

Computerized registration has many benefits, say proponents

By Darryl Joannides
Of the Emerald

After a long period of frustration on the part of students, faculty and administrators, the dual issue of computerized registration and an integrated computer system for the University may finally be resolved.

Herb Chereck, University registrar and a key figure in implementing the integrated system, sees several advantages to computer registration.

"It allows the University to plan and develop a time schedule responsive to student needs over a period of time," he says, adding that it can also aid short- and long-range planning for the administration.

In addition, it would assign students classes on a priority basis, allowing seniors greater certainty of receiving the classes they need before they graduate, he says.

Another benefit would be "an automatic tuition assessment procedure" that would eliminate errors made by the current manual system.

Two years ago, the State Board of Higher Education put a freeze on the purchase of all computer hardware and software systems for administrative purposes in an effort to limit purchases of systems that may not be compatible with a state-wide computer system they are planning to develop.

The freeze has had a substantial effect on the administrative computer system because the data banks were already working at full capacity when the freeze was implemented, says Dick Hill, University Provost.

The University had a committee to work on the development of a computer registration system several years ago, Hill says, but the proposal they came up with at the time was for the purchase of an IBM 38 software package and was found to be inadequate for the University's needs.

New evaluations show this may have been a mistake. Within a few months the board froze all purchases of administrative computer systems, but in retrospect some University administrators feel the IBM 38 could have been a good purchase at the time.

A proposal currently being submitted to the state Legislature will allow research and development for an integrated information system to begin if it passes, says Terry Hippenhammer, Director of Information Systems Services in Chancellor Bud Davis' office.

As early as last February, Davis began meeting with Gov. Vic Atiyeh and two computer companies to discuss the implementation of an OSSHE Integrated Information Plan.

The system will incorporate financial, budget, payroll, personnel, office and library automation, functioning on an OSSHE telecommunications network capable of transmitting voice, data and video signals.

The integrated system will be constructed from existing hardware and software, "eliminating the time required to develop a new product," Hippenhammer says.

The two vendors involved in the system are

Honeywell and Systems Computer Technology Corporation (SCT), the former specializing in hardware and the latter in software. "The largest hurdle has been getting two computer vendors to work together," Hippenhammer says.

In terms of computer registration for students, the system would take over the operations of the current arena scheduling process.

There are two types of computer registration processes, Hippenhammer says — an on-line system and a pre-registration system.

An on-line system would be similar to arena scheduling in that students would go to a designated place at a scheduled time. They would bring a list of requested courses and submit it to a computer operator, who would input the data, showing the student which courses were closed.

The student walks away knowing exactly what courses he or she will have for the next term.

Pre-registration entails filling out a scantron form and mailing it to the registrar's office during the previous term. The computer then sorts the information, adjusts for any closed courses by substituting the student's alternative choices, and mails the student a course confirmation, including a tuition bill.

Under the pre-registration system, "the University can allocate and reallocate courses to better meet student needs," Hippenhammer says.

While it has not been decided, the board seems to be leaning toward this type of system.

In order to accommodate student needs, both students and faculty will need to adapt to taking non-prime time courses, avoiding the traditional 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. time slots, Chereck says.

The only thing left to do before research and development can begin is to "touch base with the appropriate legislative committees," Hippenhammer says.

The chancellor's office has already submitted a request to meet with legislators and is awaiting a confirmation date, he says, adding that "once I get the okay (from the legislators), I'm going to go for it."

In addition to computer registration, the system will affect all offices on campus by systematically integrating them with one another.

This means if a student submits a name change at the registrar's office in Oregon Hall and then walks to the journalism school to make a grade inquiry, the name change will already be corrected.

Likewise, if a student pays her tuition bill and needs to prove to an instructor that she has paid, the professor can simply call up her file on any terminal and check her fee status. This eliminates the problem of duplicated effort, avoiding bureaucratic red tape, Hippenhammer says.

Currently, a student not only needs to go to each office and submit the information change but also needs to submit transcripts to several different offices on campus because most offices work independently of each other.

Dead Week guidelines limit projects, testing

With the advent of dead week, both students and faculty should keep in mind the policies established in 1982 by the University Assembly on giving tests:

- No examination worth more than 20 percent of the final grade will be given with the exception of makeup exams.
- No final exam will be given under any guise.
- No project will be due unless it was clearly stated on the syllabus within the first two weeks of the term.
- No take-home final will be due earlier than the day of the formal assigned final date for the class.

Anyone who knows of any violation of this policy should contact Student Senate members at 686-3720 or the Information and Grievance Center in the EMU lobby.

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