

# NOTES FROM THE FACET MEETING

Monday, January 6, 2003 at 4:30 PM in 303 Berryhill

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**Members present:** Reid (Co-Chair), Harward, Juliano, Kane, Keller, McCartney, Oxford, Reisner, and Tresolini

**Others present:** Linda Fisher (OED) Charles Hitlin (OIS), Peter Petrusz (Cell & Developmental Biology)

## Updates

1. **Laptop Requirement:** Dennis Schmidt (OIS) gave an update on laptop requirement and reported that there is a price difference of about \$600 between the current higher and lower end CCI laptops. Mr. Schmidt also reported that IBM is reconfiguring their laptop line so that all models use the same operating system/driver set. Once this change is in place, OIS would be able to support any model CCI laptop with the same disk image and students would not be restricted to a single model. The change will not be in place in time for students entering this spring, but will be in place by 2004.
2. **Laptop FAQ:** A list of proposed questions has been posted to the [FACET discussion forum](#). Eve Juliano (OIS) noted no further work on answers has been done since she had been working non-stop on the OIS Website.

## Discussion

1. **Virtual Microscopy:** Howard Reisner reported that the November [Symposium on Virtual Slides](#) in Charleston was very useful and summarized the experience. Symposium organizers plan to maintain the [conference web site](#) as a continuing resource. Charles Hitlin (OIS) demonstrated some of the capabilities of the technology from a [site at the University of Iowa](#). Mike Keller summarized the [current use](#) and [repair and maintenance history](#) of the school's microscopes. Peter Petrusz (Cell & Developmental Biology) observed that his department plans to use virtual slides in courses beginning January 2004. They are leaning toward using slide sets distributed on CDs rather than stored on-line.

In the discussion a number of issues were raised, including:

- a. Vendors: two major players – [Aperio Technologies](#) and [MicroBrightField](#). Software used is almost entirely open-source and not likely to be a major cost item since vendors' primary income comes from producing slides.
  - b. Source of slide images: whether to purchase images from vendors (from existing stock or based on material we provide) or to produce our own
  - c. Cost: The system would most likely require a dedicated server (and associated technical administration and support). Initial investment projected between \$20,000 and \$70,000, the higher figure including hardware and software needed to generate our own slides.
  - d. Ongoing utility of slide production facility. Once developed, slide catalogues would be relatively stable; however, it is likely that sufficient demand exists to justify ongoing slide production support.
  - e. Potential obsolescence of slide production technology. Currently the limiting factor is optical resolution; hardware and software demands (and therefore the usability of current technology) are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
  - f. Centralization of resources. Location and interdepartmental cost and resource sharing of slide production facility were discussed.
2. **On-line Testing:** Donna Harward (OED) described features of the on-line testing prototype; an accompanying [handout](#) summarized features as well as feedback from pilot users. The system has undergone extensive testing during development and will be piloted in the second year musculoskeletal course this spring semester. The goal is to move all first- and second-year courses to this type of testing. It was noted that the [Honor Code](#) (which students must view and agree to before they can proceed with the exam) had to be modified to accommodate on-line tests. Linda Fisher (OED) gave a live demonstration of the testing system using a mock exam. In its current state, on-line testing largely mirrors "paper" testing in that tests can only be taken at a specified time and place, and proctors are needed to distribute individual PINs granting access to the test. Discussion followed about the advantages of using the on-line testing as opposed to the written exam and the cost of on-line testing. Alfred Reid asked the committee to consider the role of FACET in this discussion. Comments followed that the committee's

primary role involves information sharing and dissemination as well as anticipating and helping to resolve problems at the intersection of technology and the educational process (e.g. Honor Code issues).

3. **Other Business** deferred.