsibility to enforce the policy lies, including a discussion about where record keeping on compliance should be centralized, e.g., IS&T or the Office of Disability services), and the issue of whether responsibility for webpage content should mainly lie at the level of the unit which produced it. Currently, the older draft says that every website should list a contact person but does not specify who that will be. The burden is essentially placed on the unit creating a page to assure its accessibility, but this may not well serve the broader institutional need to assure ADA compliance. It was agreed that the draft should be modified to say the contact should always be someone in Office of Disability Services and that a case file of complaints should be maintained. Ellen suggested copying the unit when Disability Services is contacted. David said that double notification would probably be most desirable since, in the absence of such a requirement, a situation could arise where both were notified of a problem but both assumed the other was responding. The clearer the document is on this point the better served the campus community is likely to be. If a website user notifies GSU that a site is not accessible, the current draft policy gives five working days to provide an alternative format. The committee modified the document to say that requests will be responded to "as soon as practicable."
"Whenever a user notifies a unit of an inability to access material, the unit must either redesign site materials to address the issue or make its content available in alternative form as soon as practicable. In the case of course materials, ‘users’ refers to enrolled and registered students.”

A discussion followed on how to handle complaints from someone who is not a registered, enrolled student, since the current draft specifically identifies users in that manner in the case of course materials. For example, a potential student wishes to view GSU materials and submits a complaint that those materials were not accessible due to the person’s disability. Tim commented that some could use this as a way to break the bank. Susan said that a person has to file appropriate documentation with Disability Services and has to self-identify their particular disability. Wendy Hensel believes that the use of “qualified user” offers the institution sufficient legal protection.

Mary Jane commented that IS&T has experts on web accessibility and they have been steadily working toward Level One compliance. David agreed that IS&T is central to the policy and their function should be incorporated into the guidelines. Susan said that, as ADA Advisory Committee Chair, she feels that we are in a good position for having something on our books and a plan to move forward.

Regarding Recommendation #1: “IS&T should perform an annual audit of the university’s main web pages to assure their compliance with W3C standards.” - Jarrett asked what tools or processes would do the auditing. She said that in the past, audits were for overall usability of sites, but not in terms of compliance specifically. If IS&T is charged with doing the audits, it becomes a resource issue. She said there are automated audits available, but they are still subject to human interpretation. David said that he will be in conversation with IS&T about this item.

Jarrett noted that there are inconsistencies with terminology in the draft policy and should be corrected. Some instances say compliance, others full compliance. David agreed to have the subcommittee review the full document to eliminate these inconsistencies.

Regarding Recommendation #11: “A request for proposals that would upgrade the university’s technology acquisition and upgrades consistent with the ADA should be made a prioritized component of Stage 1 Technology Fee proposals.” - David said that this is already occurring in an informal way, since the record shows a high level of STFS sensitivity to ADA-related proposals in the past.

David said that Georgia Tech’s Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA) is fully working on ADA as a research team. They contacted Dr. Hensel to see if GSU has an interest in participating in a beta test of a software package they intend to market, that is designed to assist organizations comply with Priority 1 accessibility criteria. Georgia State would have free access to the software for 3-4 months and would be asked to provide feedback after testing.

David noted that the WAPS’s recommendations strengthen the original document and he is comfortable with them; however, he does want to make certain everything is covered given the wide diversity of internet activity connected with campus work. He urged ISAT committee members to forward suggestions and/or red flags to him. David listed some other items still under discussion on which he would also appreciate suggestions or any input from the ISAT committee:

1) To what extent should older equipment/technology be included in the policy (the document is mainly silent on the issue of hardware)?
2) Should new forms of computer access be addressed in the policy (such as the accelerating shift to portable devices and wireless instructional environments)?
3) Should the Student Technology Fee Sub-Committee give priority to ADA-related proposals, or might that unintentionally distort the allocation process?
4) Do ADA compliance requirements pose any foreseeable threats to GSU’s network security?
5) How do we assure WebCT Vista materials are accessible?
6) At what point does GSU legal department review draft policy?
7) How do we assure that Red Dot pages remain compliant, and that the Red Dot platform’s ADA-friendly templates are put into wider institutional use?
8) What kind of information, training, resources, etc., would be of most benefit to web designers and faculty?

David said the WAPS should be able to complete its work in one more meeting. Susan agreed and said there is more than enough information to address all primary issues. David will revise the draft and re-submit it to ISAT committee for final feedback and potential approval that would send the policy to the fuller Senate for final potential adoption.
Student Technology Fee Subcommittee

The STFS held its organizational meeting on April 24. The committee approved Provost Henry's pre-allocation request that positions currently funded in FY06 be continued in FY07; however a motion was passed for the STFS to request that FACP reiterate to the Provost that another source of funding for these pre-funded requests be found. Other pre-funded allocations are:

1) Symantec Antivirus Software License and MailFrontier Anti-Spam License
2) Student Email System Administrator
3) Alpharetta Campus Classroom and Computer Lab Support
4) Alpharetta Campus Student Assistants
5) The Digital Aquarium
6) Student Printing Infrastructure
7) Student Printing (contingent on BOR approval of fee increase)

The committee approved funding the Wireless Expansion request ($390,000) from the remaining FY2006 funds. One hundred three proposals were submitted; two retracted, with $8 million requested. After deducting pre-funded requests, approximately $3.9 million is left to fund the 101 proposals.

The remaining STFS meetings will be held on March 24 and April 7. This year, it was agreed in the organizational meeting held in February, that subcommittee members will bring their laptops (with power cords and ethernet cables) to the meetings since there will be a limited amount of printed binders provided that contain all proposals. The current proposal that is being reviewed will also be displayed by projection.

With no further business, meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted March 29, 2006,
Carolyn Summerlin

Reminder:
The April 27, 2006 ISAT meeting is the 2006-2007 Organizational Meeting, subsequent to the University Senate's first meeting of the 06-07 Senate Year on April 20.