Present: Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Teresa Cook, Larry Schult, Todd Stanislav, Robbie Teahen, Deb Thalner (via conf phone), Spencer Tower and John Urbanick

Call to Order: 10:40 am

STUDENT READINESS

Spence reported on the committee's last session, with the aid of that meeting's notes made on the whiteboard. There are two separate outlooks to creating an assessment:

1. Using a variety of 8 to 10 topics offered by Atomic Learning on skills that we want our students to have. FerrisConnect has some of these topics that are being taught to the faculty.
2. Actually have the students input using Captivate. Their output would show completion and go into BlackBoard.

Captivate is used by FLITE, and clicks can be recorded to show students have done everything we want them to do. Emily Mitchell has worked with Captivate and is sure we can use it in this context. Robbie sees this as a good fit, as FLITE has an appropriate role in training students.

Atomic Learning is the actual training, Captivate is used to show students what to do and to record the tutorial for assessment.

SmarterMeasure is very generic, and perhaps we want an assessment that is BlackBoard specific.

Spence mentioned that feedback from students showed online organization was inconsistent. Whatever we use for training, we should strongly encourage a consistent look in the quizzes to what the students will actually see in their classes.

The committee also saw value in addressing softer skills and trying to spot problems influenced by life issues, individual attributes, learning style, comprehension, etc.

Having a way to let the student know how he did in the assessment is vital. Scores could be sent to FSUS or to advisors for follow-up. At least, we can record the fact that students have attempted the quizzes and how they did.

Spence asked the group for our thoughts:

- What student population should we give this to?
  - Those taking fully online courses, with a subset to those who have not taken an online course before and those who did poorly.
- SmarterMeasure offers a $1,000 one-month pilot period.
- How do we provide an assessment to those who are considering an online program?
  - We could have two or three sections for FSU online students, and have all seven sections for those who want to test before enrolling in online courses.
- We do need to recognize that you must be a Ferris student with an ID to use Atomic Learning.
- Consideration must be given to the amounts of time and effort involved to make our choice practical.

- If we use assessment as a prerequisite for online courses, there will be a good deal of prep required.
- Someone would have to enter assessment grades if this is not going to be a regular course.
- Fall 2011 registration shows 40% of our students had completed an online course successfully; this means over 50% would have to take this assessment.

All the above thoughts must be considered to determine the worth of the investment.

John felt we need a small pilot group of courses. Over time, we could determine what are the "must haves" and then extend it to the "should haves." Robbie agreed a small group is an excellent first step, see how it goes, and maybe expand from there. We would have to figure out what courses will give us a good demographic.

Larry suggested piloting two ways:
1. Put students through a learning module and then test at the end
2. Also pilot where the test is given first and then identify who needs to be trained.

Summer would be a good time to start. We should not stop any student from taking an online course; but, sometime during the first week of classes, have all students take the assessment. We do not need to wait until we have everything right, we can work with some ambiguity until we are further along.

Deb mentioned that, given most schools don't use assessment as a gatekeeper, we will have to decide whether or not there will be a point at which we say to students, "you really shouldn't register for an online class until you do an assessment."

Robbie emphasized that we must encourage faculty to utilize the many tools that we already have (created by Bill Knapp and Enid Carlson). If faculty are spending too much time in class training students in the basics of an online course rather than teaching the course material, we will supply links to advise them on what they can do.

Deb found that in doing a quick review of other schools, most of those in favor of SmarterMeasure were community colleges, others wanted to have a "home-grown" survey on self-assessment; but very few did more than say, "Think about this before you sign up."

John mentioned a brochure has been put out at FSU that could be updated, and he'll look into getting a copy for our review.

Spence suggested we ask faculty to give their students a self-assessment, then request an evaluation of it from faculty at mid-semester, asking faculty if the assessment should be a requirement, and basing our decisions on their feedback.

Robbie mentioned that we have a training course that faculty are going through right now, and we could ask participants to create a module for student assessment.

We need to give faculty permission to tell their students that they are not here to give training in online course taking, but to teach the subject course and give students a list of resources if they need help.

Teresa will email Amy Busey and Clyde Hardman and put them directly in touch with Deb to discuss students' participation in assessment.

WAIT LISTS

Cheryl reconfirmed that the automated wait-listing is working very well and has saved a great deal of time for her group. A total of 1,589 seats have been taken that Cheryl keeps wait lists for, and 828 names are still on the list.

Robbie reported that this was a topic at the Deans' Council last week.

Some comments on wait lists in the discussion that followed were:

- One reason given is that not enough faculty are available; however, we can find English faculty and train them to teach online.
- The colleges have budgets for overload, but online courses cost almost twice as much as face-to-face courses.
- If we get enough online sections, they will be taught by adjunct faculty and regular classes will lose enrollment.
- English 321 face-to-face is completely full, but how many of these students will pull out of face-to-face if room is opened up online?
- This is a problem every year and we should be responding better to students. The President has asked students what's the one thing we can do to improve, and the answer is get rid of the wait lists.
- Students are already trying to put themselves on a summer wait list, which isn't even available yet.
- There are two separate interests at play here.
- Our focus must be on face-to-face courses because of all the money we have put into infrastructure. If we are not going to fill every seat here, why are we spending money on electricity, etc.?
- If we want to be a customer-oriented school, we will at some point have fewer students on campus, and will have to close buildings, etc.
- Can we do a pilot to solve the wait-list problem?
- Barriers have been identified. Maybe a sense of urgency needs to be created by showing how much money we are losing, estimates and predictions, because of wait lists.
- See if wait lists are delaying graduation. We should look at reducing the time it takes to graduate.
- English feels it has put more and more courses out there, but need keep increasing.
- The state will hold higher education more accountable. University comparisons are inevitable, and we should get ahead of the curve on the big issues.

Robbie will work on this issue and contact Nate Tymes regarding a pilot.

ROUNDTABLE

John reported that BlackBoard conversion is going smoothly.

Teresa reported from the last Senate meeting that faculty readiness check-off is being questioned. A motion was made and passed that the Policies and Procedures Committee needs to look at this with the EMAT Committee.

Robbie reported that the check-off is the result of our recommendation that faculty will demonstrate their capacity to teach online. Power users wouldn't even have to go to training. This is a very minimum check-off. Most faculty are able to show their course and get a check-off in less than 15 minutes. The idea of the bazaar came from the Policies and Procedures Committee.

Teresa reported that the University Curriculum Manual has been updated. If you want to change a course cap for a section of a course, you must go through Form A and F procedures to show why the online cap would be different than the regular cap. This is an excellent improvement, and will be effective with the fall 2012 semester.

Robbie asked if the group would like to continue with the schedule as it now stands: first and third Thursdays of each month. The group agreed, and Marilyn will send out invitations. Deb will take over as chair in January, and she is trying to be on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Robbie mentioned that a proposal on how to fund online et al. is being taken to Council by Fritz and Don Green, and she will update us when there is news to report.

John asked if any FerrisConnect budget will be transferred over. Robbie replied that our University services more students that are not online than online. The interest of the President and Provost is to have more online programs, but we cannot promote this incentive because we do not have the capacity. Kim Wilber is preparing a budget.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, January 5, 2012   10:00 to 11:30 am   CSS-302

Meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma