Present: Stacey Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Teresa Cook, Elise Gramza, Paula Hagstrom, Leonard Johnson, and Spencer Tower

Call to Order: 10:07 a.m.

SPARC MEETING

Leonard would like to gather some feedback as we are the best group to provide information to SPARC for an online learning plan for the university.

OPEN FORUMS

Cheryl reported on the Student Capabilities forums.

Everyone would like some sort of credential that a student is capable of using online courses, some way to insure basic skills have been passed. Special skills unique to a program could be taught at the program level. Instructors feel they are spending a great deal of online class time helping students just to maneuver in the system. Some suggestions and comments from the team are:

- Have a one-week period during the first two weeks of the semester for students to take the online training
- MyFSU or FSUS could catch the students coming to Big Rapids; however, Cheryl finds the majority of online students are off campus
- Some faculty do not want a prerequisite for enrolling in online courses, as this could be a deterrent to some potential enrollees
- Assistance in developing the training could be asked of our Educational Technologies Librarian
- A tutorial could be developed with modules
- A competencies course for both students and faculty is needed
- Best practices for universities using a testing system would be worth learning
- Whatever we offer, it must be something everyone can access without being in BANNER

Cheryl will continue to research how others are doing this type of testing, and she will send our group a link to information on WEB099, a program currently in use by St. Clair County Community College.

Teresa Cook reported on the Faculty Capabilities forums.

The feeling in her forums also was that faculty should be able to prove competency before teaching online. Comments from our discussion are:

- Level 3 of certification offered by FCTL should be the minimum needed
- The recorder at one of Teresa's sessions is a student who commented that she has five online courses currently, and all of them require her to go somewhere on line other than FerrisConnect
- We should require that everything be accessed through FerrisConnect

- Consistency is a must; FerrisConnect should be our overall university basic course shell, with individual course shells contained within it
- At minimum, a course template within FerrisConnect could be offered as basic communality, while still recognizing academic freedom by its flexibility
- Commercial software packages could serve this purpose, if they are compatible with FerrisConnect and also transparent to the student

Another point of view expressed at the forums was that faculty should have the right to say which classes are taught in which manner.

- Faculty should not be able to say "No" to online, with the possible exception that some faculty could be grandfathered and new faculty required to teach online
- Larry Schult commented that much of COET's curriculum is based on hands-on learning; but lecture courses could be online, with lab courses being offered in the summer.
- Over time, lab courses may be developed in an online format

Spence reported on the Course Quality/Learning Effectiveness forums and distributed copies of his notes.

- Arts and Sciences and Lang and Lit seem to have a more collaborative culture than others
- Currently, faculty are required to have two of their courses evaluated, but no specification is made as to whether or not they must be face-to-face courses or online ones.
- An evaluation software program, IDEA, was presented to the Academic Senate recently; and the hope is to bring it to the individual colleges now. It allows customization by adding questions to the form that could be specific to online evaluation.
- Do we need to build a management staff for online teaching exclusively? Funds would have to be allocated
- The more faculty input we receive, the better

Leonard will take all the feedback from the forums to the SPARC meeting this month for discussion. In March, he will bring the topic of structure to SPARC.

ROUNDTABLE

Stacy reported that in order to provide service during evening hours, FLITE has rehired two employees who had been let go by TAC. John Urbanick has been given a directive to go to 24/7 support and keep track of how many calls are received. Novell passwords no longer sync, and students with ID barcodes must swipe them, but online and distance-learning students must re-enter their ID's/passwords on multiple screens.

Leonard mentioned cap sizes and posed the question, "what if faculty were paid per student for 100%-online classes?" We believe the Provost has just put together a table on cap sizes, and we'll try to reference it for information. One possibility would be to have a minimum guaranteed salary established, and more offered per student above that minimum, up to an established cap size.

Teresa suggested we view the DVD on e-learning at our next meeting, at least in part, due to the fact that it's 90 minutes long. She'll book a room in the IRC for February 24.

Spence asked if we could reschedule our start time from 10:00 to 10:30 for future meetings. There was no objection, so Marilyn will send new invitations changing the meeting time to 10:30 – noon.

NEXT MEETING

February 24, 2011 – 10:30 – 12:00 – IRC

Meeting adjourned 11:18 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma