

**Present:** Stacy Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Fritz Erickson, Elise Gramza, Mary Holmes, Leonard Johnson, Meegan Lillis, David Nicol, Theresa Raglin, Larry Schult, Robbie Teahen and Spencer Tower

**Call to Order:** 10:32 a.m.

Provost Erickson asked for a review of our group's activities.

#### **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR E-LEARNING AT FERRIS**

Robbie related that the full university community was given the chance to participate in drafting our online policy through campus-wide meetings and focus sessions dedicated to each recommendation. Both student and faculty surveys were well responded to. We are now at an urgent place in regard to transitioning to the new process. Our attention is now focused more on pedagogy. Our current draft is divided into categories with a summary and consolidation, followed by recommendations under each. The objectives are action items that are easy, accessible but required.

We are not retaining students in our online courses, and this should help.

- Faculty training was greatly supported on our surveys (80-90% in favor).
- We may not be at 24/7 IT support right now, but this may happen in the future.
- We recommend that the oversight be in CPTS.
- We want the right people teaching the right classes with quality classwork.

Class size should be addressed; it has been a lingering problem.

Fritz asked for indicators other than just anecdotal evidence, and Robbie cited data from the class she taught last year. She had her electronic hours tracked, but also had to consider many responses she composed first in Word before putting them into the online environment.

How do online outcomes compare to face-to-face outcomes?

Dave noted that other institutions that had set caps showed an average of 37 students – our caps are much lower. Technology has changed as well as faculty and student capabilities; more can be done online than before. Certain disciplines may require more time and degree level may determine class-size cap.

The perception by students of an instructor's level of involvement may be a misconception, because a lot of time is spent beforehand in class preparation for online instructors. Fritz asked if we can afford to have the faculty should their class sizes. Cheryl does a course-by-course analysis that uses the cost to the university for the instructor and the revenue from the class. The cut-off point has been determined to be 42-44% in direct-instructional cost. Anything that will cost more than that (say 50% of revenue) is a no-go. There still may be times when we need to do a course with fewer students than the formula would allow.

Fritz asked if being told what can or cannot be taught online is a violation of academic freedom. We felt not because the faculty is offered the chance to teach a course; and if no one wants to teach a needed class, the dean is free to look elsewhere for a teacher.

One way to handle class-size caps is to allow faculty to present a justification for a lower-than-cap number to the department. This still raises the question of the faculty member's academic freedom being impinged because the faculty body is determining whether or not his class can be taught online. Are we taking individuality away from online teaching? If not, should we do the same thing for all classes? A finalized process on a section-by-section basis is needed, as it appears we currently have two standards: one for online and another for face-to-face classes.

Faculty members should not have their full loads online. We have sufficient load that faculty can say they don't want to teach online. The key is to have the deadline in sufficient time to give faculty full loads. Another issue is if this class can only be taught online at a certain number, there must be empirical evidence to support this.

Fritz is supportive of the idea that all students must prove they are capable of taking an online class, with maybe a grandfathering in of some students.

What Fritz would like to talk about next is to take this document to Deans' Council and work toward having an implementation plan. He feels our draft is great on showing how recommendations were reached. We should take the word "Draft" off and submit the document to him.

He thanked Robbie for pulling the document together. He looks forward to sharing it with Academic Senate and to start receiving feedback from as broad an audience as possible. We need to emphasize the fact that everyone has had an opportunity to review the document and then begin to share it broadly with the campus community. We are also on the agenda for the January, February and part of the March SPARC meetings. Fritz will also discuss the plan with President Eisler.

The most controversial issues in the document will be the required training and required evaluation, especially by peer reviewers. Reference data should be shown, such as how other universities require training and evaluation.

## **ATOMIC LEARNING**

Robbie demonstrated the use of Atomic Learning, which is a series of mini modules on how to use different online programs/tools, such as Blackboard 9.1. This could be a resource to find what you need, when you need it. This is also a tool to help students who are not familiar with Excel spreadsheets, etc., that may be needed in their online classes.

The modules allow faculty to take what they need and put it right into their classes. It offers help all in one place. An outside contractor will keep up on updates and training.

We are in a crisis position in terms of support, so the cost of Atomic Learning is quite reasonable. We need to be self-sufficient because we cannot count on more money from the State, ITAP has been eliminated, and Meegan is leaving us.

Two DCCL lead faculty members took the course to test it out. They felt it was very much what they needed. The cost is \$500 for a 6-week course. Each class will have at least one faculty in it. The instructor is very good at responding to students. Robbie felt this course was very beneficial, and she is feeling positive about this course. The people who are going to teach others have to be certified in online teaching. At \$500 per person, we could get a cadre of people up to speed in a 6-week period. We teach people the tool, and then we send them out to teach online.

Mary Holmes has looked at different trainers in our area. Kathy Seville (Northern University in the upper peninsula) has been engaged to come for two days to train the trainer and two days for early-adopter training. A FAB pilot group, the quality-course design and best-practices committees have been approached for volunteers to take the training or become early adopters. She is currently looking at starting with fifty people in the fall. Training is planned for July 18-22 (two days each week), then peer-mentoring to work through any issues for the fall classes.

Robbie will contact Kathy Seville to discuss what is planned. We need to specify what a trainer needs to do to train our faculty. Some of our first trainers should definitely be from the College of Allied Health Sciences and College of Arts and Sciences. At the most, we have 18 months to move 400 people.

Please go back and talk about who in your colleges is willing to spend time to learn and become “guinea pigs.” We only want people who will help us build. Kathy has a lot of training materials and experience. AHS is looking at whether or not they should do their own training. They would be willing to pilot anything in their college because they have such a need and want to move forward.

It would be good to assign a mentor or coach to first-time instructors.

#### Other Items

Cheryl reported that on our website, under Statewide tab, there is an orientation that is fully online for off-campus orientation. FLITE has a five-part module – please take a look at it, and provide Cheryl with any feedback. Our current platform will not be supported after January 2013.

Robbie projected a costing spreadsheet that shows which online courses are losing money. The fact that this course is losing money may be offset if across the area they are making money. This spreadsheet shows projections of costs (direct expense) against tuition. Dave reported that in the College of Business, for every \$100 in tuition, \$79 is being spent to pay the instructor. Initial cohort size must be large enough to offset attrition. Summer information has been requested from the colleges and will be entered when received. Our graduate enrollment must be increased as we are losing money on all graduate courses. Each college has to create a model that is sustainable. Over all percentage was in the 60's, and more summer classes could offset this. Teaching online as overload classes is less costly. Currently, online is not a very sustainable model.

**NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, June 16, 2011 10:30 am to 12:00 noon CSS 302

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma