

Constitution of the MTU System Administration Council

Amended: January 25, 2001

Name

The name of this organization is MTU System Administration Council and can be referred to as mtusysadm for discussion purposes.

Constituents

The principal mission of the University is education, research, and public service, as outlined in MTU's Strategic Plan. To assist in accomplishing this mission, MTU uses technology and, more specifically, computers and computing-related technology. Every University department/division which uses or supports computer systems and MTU's network is a constituent of this Council.

Responsibility and Authority

Basic operation and support of departmental/divisional computing resources are the responsibility of the department/division. If the actions of a department/division, however, affect other department/division(s) or campus-wide resources and services, then those issues will be brought to the Council. Disputes between department/division(s) should be handled between themselves, unless a broader audience is needed.

Organizational Structure-----

Members

Each voting member of the Council is responsible for representing their department/division(s) views and for informing them of on-going discussions and ramifications of proposed standards.

Technical decisions of the Council may have ramifications on the budgets, procedures, services, of those represented which are not always obvious.

Therefore, it is imperative that the department/division(s) understand the impact of discussions and make their views known to the Council through their representative. Members are subsequently responsible for communicating final Council decisions to their department/division(s).

Full Council

The CEx Computer System Administration Guidelines outline that

Departments[Divisions] are accountable through their system administrator to the University for the participation in the technical development, deployment, and maintenance of campus network applications and adherence to campus technical standards.

September 27, 1994

The Council will function as a subcommittee of the CAC and the Chair of the Council is a voting member of the CAC. This ensures that technical ramifications of decisions can be heard and the main issues of the Council are taken formally to the CEx.

The Council has the responsibility and authority to consider, decide, and recommend reasonable, campus-wide, technical standards for issues proposed by the University community. These standards are recorded as "MTU RFCs" (or MTU Request For Comment), similar to those used to run the Internet.

The RFCs are approved/rejected by consensus vote of the Council to ensure that all department/division(s) can comply. After approval, RFCs are considered recommendations to the CAC and must be submitted to its Standards Subcommittee for approval and subsequent archiving.

Alternative technical methods, techniques, protocols, and procedures may

be used by a department/division unless they interfere with the established MTU RFCs or compromise the integrity of other departmental/divisional efforts, MTU's network, or MTU's presence on the Internet.

The Council also has the responsibility to assure all technical issues of interest to the campus can be discussed and addressed in an open and collegial environment. Decisions that affect University policy, other than those relating to technical issues, must be referred by the Council to the appropriate person/University committee for consideration, input, and combined judgement.

Leadership of the Council

There will be three officers of the Council: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Information Officer.

- The Chair
 - Conducts Council meetings
 - Represent Council at CAC and CEx meetings
 - Liaison to IT
 - Encouragement of meeting attendance
- The Vice-Chair
 - Assist the Chair
 - Handles rumor control
 - Ensures that subcommittees are populated and functioning
 - Handles absentee ballots for upcoming votes
 - Presides over RFAs
- The Information Officer
 - Takes and records meeting minutes
 - Takes attendance
 - Maintains mtusysadm website
 - Collects agenda info, posts, and distributes at least 3 days prior to the meeting
 - Maintains membership list

Leadership positions will have a term of one year. Nominees must be current voting members. Nominations for officers will be made at the last meeting in June. Officer elections will be held during the first meeting in July.

Subcommittees

There are two types of subcommittees; ad-hoc and standing. Ad-hoc subcommittees are temporary and generally focused on a specific issue or group of issues. Standing subcommittees are permanent and are defined in the constitution.

Functions-----

The primary functions of the Council are derived from the Computer System Administration Guidelines passed by the Computer Executive Committee (CEX) in September 1994. These include,

- o Assistance with hiring and analysis of support needs
- o Education among the members of the Council
- o Communication and coordination of technical standards and issues across campus
- o Council management

In general, the Council will function as a forum for technical issues regarding the interoperability of networked computer devices. It will also function as a communication link among technical staff across campus.

o Assistance with hiring and analysis of support needs: The Council, upon request, can assist department/division(s) with planning and evaluation of system support needs as well as hiring of computer systems personnel.

1. Assistance with hiring at request of department/division --
A voting member(s) of the Council can assist with job descriptions, questions, and interviewing.

2. Analysis of support needs -- The Council can assist in the evaluation of performance / configuration of computing system infrastructure, and evaluation of support personnel needs.

This function is the purvue of the Support Needs Subcommittee.

o Education among the members of the Council:

* Currently, the University spends close to \$700,000 annually in salaries for staff that do system administration (not necessarily full-time). Given the rate of technological change system administrators must handle, MTU should focus attention on the continual education of the University's system administration personnel. An annual budget should be established. Some benefits of a budget would be the ability to pay for video conferences or reference books of special interest to system administrators, as well as being able to send people to conferences.

* Cited from CEx system administration guidelines from 1994

The Council will function as an information/methods sharing forum for members and other network and system administrators.

The Education Subcommittee will be responsible for the development of the Council's education plan.

o Communication and coordination of technical standards and issues across campus: MTU is a distributed computing environment and as such relies heavily on strong communication ties among system administrators.

Communication and coordination entails:

1. Discussing, deciding, disseminating technical standards to effected constituents.
2. Coordinating to cover absences, sharing resources and information, and implementing new methods or procedures.

o Council management:

* The Council would elect its own leadership, set its own membership rules, and be responsible for insuring that its members are continually educated.

* Cited from CEx system administration guidelines from 1994

The Constitution Subcommittee will be responsible for ongoing development of the constitution as well as resolvment of interpretation issues.

If a subcommittee's report affects policy at a higher level, the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the subcommittee have a responsibility to take the report to the appropriate person(s)/University committee(s) for a

decision.

Operational procedures-----

Meetings

Open meetings of the Council will be biweekly. Closed meetings will be called on an ad-hoc basis to discuss impending campus network security issues. They will be open to all voting members and additional outside individuals as invited by the Council officers. After the incident is resolved, the meeting will be recorded.

Funding

The Council is funded through the annual budgetary process. Use of funds is determined by the Education Subcommittee.

Membership

*** Voting Members**

Each department **MUST** have a representative, and each division **MAY** have representation other than their departmental representative. A voting member can represent more than one department and/or division.

The proposed voting member's name will be put forth by each head of the department and the person **MUST** meet the requirements outlined below.

1. Members are knowledgeable about departmental/divisional technology needs. Members of the Council must be knowledgeable about current and future department/division plans and budgets; as well as how technology can be integrated into these plans.

2. Members represent the views of the sponsoring department/division(s). How Council members gather this information is the responsibility of the division.

3. Members are MTU employees who actively support the system and network inside the department/division they represent. Council members must be involved in both the department/division plans and the implementations of the technical standards. This is so they understand the technical ramifications and possible related budgetary and procedural implications for the department/division.

A voting member, though able to represent more than one department, may only cast one vote. If a current voting member is proposed by another department or division to handle their voting, this is simply made as an announcement at the next mtusysadm meeting.

* Participatory Members

In addition to voting members, many divisions on campus have several employees that support the system and network in that division. It is seen that those individuals would be a valuable resource and should also be recognized by the mtusysadm Council. Therefore, the current voting member from that division can propose additional person(s) from their division as a participating member.

A participating member SHOULD meet most of the above requirements for a voting member (as listed below). This member will be encouraged to attend meetings and be solicited for input and his/her expertise. However, this member will NOT have the ability to vote.

* General Membership

Departments and/or divisions can change their representative(s) if they feel their best interest is not being served. Any proposed member, whether voting or participatory, must still meet the requirements listed above. In the event that a department/division is removed from the University, that member will also be removed from voting status. There are no term length restrictions.

ALL Proposed members must be approved by a Council vote.

Officers

* Chain of Command

- In the event that the Chair is unavailable to conduct a meeting or temporarily perform the duties of Chair, succession of command is as follows:

- 1) Vice-Chair
- 2) Information Officer
- 3) Constitution SubCommittee Chair
- 4) Education SubCommittee Chair
- 5) Support Needs SubCommittee Chair
- 6) Meeting cancelled.

- In the event that the Vice-Chair is unavailable to temporarily perform assigned duties, they will be performed by the Information Officer.

- In the event that the Information Officer is unavailable to temporarily perform the duties assigned, succession of command is as follows:

- 1) Vice-Chair
- 2) Member at large selected by Chair

*** Vacancy**

- Chair Vacated

The Vice-Chair is made the interim Chair. Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair are solicited at the next meeting, with elections to be held at the following meeting. If Vice-Chair is elected to the office of Chair, proceed with elections for the office of Vice-Chair. If the Vice-Chair is not elected to the office of Chair, then the Vice-Chair retains that office. The election process is then terminated.

- Vice-Chair Vacated

There will be no interim Vice-Chair. Nominations for Vice-Chair are solicited at the next meeting, with elections to be held at the following meeting. Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair are assumed by the Information Officer.

- Information Officer Vacated

The Vice-Chair is made the interim Information Officer. Nominations for Information Officer are solicited at the next meeting, with elections to be held at the following meeting.

*** Officer Removal**

Any voting member who would like to propose the removal of an elected officer must submit, in writing, a petition stating their reasons along with three other voting member signatures to the Chair of the Constitution Subcommittee.

The Chair of the Constitution Subcommittee will announce the petition and the need for a confidence vote during the next

meeting. Secret ballot voting will then be conducted during the next 2 weeks, with results given at the following meeting. The result of the vote is effective immediately upon tabulation. There are no provisions for an appeal.

Proposals for MTU RFCs

A topic or issue becomes a proposal when a written recommendation is submitted to the Council by a representative of the campus community. A Council voting member must be named as the sponsor of the proposal to ensure that requested information is provided concerning the issue, a decision is made, and the solution is implemented, if needed.

To change an RFC, a proposal is submitted to create a new RFC, superceding the existing one. If passed, the old RFC will be altered to refer to the new one.

Subcommittees

Ad-hoc Subcommittees are formed by Council vote and are given their charge by the Chair of the Council. The Chair of each Subcommittee will make recommendations to the Council after their findings are complete. If the recommendation is rejected by the Council, the subcommittee must reconvene and re-evaluate its recommendations, unless the Council decides otherwise.

The Ad-hoc Subcommittees serve at the request of the Council and only the Council can vote as to whether the Ad-hoc Subcommittee can disband and/or the topic be dropped.

Standing Subcommittees will consist of 3-5 Council members. Openings will be filled at a regular Council meeting by volunteers. In the event that there are more volunteers than open positions, the Council will fill the position through a name drawn lottery. If membership falls below the minimum number of members and there is an insufficient number of volunteers, the Council Chair will appoint sufficient members.

Subcommittee Chairs, both standing and ad-hoc, are appointed by and serve at the discretion of the Council Chair. Subcommittee Chairs must be voting members.

Changes to this constitution

Changes to this constitution may be made at any time. A voting member can put forth a proposal/amendment, and the Council then discusses and votes on the changes.

Voting

Voting, other than the election and removal of officers as well as constitution votes, is done by consensus. Officers are elected by a majority of quorum. Removal of an officer requires a 2/3 vote of the Council. Constitutional changes and amendments also require a 2/3 vote of the Council.

Voting for officers will be conducted by secret ballot during the vote meeting. Secret and absentee ballots will be presided over by a non-voting member committee of two individuals picked from at large during the vote meeting. They will be responsible for tallying votes and conveying results to the Council during the election process. The vote will be a runoff vote between the top two vote getters, assuming one nominee doesn't have the majority of the vote in the first round.

Secret ballot voting for removal of officers is handled by the Constitution Subcommittee, with final ballots due 24hrs prior to the next meeting. The officers will be notified of the results prior to the meeting, with the full Council being notified during the meeting.

Proposals are discussed for at least one meeting. After discussion is over, a voting member calls for a vote to be made for the next meeting. At the subsequent vote meeting, a voting member may delay the vote to the next meeting. Only one delay period is allowed per proposal.

If the Council does not approve a proposal, an RFA may be raised.

Request For Action

An RFA is raised in response to an impasse in voting on a proposal. An RFA

may be raised by any voting member to the Council Chair. The Vice-Chair and involved parties must follow the escalation procedure below when an RFA is called:

1. The parties talk to each other and try to resolve the issue themselves. If this is not possible then the RFA proceeds to step 2.
2. The Council officers will meet with the parties to negotiate an agreement. If no agreement is made then the RFA proceeds to step 3.
3. The Council officers will meet with the parties and the following people to negotiate an agreement:

Department head/chair/manager (or designee), Director of Information Technology (or designee), and other people as requested.

If in any of the steps, an agreement can be made without any modification, the proposal is passed. If the proposal was modified in any way, it must be repropose to the Full Council.

If the RFA process can not be completed within 6 wks, the proposal will be defeated.

Definitions-----

Department

Department is defined as all University recognized departments as listed and approved by the Provost and Board of Control.

Division

Division is defined as distinct section of a department that has distinct needs that may be different from the governing department. These needs may include but are not limited to their own servers, budget, and computing system personnel.

Member

Member, unless otherwise designated, is meant to include both the voting members and participatory members.

Quorum

A voting quorum includes both the voting members present at the voting meeting and absentee ballots sent to the Vice-Chair prior to the meeting, and is to be 2/3 of the Council membership.

Technical standard

Decisions of the Council appear as "MTU RFCs" (or MTU Request For Comment), similar to those used to run the Internet. These RFCs are recommended campus-supported technical methods, techniques, protocols, and procedures which will work with the network topology and application configurations. Alternative technical methods, techniques, protocols, and procedures may be used by a department/division unless they interfere with the established MTU RFCs or compromise the integrity of other departmental/divisional efforts or the MTU or external network.