

Web Advisory Committee Minutes

Thursday, November 13, 2008 at 3:00 P.M.

Campus Center 206

Present: Bonnie Alexander, Zach Bajaber, Ann Esson, Taren Kingser, Lisa Landreman, Nick Raleigh, Jerry Sanders, Libby Shoop, Sara Suelflow (chair)

1. Brief updates:

- New images have been added to the Macalester.edu front page rotation.
- Julie has added content for the main page of the "About" section to provide additional information and draw visitors in. (<http://www.macalester.edu/about.html>)
- The Arts and Events Calendar has been updated with the ability to browse events by sponsor. More features will be added soon.

2. Google Sites demonstration:

Google Sites is a tool in our Google Apps suite that is primarily targeted toward group or team web sites. Sara walked through the steps in setting up a Google Sites page. It was noted that the "Collaborate with" setting can be confusing because the default selection is "Everybody" which will allow anyone from the college to edit your site. It is possible to set more precise sharing permissions from the "Site settings->Share this site" menu option. By default, only collaborators can view the site. It seems users have generally retained default sharing settings leaving their pages open to editing. There are other tools group members found useful for collaboration such as templates for content types (e.g. News), page comments, gadgets (e.g. add Google spreadsheet), and custom lists.

Lisa asked about the possibility of using Google sites for group collaboration instead of Moodle. Sara said there may be some shift toward using Google sites for non-course related groups and she will work on a guide for content creators to help them select the right tools for their needs. It was noted that attachments can be added in Google Sites as with Moodle. Nick asked if it is possible to collaborate with users on other domains, especially with regard to Alumni organizations; Sara will check on this.

The group discussed issues relating to the lack of administrative control in Google Sites (any user with a [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) e-mail account can create a site in Google Sites and name it whatever they want). It was discovered since the last meeting that it is possible to remove a Sites page if you are a Google Apps administrator, but this can be cumbersome and only a few of the network staff have these privileges. Jerry noted that it is in line with the Macalester ethos to leave it free and open and deal with issues as they arise. The service from Google came as part of the Google Apps and while some colleges have disabled the feature it was agreed that it should continue to

be available here. Jerry asked to whom the responsibility of managing the google sites should fall. Sara noted there are only a few settings under administrative control. It would be difficult to monitor sites as they are generated but issues will inevitably come up. There are parallels with the early days of the Internet and attempts to restrict content.

3. Policies for department and office web sites:

The group discussed the "Policies for department and offices web sites" document which Sara sent via e-mail on Nov. 6.

Suggested revisions to policies draft:

- o Lisa: Could the document be made more clear by adding samples and/or screen-shots? (Sara will experiment with this.)
- o Nick: Should we add a remark making it "highly advisable" to consult with Web Services or College Relations before deviating from the standard templates? (Yes it will be included.)

The committee discussed some of the problems with the current templates, such as the fixed-width layout and image-based links in the top navigation bar. It was agreed that the current templates (designed according to the Spring 2005 site launch) have elements that are outdated, but are what we have to work with until a decision is reached on a site-wide redesign and until then it is important to maintain a degree of consistency across campus web sites. Most departments are starting with the template and have made modifications. Web Services is working on adding more options to the campus templates. Libby asked if the included stylesheet would alter the layout width. Sara confirmed that it would not since that is set by the table attributes. It was noted that a clause should not be needed to explicitly allow altering the body of the templates as this is allowed in the policies as they are written. Sara will send a new revision of the policies before the next meeting. The committee aims to adopt the policies at the next meeting. Ann mentioned that Academic office professionals meeting will be good forum to distribute the document to colleagues on the academic side.

The group moved on to discuss the next steps after the policies are approved and whether other officials will need to review them. Jerry made the point that the committee should take the authority with these policies since the committee will be the group to follow up, not the senior staff. Lisa said the policies may need further sign off to get buy in from staff. If the committee takes the authority and presents the policies to departments with offers of consultation services, that would be more acceptable. The policies are a first step, along with outreach and assistance to departments. It was generally agreed that is the next step of the process and if there is a need for higher level support later it will be sought at that time.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:10 P.M.

Minutes submitted by: Zach Bajaber