

Wi-fi Pilot Project Report

Submitted to Western Oregon University Faculty Senate
January 12, 2010

From: Academic Infrastructure Committee
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Background

In Fall 2006, the Faculty Senate endorsed the concept of increasing accessibility to wireless networking for faculty and students at Western Oregon University. In response to that endorsement, President Minahan recommended that the Academic Infrastructure Committee (AIC) solicit proposals from faculty for pilot projects that demonstrate various approaches to utilizing wireless technology to support teaching, learning, and other forms of scholarship. AIC invited all tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty actively employed on campus to develop and submit project proposals. The pilot project ran from spring term 2008 through spring term 2009.

Program Objectives

The objectives of the pilot projects were to: (1) promote increased access to wireless technology for faculty and students, (2) demonstrate the utility of wireless technology in supporting high quality teaching, learning and scholarship, and (3) assess the feasibility of various models for providing access to wireless technology on campus.

Implementation

The Academic Infrastructure Committee processed fourteen applications in the initial call for proposals. Of those, all but two of them requested one connection for computers to which the faculty already had access. Natural Science and Mathematics requested four connections for computers currently in use and Music requested nine connections for use in music technology courses. Of music's nine connections, two were used on university computers and seven were available for students in the recording technology seminar. Many of the proposals requested access for use in rooms in which smart-room technology does not exist or is not practical. No requests were made for additional equipment.

A second call for proposals was sent out in the Fall term 2008. Sixteen proposals were accepted in that round. Of those, fourteen were for individual faculty and two were for departments. Applications submitted by the Athletics program, Upward Bound, and the International Student and Scholars were not accepted since they were not for faculty and therefor fell outside of the pilot project's scope and the AIC's charge of giving wireless access to support teaching, learning

and scholarship. In denying these applications, the AIC in no way intends to make a statement about the value of these programs or the importance of technology access for these programs.

Outcomes

The project successfully achieved its three objectives, offering clear data on how faculty use and value access to the wireless network. Faculty participating in the program responded to an AIC survey asking about their usage (see appendix A for results) in order to determine the utility of wireless network connections to faculty (objective 2). Of the thirty requested connections, twenty attempted activation (best estimate). Of those twenty, sixteen used their connections daily or weekly, one occasionally, and three never used their connections. Not surprisingly, seventeen of the respondents felt that continued funding was “important,” or “very important.” Similar numbers were reported for the wi-fi’s usefulness being “high” or “very high” for scholarship, teaching, and service. Of the twenty respondents, two reported difficulty in activating their network access. The open-ended comments of the respondents are contained in appendix B.

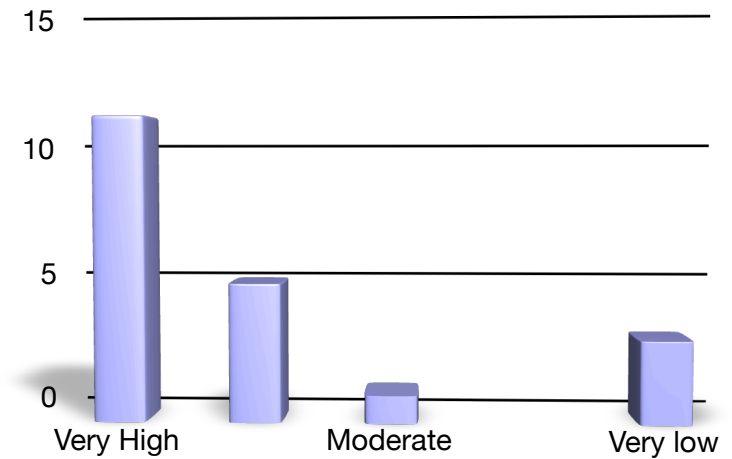
New funding models have been implemented for wi-fi access (objective 3). Since the inception of the wi-fi pilot project the STFC has allocated funding for student access to the network. At the close of the project, all three deans agreed to continue funding faculty access to the wireless network.

Faculty use of the network has increased significantly with the establishment of a consistent campus-wide funding/access policy (objectives 1 and 3). Currently there are a total of 89 faculty with wi-fi access.

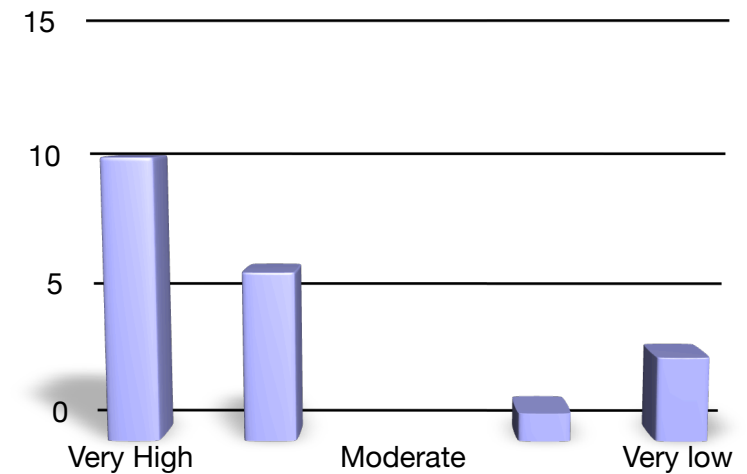
The AIC would like to thank President Minahan for this opportunity and Deans Scheck, Rosselli, and McKiel for continuing to support a resource that is highly valued by the faculty.

Appendix A - Wi-fi Pilot Project End Survey Results

Please rate the overall value of your wi-fi access.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very High	55.0%	11
High	25.0%	5
Moderate	5.0%	1
Low	0.0%	0
Very low	15.0%	3
answered question		20
skipped question		0

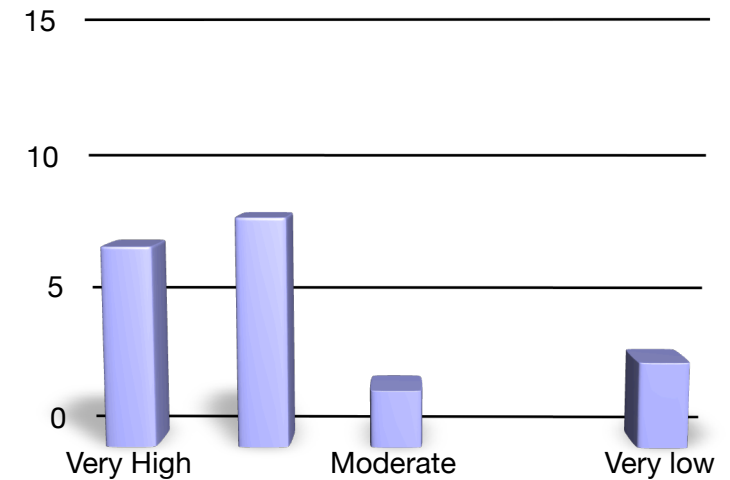


Rate wi-fi's usefulness for your teaching.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very High	50.0%	10
High	30.0%	6
Moderate	0.0%	0
Low	5.0%	1
Very low	15.0%	3
answered question		20
skipped question		0

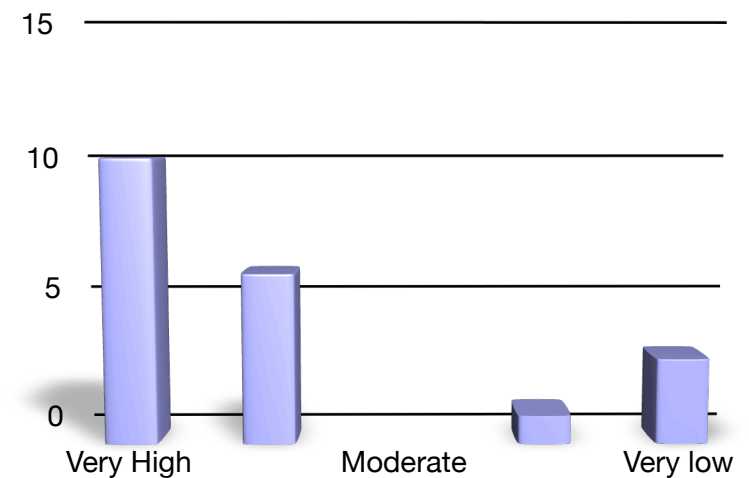


Appendix A - Wi-fi Pilot Project End Survey Results

Rate wi-fi's usefulness to your scholarship/research?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very High	35.0%	7
High	40.0%	8
Moderate	10.0%	2
Low	0.0%	0
Very low	15.0%	3
answered question		20
skipped question		0

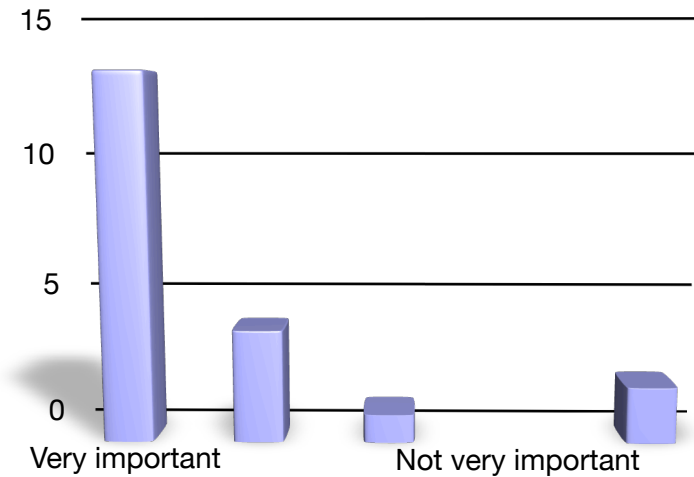


Rate wi-fi's usefulness to your institutional or professional service.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very High	50.0%	10
High	30.0%	6
Moderate	0.0%	0
Low	5.0%	1
Very low	15.0%	3
answered question		20
skipped question		0



Appendix A - Wi-fi Pilot Project End Survey Results

How important is it for the university to continue funding your wi-fi access?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	65.0%	13
Important	20.0%	4
Neutral	5.0%	1
Not very important	0.0%	0
Not at all important	10.0%	2
answered question		20
skipped question		0



How often did you use your wi-fi access?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily	55.0%	11
Weekly	25.0%	5
Occasionally	5.0%	1
Rarely	0.0%	0
Never	15.0%	3
answered question		20
skipped question		0

