Present: Stacy Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Teresa Cook, Elaine McCullough, Ron McKean, Theresa Raglin, Larry Schult, Robbie Teahen, Spencer Tower and John Urbanick

Call to Order: 10:35 a.m.

Joining our meeting today are Bea Griffith-Cooper and Jacklyn Hughes

IMPLEMENTING eQUALITY FOR ONLINE LEARNING

The first part of our meeting was a teleconference with Richard Schilke of Kaplan University, who gave a presentation on online learning and eQuality. In his 10 years' experience with online learning, he has found that most distance students are older, non-traditional students, who will withdraw when met with institutional roadblocks. We need to review our online practices to eliminate roadblocks whenever possible. Some possible solutions:

- A Student Ombudsman
- A separate office for online support
- Ongoing online-pedagogy training
- Training on what types of media are most powerful
- Training of deans on how to observe and evaluate online courses

Usually, by week 4 or 5, the number of withdrawals in each course can be seen, and quality of courses can then be compared. Most often, lack of online instruction is the reason for withdrawal. Students are looking for an answer from their instructors the same day or the next at the latest.

Another truth: online courses just take more time for the instructor; they can be more rewarding also.

Two recommended books:

1. Palloff & Pratt (2011) *The Excellent Online Instructor*
2. Ko & Rosen (2010) *Teaching Online: A Practical Guide*

To be successful online, instruction has to be faculty driven.

Quality Matters is faculty driven and has peer-review helps that help administration with evaluation of online instruction. There is a charge for the current year, past years are free. The rubric and organizational discussion are free.

Questions followed the presentation:

- Are you looking at several sections of the same class or several classes?
  - Multiple sections of the same class
  - Each discipline is unique; you have to look at each course individually
  - When you see a high rate of withdrawal, you can see something is going on

- Who would the ombudsman be?
    - Usually, it is a faculty member, Student Affairs, or support staff in the dean's office
    - If online is in a separate program, the ombudsman is usually housed there.
- How did you promote collaboration and the evaluation of faculty? We are moving toward mandating training, and there may be resistance.
    - In collaborate-course design, the online instructors know who are online instructors, and can get together and share their experiences.
    - All instructors in the course were students in the course for training.
    - Online instructors are invited for briefing and sharing.
    - Bringing the instructors together, virtually or physically, is the key first step to success.
    - Newsletters to all faculty help build that collaboration.
    - Quality Matters recommends that a person from a different school and different discipline is less likely to involve familiarity and influence evaluation.
    - Following a standard rubric makes evaluation go more smoothly.
    - Schilke's experience has been that most faculty were "chomping at the bit" to get the training and start teaching.
- Have you ever come to the point where you told an instructor he didn't measure up and did this result in dropping courses?
    - We have told instructors they cannot teach a course, but we do evaluations on a case-by-case basis and work closely with deans throughout the process.
    - We have never had a course cancelled due to no instructor. We have had multiple sections and multiple instructors.
- What were your biggest headaches, and how did you handle them?
    - The biggest challenge has been with some faculty thinking that online instruction is easy; getting them to understand there is so much more than preparing your PowerPoint presentations.
    - The best way to handle this is to have online instructors be online students also, so they understand what a student goes through in taking an online course. If you haven't taken an online course, you lack that experience and realization that online experience is different than face-to-face experience.

Robbie thanked Richard for his valuable presentation and we disconnected at 11:28 am.

TRAINING

Robbie reported that faculty can do training one-on-one; or, if they are familiar, they can learn it on their own and then participate this fall to demonstrate that they could contribute to a discussion board, etc., to show they are capable of doing the basic things we expect them to do. We can research what tools are available to do this. Jackie Hughes is very good, but she is the only one to answer questions. This results in our current approach being to tell faculty that they are on their own; we will help when we can, but they must feel confident enough to carry on without much support.

Blackboard 9/Sandbox training is available. Gloria Lukusa was given a partial contract for the summer to get the training course set up. We need to utilize Bill Knapp's materials, along with academic learning. A short version that addresses just the Ferris-unique material will be developed.

The group will be getting e-mails regarding training.

E-LEARNING PLAN

Our plan goes to the Senate for its first review.

John asked if there is a process in place to guarantee faculty competence. Are we going to ask the Senate to adopt the plan?

Spence asked how much of the plan should be mandated.

Teresa Cook commented that by fall 2012 we will be fully implemented; and whatever this document is after editing, it should be considered what faculty must use as their online guideline for Blackboard 9.1.

Robbie asked Teresa to introduce the plan to the Senate. All they need to see are the recommendations, and approval is not needed that same day. Our goal is not to make it easy for the faculty member, but to provide quality instruction for the student. What can we do to eliminate faculty trying to make it easy? Should four faculty be at the forefront?

Due to the fact that the Retreat is not when the Senate usually takes action on items, we need to make sure the Senate keeps this item on its agenda.

Teresa Cook will take the lead at the Senate meeting and report that our goal is fall of 2012, and briefly trace the history of the survey. Spence Tower and Elaine McCullough will attend the Senate meeting in support of the plan, and Stacy Anderson will brief her Senate representative. We must remember to keep the review moving to be able to cover all the recommendations in the time allotment.

Larry suggested that we have an open forum and invite Senate members.

Marilyn will send to the group a one-page slide of just our recommendations, along with one that gives all pertinent information on the open forum.

LMS

John reported that we have signed up for a three-year agreement with the new product. Sixteen weeks beyond the pilot were negotiated, and there are some proposals on the table – questions have been asked as to what else is available.

A decision should be coming soon on what we will be hosting. Hosting should not impact faculty. IT will make a decision to bring hosting in-house if we are not happy. We cannot set up hosting in time for the fall semester. The hosting agreement is really specific to back-end technology; the customer-facing will still be done by Ferris. IT will continue to address Blackboard issues. If the system goes down because of overload, it will be the responsibility of hosting. Hosting off-campus will free up our IT staff.

OTHER ITEMS

Elaine reported that the newsletter to all online faculty is going to be about faculty presence, and she requested articles from our group to use in the newsletter. Theresa Raglin reported that the majority of CAHS faculty have gone through Quality Matters training, and she will put together an article for Elaine's newsletter.

Our meeting schedule will be set up by Marilyn for 10:30 – 12:30 (with lunch) the first and third Thursdays of the month, beginning September 15. The 9/15 meeting will be an open forum, and Marilyn will locate a room that can accommodate at least 35 people.

Cheryl reported that many students were dropped yesterday. They all got e-mails and phone calls before they were dropped. These students cannot be put back into their courses because they have holds on their accounts. The waiting list is still long, and off-campus students on the list will be called first.

Theresa Raglin reported that from a student's point of view, Pedagogy COAT course is very easy. This is a special course for those taking it to be able to teach it. Quality Matters is much more about the creation of a course, and COAT is much more about how to teach online. Some faculty who have not taught online are taking this course, and it has been offered to Karen Strasser. It is required of Head of Program in DCCL. There are 20 faculty from AHS enrolled in the course. Teresa will update us when the course is completed.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, September 15, 2011   10:30 am to 12:00 noon   Location to be determined

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma