Joint Committee on Online and Distance Education
Minutes
February 10, 2014

Present:

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Seitsinger</td>
<td>Joannah Portman-Daley</td>
<td>Laura Beauvais</td>
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<td>Arthur Mead</td>
<td>Diane Goldsmith</td>
<td>Nancy Eaton</td>
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<td>David Porter</td>
<td>Jill Doerner</td>
<td>Vince Petronio</td>
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<td>Deborah Mongeau</td>
<td>Kathleen Torrens</td>
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1. The Minutes from December 12 were approved.

2. The committee discussed how best to support Sakai as an essential teaching and learning tool at the University. The committee requested that Diane draft a letter to send to the President, AMRC, Provost, and Senate Executive Committee. The letter should include the following:
   • The fact that no body or administrator is seemingly tasked with leading the deployment and support of academic technology – those technologies designed to support the teaching and learning mission of the University. This means that resources are not appropriately aligned with this mission.
   • That Sakai is a critical technology. It not only supports teaching and learning, but also advising, projects, and promotion and tenure.
   • That the culture of ITS has not created “rules” that recognize the critical nature of Sakai – i.e. downtimes, troubleshooting, etc. are not structured around the way Sakai is used by faculty and students.
   • The committee strongly supports URI moving toward a vendor version of Sakai as it believes this is the only way to ensure that it is supported appropriately.

   The questions the committee asked were:
   - How different is the Asahinet version from the one we are running in terms of tools?
   - How easy/difficult will the transition be?
   - What sort of Support (tier 1, 2, 3) is available at what cost?
   - Costs?

   Dave Porter said he would talk with his colleagues at Providence College and Roger Williams who are using Asahinet to gauge their experience, costs, and any issues.

   • The committee discussed whether this was the right time to look at other LMS platforms. There was general agreement that moving to a new LMS, unless there were significant advantages pedagogically, would be very disruptive and that most faculty are satisfied with Sakai.

   • The committee understands that this move, given issues of purchasing, budgeting etc. may take up to 18 months and therefore there must be an interim solution – Tier 1 help desk available 24/7 and a Service Level Agreement with ITS.

3. Diane reported Nancy Neff’s opinion that that the Policy on Faculty Training which we approved at the last meeting was not the purview of the CAC nor the Faculty Senate. The committee discussed how best to present this “policy” to departments and deans by including it as part of a discussion of what type of assistance the Office of Online
Education could offer. Laura suggested that this recommendation be explained to the Dean’s Council and the Senate Executive Committee as well as in the committee’s report to the Senate.

4. The committee discussed the issue of folks teaching outside of Sakai in ways that may violate FERPA and NEASC rules that have to do with student authentication. The committee suggested that this also be added to Diane’s list of issues to bring to the Dean’s Council and the Senate Executive Committee. The committee also discussed the increasingly difficult issue of ensuring all our courses are fully accessible. Vince noted that the University had a responsibility to be looking for and purchasing appropriate technology to help with accessibility including captioning etc.

5. Diane reported on the following Sakai Issues
   • Gradebooks. ITS is looking at enabling an “upload grades” function from Sakai to People Soft. This would be faculty controlled not an automatic “fetch.” The integration would probably happen with Gradebook 2 (as we believe this is the quickest and easiest way to do it), but both grade books would be maintained.
   • JForum is not being fixed. We are upgrading to 2.9, which will fix the problem. This may not happen until mid Feb.
   • They are working on turning on the email archive tool.
   • They are investigating the issue of slowness in “test and quizzes.”

6. Kathleen reported on Dean Libutti’s Initiative for Alternative Semesters to increase summer school enrollment and improve graduation rates. He will be looking for funding to provide incentives to faculty to create courses.

7. Training updates
   • Sakai training --79 folks enrolled; 20 completed
   • Fall OLTF 1 –19 finished
   • Fall OLTF 2 – 7 finished
   • Spring OLTF 1 – 21 enrolled
   • Badge for completion

8. Comparison of Survey data (document in resources).

9. The Award for Exemplary Course Design is now on the website. The intention is to present the award at the OLTF Showcase that is scheduled for April 30 at 2:30, although this date may change given the conversation about the number of activities scheduled for reading days.

10. Diane provided an update on programs planning on moving on line: Nursing, Dietetics, MLIS. Anne noted that the Harrington School and the School of Education are planning a joint online certificate in digital literacy. Diane noted that all of these programs would benefit from a change in tuition for online programs that eliminated the in and out-of-state differential and allowed for market driven pricing. Laura reported that Don was bringing such a policy to the VPs for their approval.