



Workstation Program Proposal

Executive Summary :: 2/8/2005

History

The Cal Poly State University Workstation Program, established in 1996/97, was proposed, *“to insure faculty access to current computing and communications resources, as well as support and training opportunities to enable them to use technologies effectively... The program is designed to replace each faculty computer every three to four years so that no faculty member will be constrained by obsolete technology”*. The Workstation Program has consistently earned “as good as it gets” reviews from the IACC since its inception. Initially designed to operate on a yearly budget of \$986,400 and cover 822 faculty workstations campus-wide, the program now includes 989 faculty workstations on a budget of \$400,000 per year; thus representing increased coverage while realizing significant cost reductions for products and services over time. The cost of purchasing, setting up, and delivering workstations to faculty has dropped from ~\$3,600/workstation to ~\$1,544/workstation over the life of the program.

A collateral side-effect of the Workstation Program has been to establish clear campus computing standards for hardware, software, and support and to significantly lower the over-all campus cost of purchasing workstations, including those purchased outside of the Workstation Program. Cal Poly’s Contracts and Procurement Services participated in a recent CSU-wide initiative to cut costs and, as part of one such effort, compared Dell workstation acquisition costs at all 23 campuses. Cal Poly enjoys the lowest Dell pricing in the CSU, in part because of the close working relationship established between Purchasing and ITS and standardized, consistently implemented, bulk-purchasing practiced through our Workstation Program. To put this in perspective, Dell is consistently in the top 10 vendors listed by expenditure at each campus (in most cases in the top 5). In 2004, Cal Poly spent ~\$1.3 on products from Dell.

Trends

In FY 04-05 the Workstation Program budget was cut by 32%, from \$592,500 to \$400,000. Cuts were necessary to meet budget reduction goals for the fiscal year but, for the first time since the inception of the Workstation Program, these cuts resulted in a real reduction of service and over-all quality of the program. There are several coincidental trends which are also currently affecting the costs to support instructional computing at Cal Poly as follows:

1. New faculty are arriving at Cal Poly with greater experience, skills, and expectations regarding the use of technology for instruction and require a more complex set of capabilities in their workstations.
2. Laptop usage (and mobile computing in general) is steadily growing and now accounts for about 30% (and rising) of all orders. Laptops tend to cost more for similar horsepower.
3. As workstation management tools are implemented to support technology and reduce support costs across campus, the cost of supporting older, non-compliant hardware is growing.
4. Security is now a growing concern in the academic community. In order to implement cohesive strategies to thwart hackers, viruses, spam and the like, hardware must be able to support new, more agile, management technologies.
5. Given the above parameters, the true average workstation cost at Cal Poly is projected to be \$1,826 (pre tax), for the current round of acquisitions, not \$1,544 as allowed under the current budget allocation.

Bottom line: At this point faculty campus-wide are not able to order computers which fully meet their anticipated instructional technology needs.

Proposal Part 1 (Faculty Workstation Program): \$57,529

In order to address the points listed above, ITS proposes to do the following:

1. Seek campus approval to selectively restore funding for the Workstation Program in FY 05-06 to a level that will properly support instructional computing demands, raising the current workstation allocation from \$1,544 to \$1,800 per workstation.
2. Officially include the Athletics Department in the Workstation program. Historically, the Athletics department has scrounged for new computers and is often the recipient of hand-me-down computers. This practice has spawned costly support issues and selective risks to security and compliance resulting from the use of outdated, non-standard, and otherwise unsupported computer equipment. New security and management software is not able to run on aging hardware, exposing the campus network and confidential student data to breach, and security threats with costly consequences.

Implementing points one and two above will result in a budget increase of \$57,529 per year, making the annual budget \$457,529; a total still far below the \$592,500 funding level in existence prior to last year's 32% cut.

Proposal Part 2 (Lab Workstation Program): \$92,664

Extend the benefits of pooled purchasing, standard installation cycles, and standards-based imaging and support models to labs across campus, starting with ITS-managed labs. Standardizing labs across campus will also benefit students expecting to find similar capabilities and software applications in all locations. To support this goal, ITS proposes the following:

1. Fund a program for six "open access" labs, currently managed by ITS and located in the Kennedy Library utilizing the same purchase cycles and models used for Faculty and Staff Workstation Programs.
2. Create a Service Level Agreement "opt-in" model for other departments wishing to participate in a Lab Workstation Program for their college level or specific purpose labs. ITS will work with departments to establish a budget, create standards, manage orders, and, optionally, prepare and install computers. Standardized, structured, planned, and pooled purchases combined with efficient installation processes should result in further cost-savings--reducing costs by as much as 20% for participating departments. In addition, security concerns can be addressed more effectively with standardized hardware and software deployment.

Proposal Part 3 (Staff Workstation Program): \$158,301

The Faculty Workstation Program is a proven success at Cal Poly, providing cost reductions resulting from pooled purchases, standard installation cycles, and standards-based imaging and support models. In FY 02-03 and again in FY 03-04, ITS was given from campus S's & U's \$80,000 in one-time funding for a limited staff refresh program. This was driven in part by the preparations for CMS readiness within the Academic units. As a consequence of the success of this program, ITS has received requests from colleges, the IACC, and the AACC to permanently fund an on-going Staff Workstation Program modeled after the Faculty Workstation Program. Clearly, many of the drivers cited above tend to justify the benefits and potential cost avoidance possibilities of such an initiative if affordable. To support this goal, ITS proposes the following:

1. Fund a program for staff in colleges, the Library, Athletics, and ITS using the same headcount model the Faculty Workstation Program uses. This plan will result in coverage for 326 staff members at a cost of \$158,301 per year.
2. Additionally, create a Service Level Agreement "opt-in" model for non academic departments wishing to participate in a Staff Refresh Program. ITS will work with departments to establish a budget, create standards, and manage orders, preparation, and installation of computers, again resulting in an estimated 20% cost savings and added security benefits for participating departments. If departments outside of the colleges find that they have performance issues with campus systems (e.g. CMS) because of outdated hardware, we may seek funding from project sources to address issues as they arise (as we have done in the past).