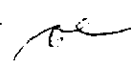


**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Members of University Committee on Academic Policy  
FROM: Joe Chartkoff   
SUBJECT: Questions for Provost's Visit on Student Laptop Proposal  
DATE: September 24, 1999

The Student Laptop Proposal subcommittee met yesterday to develop a set of proposed questions about the current status of the Student Laptop Proposal to raise to the Provost at her upcoming meeting with the UCAP. A copy of the draft of proposed questions is enclosed. If you would like to offer perspectives, suggest new questions or suggest changes to these questions prior to the next UCAP meeting (September 30th), your contributions are greatly welcomed. My e-mail address is:

joseph.chartkoff@ssc.msu.edu



COLLEGE OF  
**SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**Department of  
Anthropology**

Michigan State University  
Baker Hall  
East Lansing, MI  
48824-1118  
517/353-2950  
FAX: 517/432-2363

UCAP  
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## STUDENT LAPTOP PROPOSAL SUBCOMMITTEE

### PROPOSED QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE PROVOST

[Note: the committee supports the goal of enhancing MSU student computer competence. Questions here reflect the committee's concerns as to how to further that goal with the greatest progress, least problems and most effective management possible]

#### I. AREA OF COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS:

1. What is the Provost's reaction to the UCAP report on findings from the ICCEL Conference at Wake Forest University and their relevance to the Student Laptop Proposal? Could feedback be provided?
2. Is there any plan to provide for the faculty in general some opportunities to participate in discussions about the proposal before the final decision is made? If so, how, and when? If not, why not, and is there any sense of what the consequences might be of not doing so? As one possibility, could a Web Site page or e-mail address be developed to advise faculty as to what is under consideration and invite faculty input?
3. Is there any plan to provide means for the general student population to review what is being proposed and to provide their reflections and support or non-support, such as through e-mail or a Web site?

#### II. AREA OF OBJECTIVES:

4. Are there any plans to develop a statement of formal objectives or goals that are to be reached by implementing ubiquitous computing, and particularly by requiring that laptop computers be used in this effort?
5. Are there any plans to identify the particular skills or minimal core competences which are to be fostered by this program, and are such skills being linked to the means proposed to be required?
6. Are there any plans to identify standards or minimal levels of quality in hardware and software for machines, to help insure that machines purchased will be adequate for the task and compatible with what else is being used?
7. What plans are being made or policies being developed as to frequency and magnitude of rejuvenation? Are timetables being planned? What are the implications of encouraging students to purchase machines while still in high school as to their ability to be functional when they become upper division students at MSU? How will faculty/staff/graduate assistant hardware/software refreshments be handled and funded? How will rejuvenations be related to the establishment of any standards for

levels of hardware and software?

### III. AREA OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING:

8. Are there any moves underway to develop a detailed implementation plan for putting the student laptop proposal into effect? If so, who is developing it and when should it be available to the university?
9. Is there any plan to conduct pilot implementations, studies or projects to work out problems before the full-scale implementation? Is there any plan to consult with other universities which already have adopted ubiquitous computing to learn about the problems they encountered, how they addressed them, and/or how to avoid them in the first place? If so, what is being planned, who is planning it, and when should it take place? If not, why not, and what will the consequences be?

### IV. AREA OF STUDENT FINANCIAL IMPACT:

10. What plans are being made to provide for student financing of a universal computer access requirement? How will students not poor enough to gain full financial awards but not well-off enough to afford purchase or heavier loan burdens be helped?
11. Has consideration been given to providing loaner opportunities for both long-term and emergency needs? Is there any plan for how to provide loaner machines?
12. Has any consideration been given to the University undertaking a comprehensive leasing program so that standards could be more easily maintained and updating of hardware and software could be more readily achieved?
13. Is there any sense of impact on MSU recruiting, both in terms of numbers and of student quality and diversity, from implementing such a requirement?
14. Is there any plan to impose a student technology fee? If so, to what purposes would such a fee be devoted? What would the impact of such a fee be on the University's commitment to limit tuition increases? What would its impact be on the political climate in state government, and on student recruiting? Are the intended uses of such a fee, if implemented, linked to analyses of support needs? If so, could those analyses be shared for consideration?
15. What are plans for providing for the costs and facilities for the provision of student computer support services? How is funding expected to be handled? What amount or magnitude of cost is expected for an undergraduate population of 32,000, and how were those figures derived? What relationship has been arranged between student needs for financial aid and expected costs of computer support services?

### V. AREA OF STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT AND REMEDIATION:

16. Are there any plans being developed to assess student skill levels and to

provide for appropriate remediation at manageable means? What are they? Who will be responsible? How will they be funded? When and where will they be provided?

17. Are there any plans being developed to restructure the academic calendar to provide for needed student computer skills enhancements in order to enable the whole student body to function effectively in the curriculum with computers? Are there any plans to lengthen the Fall orientation period to provide for computer skills assessments of all incoming Freshmen? Are there any plans to provide focal workshops for skills development among entering students? Are there any plans to design and put into effect Freshmen computer skills required courses comparable to Integrative Studies and ATL requirements? If so, who would be responsible for these steps and what provisions are being made to fund them? Are any comparable plans being made to analyze and serve transfer students and adult non-traditional students in comparable ways?

#### VI. AREA OF STUDENT SECURITY AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

18. What plans are there to deal with issues of theft of student machines, to minimize the probabilities of theft and/or to increase the ability of law enforcement agencies to detect and respond to theft?
19. What plans are being developed to provide students with readily-accessible support services for both hardware and for operations assistance? What plans are being developed to provide for printing needs for the campus? What plans are being developed to provide adequate access to emergency repair services with fast turn-around so that a student population of 32,000 can be kept functioning? What cost estimates have been reached? How are costs expected to be funded?
20. What plans are being developed to provide students with emergency machine loans so they will be able to keep functioning and fulfill course requirements even when their own machines have been stolen or have been damaged and need to be repaired?
21. What plans are being made to protect the campus from virus problems once there are 32,000 undergraduates plugging in their machines simultaneously, gaining access to networks and trading or sharing disks?

#### VII. AREA OF FACILITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT:

22. What plans are being made to develop classroom capacities for computer use, in terms of wiring, hardware and furniture? What parts of the university educational system will be most strongly or least strongly able to participate? What models for adequate desk areas are being considered? What costs are being anticipated? How is funding being planned? What fraction of the university's classroom set is planned for conversion? What plans are being made to upgrade or refresh these high-technology classrooms so they do not become functionally obsolete? Is there any sense of how often such upgrades needs to be made, and how it will be done? Will departments and colleges be expected to fund the costs of such facilities from their reduced budgets? What other essential functions that must be

performed by units and colleges will be required to be downgraded or eliminated in order to support technology costs, and what impact is anticipated as a result?

23. What plans are being developed to provide ubiquitous wiring for the campus as a whole, outside of classrooms? Who is to be responsible for construction and maintenance, and how is funding to be provided?
24. What plans are being made to provide for adequate amounts of permanent, professional support staff at the unit and college level, to maintain systems and to be able to respond adequately to emergencies in a timely fashion? What magnitude of staffing, and of what quality, is planned? How is funding being planned? Is it expected technical support for instructional units can begin to approach the level of technical support provided in area school districts? Will colleges and units be provided with new resources to fund any such improvements? Will units be expected to fund costs for extraordinary emergency responses out of their existing budgets?
25. What plans are being developed to assess the health and environmental impacts of the use of large numbers of laptop machines in the same classroom? Are there plans to measure impacts of radiation, noise or ergonomic problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome? Are there plans to assess the impact on effective teaching of the use of up to several hundred keyboards simultaneously in large classes? Are there Human Subjects implications that need to be addressed? If so, what are they, who is responsible, and how are they being addressed?
26. What plans are being developed to provide the University with adequate legal protection from expectable litigation associated with student and staff consequences from theft, machine damage, medical problems and physiological damage? How are costs to be covered? What will University perspectives and policies be toward such litigation and legal protection needs?
27. What plans are being developed to provide faculty, academic staff and graduate assistants with the hardware and software equivalent to or appropriately compatible with those required of students to enact and operate teaching use plans? Will departments end up being required to support the costs of these investments from the remainder of their already-declining budgets to fund these new needs? What plans are being made as to needs and frequencies of refreshing or updating, and how are those costs to be funded?

#### VIII. AREA OF PEDAGOGY:

28. Are there any plans to develop pedagogical models for use of computing as part of curricula? Is there any assessment as to what extent various applications improve the learning of subject matter, as opposed to skill levels, compared to more traditional teaching strategies?
29. What plans are there to train the faculty, the academic staff and the rotating population of graduate assistants more fully in competence for computer use in teaching? Are such plans self-selective or universal? How will they be balanced against existing commitments and requirements?

How will they be factored against demands on faculty for particular kinds of performances to qualify for tenure, promotion or merit recognition?

30. What plans are being made to provide for application and operation support services for department, faculty and graduate assistant computing, both for hardware/software support and for use support? Is there any sense of budget implications? How will it be funded?

Respectfully submitted, -

Joseph Chartkoff, College of Social Science  
Peter Imig, College of Human Ecology  
Howard Bossen, College of Communication Arts & Sciences