

Joint Committee on Online and Distance Learning
Report to the Faculty Senate
Dr. Diane J. Goldsmith, Chair
May 4, 2017

Committee Members include: Ari Mia Loberti, Damon Rarick, David Porter, Deborah Mongeau, Diane Goldsmith, Jill Doerner, Kathleen Torrens, Laura Beauvais, Mike Motta, Terry Deeney, Thomas Boving, and Vince Petronio.

1. **Move to Longsight to host Sakai:** The committee has received regular reports from Media and Technology Services (MTS) on the Longsite's hosting. The decision to move to Longsite was to improve reliability, stability, and uptime. The committee is pleased that these objectives have been met. The committee noted that with the exception of scheduled downtimes on Sunday at 5am, there have been very few downtimes and those have been resolved quickly. The more recent issue of lack of access to Sakai in March was a problem of authentication due to URI's network issues.
2. **Sakai Enhancements Coming in August:** We will be adding major enhancements to Sakai through an upgrade scheduled from August 25-August 28. With the exception of the week between Christmas and New Year, *this is the only time in the entire calendar when there are no classes scheduled*. All work done in Sakai before August 25 at 5pm will be moved into the new system.

The IT department has been working to inform faculty and staff of the enhancements which include:

- Auto-save in the content editor
- New Accessibility Checker feature
- Mobile-friendly, responsive layout
- Added layout options in the Lessons tool
- Improved LaTeX support (for authoring formulas and scientific notation in plain text)
- Faster grade and comment input in the Gradebook tool

There are many opportunities for faculty to get acquainted with these changes:

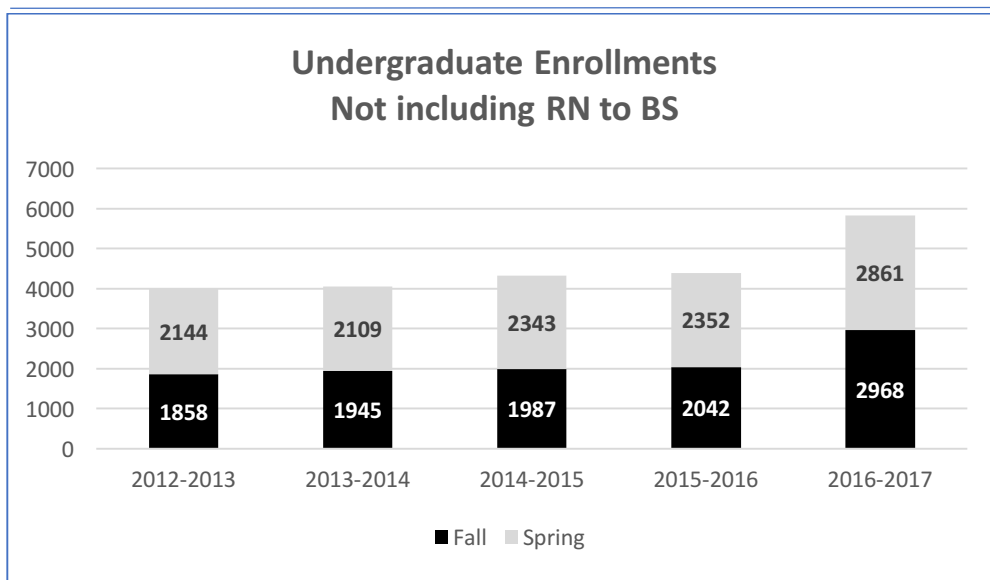
- A short video introduction is available here: <https://youtu.be/Gblw0mVi7hE>
- A complete list of the new features is here: <https://sakaiproject.org/features>
- Sakai Drop in Training Days are schedule from May 1-May 12: web.uri.edu/its-training/training
- The development site is open to all users: <https://uri-test.longsight.com/> **NOTE: work done in the development site cannot be saved to the new site.**

3. **Accessibility:** The committee continues to monitor work being done to ensure that online and distance classes are accessible to all students. We are pleased that the upgraded version of Sakai will allow faculty to check their own sites for accessibility. The Office of Online Education is asking for funding to continue to provide captioning services for videos under 10 minutes in online classes. The Committee continues to advocate for a long-term, institution wide captioning solution.

4. SAKAI Listserve: The committee has asked MTS to work to expand the number of faculty subscribed to and using the SAKAI Listserve. This is a primary means of communication between MTS and faculty and in the past served as a very useful tool for faculty to get help and tips on using SAKAI. Faculty can receive the listserv in digest form once a week to limit the amount of emails it generates. Instructions can be found here: <http://web.uri.edu/its/listserv-users-guide/>

5. Expanded Online Enrollments:

- Enrollments in undergraduate courses (not including the RN to BS degree program) have increased in the last 5 years: 59.7% in the fall and 33.4% in the spring for a total increase 45.7%. Summer enrollment has also increased: from summer 2013 to summer 2016 enrollments went from 1643 to 2410, an increase of 46.7%.



Undergraduate online demographics are very similar to URI's face to face classes:

| Race/Ethnicity | Online | URI |
|--|--------|-------|
| White | 72.1% | 72.1% |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 8.0% | 9.6% |
| Black/African American | 6.4% | 5.1% |
| Asian | 4.0% | 3.3% |
| American Indian / Alaskan Native / Native Hawaiian | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| Multiracial | 2.5% | 2.5% |
| Not Specified | 6.7% | 5.8% |

- Graduate enrollments (not including the accelerated dietetics program) have increased almost 200%, from a total enrollment of 215 students in 2012-13 to 639 in 2016-17.

6. Expanded Online Programs:

- We currently have 4 fully online programs: The RN to BS in Nursing and the M.S in Dietetics are offered in the accelerated calendar. The Cybersecurity Professional Science Master’s Degree and the M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language are both offered in the regular calendar. <http://web.uri.edu/online/online-programscertificates/>

RN to BS Online Accelerating Nursing Program:

- The RN to BS degree program has shown a dramatic increase in enrollments from 75 in its first term, Fall 2015, to 1036 in Spring 2017. Note: these are enrollments, not headcounts. There are over 450 students enrolled in the program in Spring 2017

| | Fall 2015 | Spring 2016 | Summer 2016 | Fall 2016 | Spring 2017 |
|------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| Session 1 | 31 | 160 | 209 | 461 | 534 |
| Session 2 | 75 | 228 | 251 | 477 | 502 |
| Total | 106 | 388 | 460 | 938 | 1,036 |

- The RN to BS students have slightly different demographics than URI undergraduates as a whole.

| Race/Ethnicity | RN to BS | URI |
|--|----------|-------|
| White | 78.1% | 72.1% |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 3.1% | 9.6% |
| Black/African American | 6.7% | 5.1% |
| Asian | 4.4% | 3.3% |
| American Indian / Alaskan Native / Native Hawaiian | 0.8% | 0.3% |
| Multiracial | .04% | 2.5% |
| Not Specified | 6.6% | 5.8% |

- RN to BS students are primarily female. Only 10% are male. They are also older.

| AGE | RN to BS Students |
|-------|-------------------|
| 22-29 | 30.8% |
| 30-39 | 34.3% |
| 40-49 | 23.1% |
| 50+ | 11.8% |

Professional Development Opportunities:

The Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning is supporting URI faculty who are interested in these two upcoming workshops.

- The first is an all-day conference on Blended Learning at Roger Williams University on June 7th. This opportunity is for faculty who teach, or are planning on teaching, blended courses. Katie Linder, blended learning specialist, will facilitate the workshop. We have only 5 or 6 more slots left. Given the discussion about 4-credit courses, the session on homework vs online activities may be very beneficial. If you are interested, please have your department chair nominate you: <https://goo.gl/forms/iIy75yPYP9cDQuOu2>

- The second is the Northeast Regional OER Summit, an all-day conference on Open Educational Resource at UMass Amherst on June 14. We will pay the registration fee for a few more people to attend. For faculty who are interested in exploring ways to decrease the cost of student resources and meet with colleagues from around the northeast, information can be found here: <http://www.library.umass.edu/services/teaching-and-learning/oer/northeast-oer-summit>. Apply for registration funds here: <https://goo.gl/forms/D0VHsJCpd0fJvGxJ3>

- The Office of Online Education offers training for faculty interested in teaching online. Online Pedagogy 1 is a three-week, fully online, facilitated course beginning June 5. For more information go to: <http://web.uri.edu/online/online-pedagogy-competency-courses/>