

Linux Faculty Advisory Committee

November 17, 2006

Faculty attendees

[removed for privacy]

Computing Services attendees

Susan Alexander

David Baisley

Connie Deighan Eaton

Meena Lakhavani

Laura Valentine

Pomona Valero

Summary

We followed up on data requests from the previous faculty meeting, discussed the action we had taken on action items from that meeting, and discussed solutions and recommendations surrounding the clusters.

Faculty had a number of recommendations to make regarding the situation with clusters, and also recommended some changes to the Computing Services-proposed solutions. In general, they felt that the Computing Services-proposed solutions were workable.

General recommendations

- improve Linux server infrastructure
 - o explore backend options for xwin
- consider the importance of Wean space
 - o tradition, TA location
- report space issues in Clusters up the chain
- explore cross-platform virtual machines
- explore KVM switches in small room in Wean
- Consider trying new things in the Wean space.
- explore how changed Wean rooms can be used offpeak
 - o most of the pressure on the space is in the middle of the day; make sure the rooms are usable for the offpeak users as well as for classes

Proposed Solutions & Faculty Recommended Changes

Solution: Collaborative Linux space in West Wing

Recommendations:

- TA location - grad student TAs are located in Wean and will not walk across campus. Make sure they have access to space in Wean (see below).

Solution: Keep some Linux space in Wean

Recommendations:

- Make this reservable
- Emphasize to graduate TAs that this is reservable and they can hold office hours here

Solution: Reservable PC or Mac cluster in Wean

Recommendations:

- Make this a Mac cluster
 - o Macs are more amenable as a front end for Linux
 - o KVM switches and cross-platform virtual machines are less necessary if these are Macs
 - o PCs in Hunt, Macs in Wean is an appealing idea and will help draw different people across campus
- "xwin is crucial"
- in CSW and in documentation, teach people how to use Linux from Mac/PC
 - o not just sshing in
 - o xwin, etc. should be taught
- Think carefully about the Linux backend needs for a cluster like this.

Next Steps

- Computing Services should consider the recommendations and write a proposal covering planned changes.
- [Faculty member] has offered to read over the proposal, offer suggestions, and assist in outreach to faculty and students.
- Faculty will help define the Linux backend configuration. [Faculty member] has offered to assist in gathering faculty recommendations.