

Present: Stacy Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Teresa Cook, Elise Gramza, Jacklyn Hughes, Leonard Johnson, Elaine McCullough, David Nichol, Theresa Raglin, Larry Schult and Deb Thalner

Robbie Teahen listened in via the conference phone; and we welcomed Andrew Peterson, Instruction Technologist with FCTL, as a guest.

Call to Order: 10:35 a.m.

THE ONLINE COURSES FAIR

Elaine reported that nineteen faculty members gave presentations at the Online Courses Fair October 28. Unfortunately, only 15 people attended the fair; Friday afternoon from 3:00 – 5:00 was an excellent time for the presenters but not for building an audience. We would like to see another such fair, possibly during faculty week or target education students during one of their half-day sessions. Leonard suggested coordinating the next fair in the spring, when he brings people to campus. Staging the fair in a more centralized location could possibly bring in more people. It was suggested that the IRC be used because of the high volume of traffic through the building, and some IRC classrooms could be utilized in the presentations.

The fair was very well organized, thanks to Elaine – who thanked all those who had a hand in it, as they all did their parts and were very dedicated. Prizes were given to both fairgoers and exhibitors. The fairgoers were very interested in the Atomic Learning models. Elaine will try to convince the exhibitors that larger audiences will be guaranteed, with maybe more university-wide involvement in the planning.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Cheryl reported that she and Deb are both attending the Sloan conference next week and will definitely report back to the group afterward. She has contacted both Montcalm Community College and Grand Rapids Community College regarding student assessment, as they both use it. Montcalm loves it and thinks it is well worth the price; GRCC did know anything about it. Montcalm uses it in courses and not to deny a student permission to take online courses.

Jackie requested that Cheryl and Deb ask at the Sloan conference if there is a product that is designed to be tied into Banner.

We all agree that the more preventative measures we can build in our system, the better our student retention will be and the more faculty can teach the course and not teach BlackBoard. The skill set is here, but the time may not be available for a fall 2012 goal of using assessment as a prerequisite. Registration for fall starts on March 19, 2012. The program could possibly be implemented by fall 2012, with it being pre-required for the semester after that. It was suggested that taking the assessment

could be a prerequisite, but scoring it would not be done. The responsibility to take advantage of corrective actions in weak areas would be on the student.

Elise asked if the assessment becomes policy once we decide what product we will use, and does it go through the UCC process. It is the province of the Provost to declare this as policy; it is already approved by the Senate. It does, however, need a communication plan; and the final attendance decision should be with the instructor. It must also be communicated to the student when a course requires more than the basic skills, similar to a placement test for a face-to-face course. An assessment would be ideally taken as one of the first experiences a student has with Ferris. As time goes on, more and more students will have worked online in high school, but many students currently coming into our online courses are older students, and we cannot assume they are computer literate.

Sloan attendees will investigate what other schools that have developed this tool are doing. At \$25 per student, requiring everyone to take the assessment would be quite costly. The contract with SmarterMeasure is based on how many students are estimated to take this assessment and could be much less than \$25 each.

THE COLLEGE NETWORK

Theresa reported that Allied Health placed a conference call to College Network because their need is so great for students to complete Gen Ed courses. However, all of their degree-completion needs are upper Gen Ed courses, and this company only has basic Gen Ed to offer. They could build such courses, but the time it would take to get the ACE and/or CLEP approval poses a problem.

Stacy searched this company online and discovered a long list of complaints, mainly disappointment in the product and with the high-pressure sales tactics used. The fact that the courses are not being teacher led is a concern of many on the team, as is that fact that we would be giving our student-hour credits away. It's true that we do not have the faculty resources for all of our Gen Ed prerequisites, but we feel recommending students take such courses at our partner community colleges is preferred. We felt that a third party will not help the situation.

Jackie related a past experience where she built online courses that were for summer only. She planned how many students needed a certain course, approached the college department and set up the needed courses, resulting in summer enrollment being tripled. Retention was improved, and the action did not reduce the number of on-campus courses taken during the academic year. She suggested we could limit enrollment to the first summer session, then open more sessions as the first ones fill up, with faculty on call.

We have plenty of students interested in taking summer courses, but we are limited in resources. Our focus is on the academic year, and our faculty have 9-month contracts to be taken into consideration.

NEW WAIT LISTS

Cheryl distributed a spring semester wait list update and reported that students can now go to our website and click to get on a wait list. This new feature is working wonderfully, and only two people are needed to man the phones. Big Rapids students will have access on 11/23. As of this morning, the number of course requests is 449.

Leonard mentioned that there is an article on the new wait list process in the October 31 issue of the *TORCH*.

Although staff must still go through and make phone calls as openings in courses materialize to verify that students still want to be enrolled, half the number of calls has been eliminated by the new electronic request form.

BLACKBOARD 9.1 TRAINING

Jackie reported that 246 people have been trained to date, and the goal is 150 people trained each semester. We are well above and beyond this goal. Forty-five people have signed up for November and December training. This will give us almost 200 people by the end of the semester. Also, people who have gone through the 3-hour training are coming back. Atomic Learning is turned on; emails will be going out to students, faculty and staff to inform everyone that the tool is out there. Demonstrations are scheduled for later this month. Jackie will meet with TAC to familiarize them with the program because they will be the group who will answer any questions. The registration request can be reached through MyFSU.

There will be training scheduled for January 4, 5 and 6, 2012, and the form for this should be on the website soon. The Faculty Center will conduct a one-day training session. Training in Lansing and in Grand Rapids is also being scheduled.

ROUNDTABLE

Leonard invited the team to the next SPARC meeting to be held Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. in the West Campus Community Center. The draft of the new IT plan will be the main topic, and Leonard will forward a copy of the draft to the team when he receives it.

Cheryl reported that, for authentication of online students, Western Governor's University has sent every online student a webcam, as well as offering students the option to go into a proctoring site.

Deb asked if the team has any requests for the group going to Sloan. Elaine requested they seek out any technology that is being developed to prevent online cheating, as it seems like quite a challenge and may require a large dollar investment in something that can never be assured.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 2011 10:30 am to 12:00 pm CSS-302

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma