Statistical and Qualitative Software Support Advisory Panel

April 23, 2009

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:  Laurie Broadwater, Patrick Coy, Erica Eckert, Julie Gedeon, Ann Jacobson, Steve Schindler, Barbara Schloman, Richard Sierpe, Murali Shanker, Tina Ughrin, Manfred VanDulman, Kathryn Wilson

1. Minutes of March 31 meeting accepted
2. Changes made to needs assessment report (based on input from Panel members) were presented; the report received endorsement by the Panel

3. At the March meeting, it was suggested the Panel devise some guiding principles surrounding software and support services. The notion of generalized versus specialized was brought up. Tina drafted a table with cells for specialized and generalized, teaching and research as a starting point for this discussion. Numerous ideas were generated as to how the information could be presented.

The table was seen as constraining, because the software and service decisions are multidimensional. Other dimensions suggested include licensing, delivery, support; undergraduate versus graduate instruction; specific discipline. Eventually the group decided flow charting may be a better way to present the information. Elements to be included are:

Teaching
  is this used in the classroom?
  undergrad/grad

Research
  What is usage level?
  Threshold for usage
  Productivity Potential for future usage: would availability of tool increase the success of researcher

Licensing/pricing
  Dollars prohibitive
  University pays all -------------------------------------- individual pays all

Capability/features

Units:  college/depts.

Target audience (students, researchers)
Availability models
Concurrent; electronic classrooms

Support—adopt open source model of documentation and transfer of knowledge

Other ideas that need to be included in a statement of principles to guide statistical software decisions include:

USE ISSUES

**Generalized**
Teaching: Basic programs, used instructionally, use in labs
Research: higher/analytical tools; latest tools
  - Research university, people need to stay on the cutting edge; need to experience new technologies in order to improve, environment needs to be conducive
Model of centralized may be narrower than university-wide—maybe it’s college/dept

**Specialized**
Decision of specific researcher to stick with SW that doesn’t have traction
May require reconsideration when there is enough demand; can we define threshold new SW reaches that requires centralized support

FUNDING ISSUES

Venture capital needs to be included or there will be no growth
Require investment with assessment—in 3 years, who is using, what have they done with it, what have they produced?
User group should be formed to disseminate
No cost to departments/colleges for lab licenses—university should provide
Certain level of “specialized” that should be paid for centrally
Central funding is crucial—investment in university future

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Murali surveyed College of Business: teaching, labs, research
  It was suggested that other units be surveyed using similar survey
  Department level may be better than college for collecting data
  Decisions may be made at the college level

4. Package renewal decisions need more discussion
   Use of EQS and LISREL higher in sociology and psychology than previously thought
   AMOS used instructionally b/c it works seamlessly with SPSS

6. The Panel agreed to continue meeting over the summer.