

Present: Stacy Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Teresa Cook, Elise Gramza, Jacklyn Hughes, David Nichol, Todd Stanislav, Robbie Teahen, Spencer Tower and John Urbanick

Call to Order: 10:30 a.m.

SmarterMeasure

We viewed a video demonstration conducted via conference phone by Angela Cantrell, Sales Manager for SmarterServices. This product is an online tool that measures a student's level of readiness to take online classes.

Several members of our group took the assessment before this meeting.

Under the Student View:

- Custom interface for each school is included for the log-in page.
- Customized school-wide questions can be added to the Personal Information page.
- Learning Styles page has options for 21 or 35 questions.
- The Reading Page is at the 11th-grade reading level as a default, and can be altered.
- Under Technical Competency, the student must check off what operating system is being used.
- Technical Knowledge has four subsections:
 - Technology Usage
 - Technology in Your Life
 - Technology Vocabulary
 - Personal Computer and Internet Specifications
- A simple typing test is next.
- The student is asked to confirm his email address.
- At this point, he immediately gets the assessment results.
 - Results are shown in several different charts, as well as the student's score compared to the national average (optional).
 - Resources for Support are listed, and these are also customizable.

Under the Administrator Panel:

- A Super User has the ability to set up access for others.
- Data on who has taken the assessment is offered.
- Resources are available that administrators may want to use:
 - A Tutorial is available.
 - Managing Account has customizing available for the Personal Information section of the Student View.
 - The creation of additional administrative groups is possible, with specific permissions.
 - Test-taker groups can be customized.
 - Test Search and Export allows an administrator to pull data by filter criteria.
 - Data can be exported to Excel.

Questions were called for:

Q: Can the results be fed directly into Banner?

A: A group can be set up in the Administrative area.

Q: When taking the test, there were several places where the sound could not be played. Do you know what would cause this?

A: Angela is not sure why, but a student can click "Opt Out" if technical problems arise and then finish the assessment at another time.

Q: What about ADA compliance?

A: SmartMeasure is very close to being totally compliant. The program should remain as it is now; the company doesn't expect any ADA challenges.

Q: Could we set up a test-taker group, say MBA students, and give them a page relevant to their studies?

A: Pages are pre-set by grade level only.

Q: How long does it take a typical student to take the assessment?

A: The average time was just under 30 minutes. An option is available to offer the assessment over a period of time, offering it sections at a time.

Q: Who decides what is passing, competent or failing?

A: Assessments are preset by the company based on data collected over the years. Schools can change the range for their own institution.

Q: Is there a way for us to upload our documents into the system?

A: API's and customizing and integration are possible. A developer could help with this. More information can be found under the Integration section on the SmartMeasure website.

Q: Can you give us names of other universities that have implemented this product that we could contact?

A: Yes, Angela will send contact information next week.

Q: How is this product priced?

A: An estimate is based on how you want to implement. Retail price is \$24.95 per assessment; price by volume is much lower and is based on the number used in a 12-month period.

Q: What if a school estimates 2,000 and actually 4,000 take the assessment in a year?

A: As long as a school is being true to its estimate, only a 20% overage is charged.

Q: How much for 8,000 students?

A: Probably \$3.00 - \$3.50 per test.

Q: Can you identify consortia that would be beneficial?

A: Angela will send some information to Robbie.

Angela concluded the session at 11:30 a.m. by informing everyone that the log-in for those interested in completing an assessment would remain in effect through the end of business on Monday, October 10.

We know that we are already in some beneficial consortia with several community colleges, who are far ahead of universities in teaching online. Exporting this data into Banner will be a big factor in our success. Another item is whether or not this data can be pulled over from other colleges for transfer students. WebTreQ may be able to track this data. We would want to get this data to counselors to help with student retention efforts. Teachers who teach online should also take this assessment so they will understand what the student has taken and what the scores mean.

Teresa Cook moved that our sub-committee (Spence, Cheryl, Elaine, Elise and Deb Thalner) continue to evaluate and look into the implementation of student competency assessment. The sub-committee agreed, and it was suggested they add a person from IT, at least one student and an educational counselor to their group. They will then report back to the team after attending a seminar in November.

The team is requested to ask student employees in their areas to go in and take the assessment and give us their feedback. We would like a solid recommendation for or against SmartMeasure by early December.

We should also check with community colleges that we have articulation agreements with to gather feedback on what assessment tools they are using. Grand Rapids Community College would be a good one to ask because it is our largest transfer institution, with Montcalm Community College second. Cheryl will look into this and report back to us.

We discussed whether or not we intend to use the assessment as a screening tool, and what is the level of competency for admission to online classes. The subgroup will come back with a recommendation on this.

Jackie asked if we can automate the data coming in. For retention purposes, she suggested areas needing remedial action be flags in Banner that would generate emails to students and/or advisors in addition to customizing SmartMeasure to show Ferris resources.

ROUNDTABLE

At least two members of our group will be going to the Sloan meeting, and all of the major vendors of online tools will be displaying their products. We will hear feedback after that conference. Spence suggested those going have a list with them of what we are looking for.

Teresa gave a quick rundown of what the Senate asked us to revise in our recommendations:

- Recommendation 4
 - Remove the word “faculty”
- Recommendation 9
 - The words “of viable” should replace the words “and growth of”
- Recommendation 11
 - Add the word “applicable” before “Federal”

It was a big step forward to require all online classes go through FerrisConnect. Fritz is very supportive of our work, and we have a very strong endorsement from Senate. Now we will work on the details of implementation.

Although this was unofficially announced to Senate during our meeting, a university-wide notice regarding Deb Thalner will come after the details of her taking over the team chair are finalized. She will most likely not take over before January.

Dave mentioned that the financial 44% being instruction percentage is 44% of tuition, which is 72% of costs, so the 44% is more like 73%. Bottom line is, overall, we are making a profit on online classes if we continue the holistic philosophy of classes that lose money are offset by the profitable courses in the university.

Jackie reported that the first training class filled up, the turn-out was good, and two people signed up for Quality Matters. Almost everybody signed up for Phase 2, and none felt the training was a waste of their time.

Teresa suggested that rotating team members give update reports to the Senate, possibly every other month.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, October 20, 2011 10:30 am to 12:00 pm CSS-302 Presentation will be made at this meeting by The College Network

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma