Mitchell convened the meeting at 3:05 p.m. A quorum was not present.

Classroom Technology
Mitchell introduced Roeber, Schaeffer and Sandhorst, who had been invited to answer APC questions about classroom technology. Schaeffer and Sandhorst said the number of general-purpose classrooms equipped with technology has gone from two in 1994 to 102 in 2005. Information Services supports 39 of those classrooms. The rest are supported by departments or colleges, or are unsupported.

In the past many classrooms were equipped using one-time funding. Deferred maintenance money allowed some technical support and equipment upgrades, but there has been a lack of funding for many ongoing needs. At this time there is no replacement equipment funding for some 50 classrooms that need to be renovated.

In 2001 Information Services and Facilities Management started working together on classroom renovations to improve consistency and make designs more user-friendly. Academic Affairs has relaxed the standard of consistency between classrooms in order to equip more classrooms at least partially with technology.

Kettler asked about the budget for instructional technology in classrooms. Schaeffer said Academic Affairs continually looks for cost-cutting measures. First, only Windows-compatible computers will be installed in classrooms, eliminating the need for Macintosh technical support. Projected costs based on a single-platform system are about $27,000 for a small classroom and $45,000 for a medium classroom. One-time costs to replace current control systems across campus would be about $1.2 to $1.9 million. The annualized cost for classroom technology renovations, calculating a 3- to 5-year life cycle, would range from $8,500 for a small classroom to $13,000 for a lecture hall.
Nunez asked what would be included in a room upgraded at the stated cost of $50,000. Schaeffer said rather than replacing all components in one room, the procedure is to replace switches and other short-lived components in multiple rooms concurrently to maintain a level of standardization. He and Sandhorst agreed that the cost of technology is decreasing and that trend is expected to continue. Schaeffer said the use of multi-functional devices also drives costs down.

Mitchell asked why upgrades were so expensive. Roeber said the cost of upgrading lecture halls is more than double the cost of upgrading a smaller classroom. Besides the obvious need for multiple projectors and screens, hearing assistance technology and other concerns must be addressed.

Kettler commented that classroom technology might be viewed by constituents as unnecessary. He said there is no measurable increase in productivity resulting from expensive upgrades. Roeber said classroom comfort and aesthetics are intangible recruiting factors. Classroom technology must be current in order for UNL to remain competitive.

Keown asked whether computers in student labs might be upgraded less often to save IT costs. Sandhorst said the replacement cycle for student computers has been lengthened to four years. The laptop checkout program is popular with students and increasingly sit-down labs are being replaced by laptops and wireless networking. Roeber said the wireless internet demand is not in classrooms but in locations where students are concentrated, such as residence halls. Mitchell asked whether students could be required to buy their own laptop computers. Schaeffer said students in Architecture are required to buy laptops, but the program uses them heavily. Roeber said it is hard to convince students that their investment in technology is necessary, plus the curriculum needs to support the requirement. Mitchell remarked that some universities give laptops as part of a scholarship package.

An innovation that is expected to decrease equipment downtime is equipment that allows for remote monitoring of equipment and particular event frequency. Using this technology, IT is able to identify and perform preventive maintenance before trouble occurs. Keown asked whether it would save money to keep using old equipment until it breaks down. Sandhorst said it is more economical to maintain equipment than to fix it after it is broken. Old equipment is likely to have inferior performance even if it doesn’t break down.

Mitchell asked what faculty think of the “clicker” system. Roeber said 10 percent of faculty use it frequently and perhaps the other 90 percent consider it a waste of time. Working with IT to get people comfortable with technology is a priority. Students have a one-time fee of $30 for the clickers. Drawbacks are that students forget them, the batteries run down, and they require extra instructor preparation time. Schaeffer said it costs around $45 to furnish the hardware for clickers and to install them.

Mitchell thanked Roeber, Schaeffer and Sandhorst for the information and they left. Eckhardt arrived.
IANR Academic Senate Letter
Keown presented a memorandum that senators from IANR had addressed to IANR department heads. It concerned the implementation of a two-percent budget cut that Chancellor Perlman announced in July. IANR departments were directed to present options for two percent, four percent and eight percent budget reductions. The memo said that differential budget reductions among departments would effectively restructure IANR without APC review, that criteria for making the cuts had not been discussed, and that consideration of eight-percent cuts would be devastating to morale. The issue was continued to the next APC meeting since a quorum was not present.

Kettler said it seems there is always bad news about the University’s budget. Waller said budget cuts are often accompanied by tuition increases, so they are a double-edged sword. He said the proposed 1.6 percent cut is not likely to be disruptive as long as it is across the board. However, deeper cuts in some departments would make students and parents skeptical about the University’s commitment to them. Eckhardt said APC should have a standing subcommittee to deal with budget cuts before issues heat up.

Long-Range Planning Subcommittee
Eckhardt highlighted the LRPS’s recommendations to the Senior Vice Chancellor on strategic planning. The subcommittee’s charge was to look for cross-cutting themes to build upon and to suggest processes that might enable good ideas to move forward. The LRPS recommended greater emphasis on teaching; an interdisciplinary research alternative to General Education requirements; a University College made up of faculty from three or more colleges that are involved in a multidisciplinary project; juried assessment of outcomes; and rewards for faculty who participate in the University College.

The APC did not take action on the recommendations due to lack of a quorum. The Long-Range Planning Subcommittee will present the document to the Senior Vice Chancellor on December 2.

Ecology Now!
Mitchell received a letter in October from Ecology Now, a student organization. It raised questions about UNL’s commitment to recycling since the position of Recycling Manager was eliminated in 2002-03. Mitchell and Nunez are working with Business and Finance and Facilities Management to address the issues. Mitchell will update the APC as information is acquired.

APC Website
Nunez said that Institutional Research and Planning and University Communications had set up an APC website at Senior Vice Chancellor Couture’s request. He asked that the members look at the site, in particular the narrative about APC’s purpose, and send comments to him. Mitchell suggested that a contact person’s name be shown on the first page. Nunez said Kramer will be listed as the APC contact.

Other Issues
Mitchell said volunteers were needed for Academic Program Reviews. Hallbeck would not be able to serve on the Animal Science APR. Waller volunteered for the Computer Science and
Engineering APR scheduled for March 26 to 29, 2006. Mitchell will contact other APC members about the open APRs.

Waller said Central Administration and the Nebraska Coordinating Commission were discussing new guidelines for proposal submissions. Mitchell said that should be discussed at a future APC meeting.

Mitchell commented on the difficulty of getting a quorum since two positions on the APC are vacant. In addition Eckhardt, who is serving as an interim member, will leave at the end of the semester. Mitchell said it was important to have a quorum at the next meeting to vote on several issues. She said that cookies would be available at the December 14 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lona Kramer, APC Coordinator