



iMacs for Graphics and Publishing

Proposed Motion: *Allocate 17,831 to replace 13 Publicity Center and AS Review design-specific computers with iMacs out of the Discretionary Reserve account.*

Sponsor: *Publicity Center Coordinator, Jeff Bates*

Persons of Contact: *Jeff Bates, Chris Miller, Stephen Ateser*

Guest Speaker: *Jeff Bates*

Date: 2/23/15

Attached Document

Please see attached budget prepared by VU IT Manager

Background & Context

The Publicity Center requires high level computers for animation and vector design. Every four years AS computers are replaced or trickled down to other users. VU IT has made it a priority to ensure PC computers are the most robust in our organization. However, even when using Windows machines capable of running our necessary software, we still experience regular lock-ups, daily degradation of performance, and long wait times for rendering animation and complex layered files. This results in reduced staff productivity, wasted time, staff frustration, and reduced ability to recruit the best designers possible

This proposal is a direct outgrowth of the Publicity Center's assessment recommendations to the Structure and Program Advisory Committee. The recommendation was approved by the Committee on February 20.

Prior to presenting the recommendation to SPAC, the PC Coordinator met with the VU Finance Manager, ASVP Business and Operations, the Assistant Director of Student Activities, and the VU IT Manager to discuss cost and possible funding potential.

Conversations with the VU IT Manager have resulted in his support for this proposal.

Summary of Proposal

This proposal requests replacement of all design-specific computers in the Publicity Center and AS Review. Working with iMacs will improve productivity, reduce computer downtime and provide a more stable and relevant platform for our highly skilled staff to produce the high quality design necessary to showcase the AS's sophisticated and busy programming schedule.

The one downside to this proposal is cost, and it's the main reason the PC hasn't made this request earlier. Macs will cost about double what we would pay for "equivalent" Dell machines. It's important to note, however, that Macs use different optimization than PCs do when processing animation and vector files. An iMac will perform better when creating graphics files simply because it's designed to do so. This is why we see so many graphics professionals using Macs.

Because graphics and publishing professionals tend to use Macs more than PCs, software manufacturers tend to release updates and enhancements earlier on Macs, and sometimes don't fix software bugs at all on their PC based versions. This has slowed us down several times in the Publicity Center.

With our current design practice pushing our computing harder, and our desire to stay fresh and innovative with our AS promotions, this is the time to move the Publicity Center and AS Review to Macs.

Fiscal Impacts

The Publicity Center and AS Review are scheduled for computer replacement this fiscal year. This proposal is timed to allow for ordering of Macs at the same time as other AS computers. Funding this now would allow for a seamless replacement process. VU IT has earmarked \$17,680 for replacement of graphics-specific computers in the PC this year. These dollars would offset the total cost of buying iMacs, resulting in the total amount requested in this proposal.

Rationale

The Publicity Center and AS Review are at the core of AS promotions. Our biggest challenge is having enough time to complete the vast number of graphics requests we receive, and to complete the AS Review layout in time for hard deadlines at the printer. We have struggled for years with Windows based machines, and VU IT has done an excellent job specifying computers and providing us with the best tools within that platform. Still, it's become clear that we need the industry standard platform for computer graphics performance we can count on and grow with. This proposal addresses this issue in a financially modest and well researched manner. We are excited to begin a new era of design performance using iMacs in the PC.