Present: Stacy Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Teresa Cook, Julie Coon, Elise Gramza, Jackie Hughes, Leonard Johnson, David Marion, Elaine McCullough, Ron McKean, Todd Stanislav, Robbie Teahen, Michelle Teschendorf, Deb Thalner and Spencer Tower

Call to Order: 10:05 a.m.

We welcome as guest today: Mary Holmes of IT

BlackBoard Attendance Reports

Elise reported that the new version of FerrisConnect reports is presenting a challenge to improve student attendance. Copies of reports from both WebCT and BlackBoard were handed out. It is easy to see when the last time a student was engaged online with the WebCT report, but not so with the pie charts from BlackBoard reports.

Robbie commented that from a federal compliance perspective, these are only students who have dropped. An audit could ask us to return financial aid for any students who are not actively engaged but have never dropped. Therefore, verification of activity is extremely important.

Elise stated that if she gets notification that a student has not been in attendance by the fourth day, she will drop them; but not all faculty communicate this to Records.

Michelle asked the question: What about students who do not show up for several weeks and then take the final exam?

Robbie commented that the federal government is paying more attention than before to online classes. In face-to-face, the instructors know even if they are not taking attendance because they can see whether or not a student is sitting in the classroom. Elise confirmed that federal requirements are treating online differently.

Robbie also reported that on a questionnaire she completes each year, there is the question, "how are you authenticating engagement, and what are you doing to make it more sophisticated?" She has not seen this year's questionnaire yet but assumes we will need to answer this question again.

Mary stated that the overall summary gives access date and continues until printed. It also shows what the person accessed, percentage wise. Jackie commented that Page 8 shows this person went in only four days, while the pie chart looks like she is quite engaged. The blue pie chart takes content area and breaks it out into percentages. One other report that shows the last time the student logged in, but there is no evidence of engagement. Elise reiterated that we have lost the ability to see what the student did while online. Maybe we can come up with a percentage of hours a student would have to be online to be engaged.

Leonard suggested that we require something that has to go into the grade book every week to verify engagement. Spence felt there may be a percentage of faculty who will not diligently provide verification.

Jackie recently worked with a faculty member who found, in this sixth week of classes, five people in his course haven't even logged in. She showed the instructor how he could send them an email right at that

time to ask them what they are planning to do. This faculty notice goes into an external email. Replies go to the instructor's email. This is different than sending a "message" within the program.

Robbie felt we could ask for only a progress report from each student. Communicate to faculty, "Reports are not giving us what we need, we are relying on you to let us know student is engaged. Here's how you can do it: . . ."

Stacy commented that a quality issue that has been the same issue right along is the students wondering where the professor is. Michelle felt every professor must have two significant postings to all students every week. Deb commented that if you are an adjunct you must allow your liaison to see your course.

Leonard asked if there is something we can do to assist faculty on an automated level. Jackie reported that Starfish Solutions has a student-retention program that generates reports automatically. Teresa felt that the educational counselor needs to know this information. Robbie commented that she would like to see a demo of this tool.

We need a long-term solution to this, but in the short term this semester Robbie and Julie Coon could work on a message that goes out to the deans and the Academic Leadership Council that we need compliance every week that shows the last date of academic content activity. We also have a first draft of an attendance policy that we will continue to work on.

Student Readiness Assessment Policy – Follow-up

Robbie reported that a draft was updated and sent to the Policy Committee yesterday. The Policy Committee meets next week, and we will discuss this at our next meeting. Meanwhile, Robbie will email everyone on our team the updated draft.

Teresa commented that Davenport has backed off on its assessment requirements as online numbers have increased because it was so much trouble. Robbie will look at the Phoenix report she has. Training is down to two days from two weeks. Their enrollment has grown to 400,000.

Online Wait List Data from Spring 2012 (300-Level English)

Deb distributed handouts of a spring wait list analysis. Only about 16% were Big Rapids students in an online class. Majority are off-campus students.   It was noted that 121 were duplicates (placed themselves on more than one wait list). Of the 235 who didn't get into an online class, some would select a face-to-face class in Traverse City or Greenville. Some Allied Health students wanted face-to-face classes, but none worked into their schedules. We do have an issue with Big Rapids students wanting online classes that we are not able to provide. We offer no evening face-to-face classes. We have a lot of commuter students with issues. Some senior-level classes are only offered once, which causes conflicts. This is a general capacity issue. We want to expand into online, but we don't have the instructors. Deb has had conversations with department heads about English because it seems to be a bottleneck. The department heads would like a better handle on who needs only online and who doesn't. They are concerned they are taking away from their face-to-face enrollment. She is working on doing a test run in the fall to see if things can't be done a little differently.

Cheryl suggested putting out a memo to verify what CAS wants to do in the fall. She has heard an untrue rumor that no on-campus student would be allowed to take an online class. On-campus students have to contact the department to get into a class.

Online is set up so students can self-register. CPTS will no longer be keeping a wait list for Arts & Sciences courses. Off-campus will be determined by what program students are in, not just where they live. This is good from the online students' perspective because they can register themselves, and from the departments' perspective because this will give them better information on who the students from Big Rapids are. Hopefully, this will help reduce wait lists.

Fall registration begins March 19. Deans' secretaries need to have all coding on by then. It is the department's call on whether or not students need an online class. Summer registration has been quiet, waiting list calls began on Monday, February 13. Due to many factors, a reduced number of students taking classes is expected this summer. Elaine commented that one of the reasons was the data we had on high-end completion rate demographics. A message has been sent out to all colleges asking for names of students who are recommended for online summer courses. This semester both face-to-face and online classes have been full. We have reached our capacity percentage of adjunct instructors.

OTHER

Spence inquired if adjuncts all have a regular teacher supervising them. Julie commented that we are looking at ways for regular faculty to serve as mentors to adjuncts. Adjunct instructors do not build the courses, faculty are very happy to do this. We need a core approach to courses being taught by faculty and adjunct instructors.

A discussion followed on off-campus adjunct instructors who may not follow the book provided by faculty. In such cases, faculty should provide feedback to their departments as well as talk to the location where the adjunct is teaching. Faculty can give adjuncts copies of the course shells to aid in teaching online classes, and they can review any new book recommended by adjuncts. Deans do have to approve use of all textbooks before they can be used in classes.

The federal regulations seem more concerned with pricing of books than in the past. We feel that the same approach taken with airlines may be expanded to our area: customers (students) must be given the full cost of everything before registering, not just tuition. Deb commented that Cleary College has the cost of books in with their tuition already. Dave felt that every student should have an iPad.

Deb reported that a follow up on the attendance policy will be on our next agenda, as well as student readiness.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, March 1, 2012   10:00 am to 11:30 pm   CSS-302

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma