

Distance Education Taskforce Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 23, 2015

WSU Foundation Building, First Floor, 3037 Presidential Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324

Prepared by Victoria Carson

Attendees:

Terri Klaus – CTL

Jim Menart – MMB

Kayleigh Duncan – CSE

John Gallagher – CSE

Thomas Wischgoll – CSE

Chris Roberts – CTL

Fernando Smith – RSCOB

Deb Arms – CONH

Sean Pollock – COLA, CTL

Ann Stalter – CONH

Chris Beck – COLA

Todd Pavlack – CTL

Mary Clem – CATS

Courtney Simons – Lake

Theresa Dorn – CECS

Gina Oswald – CEHS

Sheri Stover – CEHS

11:05 AM

The new members (Fernando Smith and Kayleigh Duncan) and the rest of the group introduce themselves to each other.

Sean Pollock reviews the meeting agenda.

Discussion: approval of February 9 meeting minutes

- Sean Pollock did not see any need for major revisions.
- No comments from other members.

Decision: minutes approved

Sean Pollock reminds all the subcommittees that there is a vast amount of literature addressing each of their tasks, and that literature should make its way into the final report.

Discussion: subcommittee 4 report

- Sheri Stover reports that she followed Sean Pollock's suggestions on the report's structure.
- The subcommittee decided to adopt the policy from OBR, which is preparing to accept the definitions from the Higher Learning Commission. The definitions they are recommending are comprised of distance, blended, and distance with face-to-face with an additional category of distance delivery courses.
 - Distance (100% and above online)
 - Online with face-to-face (75% and above [used to be 80%])

- Distance delivery programs (50% and above)
- Blended learning (between 50% and 75% online)
- Sean Pollock says that in the group's report they should address the potential shortcomings of these definitions.
- Sheri Stover reports that the next thing the subcommittee worked on was the potential policies we should adopt, which was a large undertaking. They examined the OLC (Online Learning Consortium) qualities that online programs should have (instructional support, course instruction, teaching and learning, student support, and other qualities). They self-scored WSU on these qualities and made specific recommendations for each category.
- Sheri Stover asks the larger group if faculty should be required to go through training before teaching an online course?
- Sean Pollock asks what the subcommittee found what peer institutions are doing?
- Sheri Stover that WSU is comparatively blessed to have more funding(?) and more support (with the CTL and CTL South). Other universities are managing by setting up a very robust template that can be customized by faculty.
- Sheri Stover looked at other union universities and none of them mandated training, but faculty tended to want to go to training. She thinks that with the current attitude of faculty toward the CTL we would have a similar response.
- Sean Pollock says that some institutions mandate training (Georgetown, Lilly), so it is still something to consider.
- Fernando Smith asks if this sort of decisions would be better left to the colleges; in his college the dean has an informal rule that faculty undergo some training before teaching online. If we talk to the deans, they might have similar systems in place.
- Terri Klaus says that if we want mandatory training it can be put into agreements and contracts. The question is whether we want to recommend that or not.
- Sheri Stover says that what the subcommittee believes is absolutely necessary is creating standards that an online course has to comply with. If these standards are rigorously enforced, do we need to mandate training? As a faculty member, she doesn't like being forced to do something.
- Chris Roberts says that for seasoned faculty members we could provide an "out" if they can demonstrate their competence in online teaching.
- Terri Klaus says that sometimes people who have been teaching for years are the ones who really need the training.
- Fernando Smith says that if we hire a faculty member because they have taught online, how do we say we don't like the way they teach online? We're hiring a person because they're an expert in something and then force them to take more training. But if we give them a robust template, most faculty will look at it and know the tools that are available.
- Ann Stalter says that some competitors in the field of nursing have very strict standards and guidelines, and although here at WSU we may not be ready for it now, we need to address it somehow or it will only get worse.
- Sheri Stover suggests mandating new hires go through 3 days of robust training.
- Ann Stalter asks what the minimum training looks like?

- Sheri Stover says that the minimum of other universities was APPQMR training (Quality Matters). If faculty at least have to understand Quality Matters, the CTL won't have to help people who know absolutely nothing.
- Sean Pollock says that the result of this will probably be guidelines for standards in the final report.
- Sheri Stover asks for input from the college of engineering representatives: what do they think about mandatory training?
- Thomas Wischgoll says he would dislike mandatory training, but having an option for faculty is a good idea.
- Gina Oswald says that we've all been in training sessions with people who don't want to be there; if we force faculty to do what they don't want it may not be very effective (as far as what they learn).
- Fernando Smith says that he can see the other side too; if they can make faculty go to HR training, training that makes you a better teacher should be acceptable. If we did something like this we would have to be smart about finding the best ways to fit it into schedules.
- Sheri Stover says that for new faculty we could use the first couple weeks in August, but the university would have to pay those faculty for an extra two weeks (they normally don't start until August 15).
- Sean Pollock reminds them that it is our job to propose these types of things (minimums, guidelines).
- Todd Pavlack says that we could make this an at-your-own-pace online training rather than in-person.
- Sheri Stover says that the advantage of face-to-face training is new faculty get to know people.
- Todd Pavlack says that there will still be face-to-face training, just not training for online teaching.
- Ann Stalter asks how much faculty will need to be orientated to designing courses?
- Terri Klaus says that we have talked about two different types of training: how to develop online courses and how to facilitate online courses.
- Sean Pollock says that all of this has to tie into student success somehow. There should probably be guidelines for gateway courses.
- Chris Beck says that in COLA, the instruction design wasn't necessary information because their courses were being designed by Quality Matters certified professionals. They need information on administering these courses.
- Fernando Smith mentions accounting for different students' different capabilities.
- Sean Pollock says that we need to consider how we are approaching online learning in relation to specific groups of students on campus (under-prepared students, international students).
- Thomas Wischgoll says that the training is helpful.
- Sheri Stover says that benchmark universities offered faculties options: in-person training, online training, workshops.
- Sean Pollock says that offering options will be an important component in the final report.

- Kayleigh Duncan asks why the departments aren't the first stop: take fully developed courses to be checked by the CTL. Friendly faculty competition also encourages better online courses.
- Sheri Stover agrees that the departments really are where it begins.
- Todd Pavlack asks if Kayleigh Duncan's department are designing courses or just administering them.
- Kayleigh Duncan says she doesn't know.
- Ann Stalter says that it's the instructional design piece that determines the students' outcomes and their consistency.
- Chris Beck says that COLA has had trouble because they had a dichotomy: some professors were going through the CTL while others were entrepreneurially designing their own courses (which was difficult to control and regulate). Having options for instructional design training and/or template would be helpful.
- Sheri Stover says that the review process would be the same as a department reviewing a face-to-face course.
- Todd Pavlack says that there are legal guidelines, so we need to enforce that minimum. The skills garnered from training for online teaching easily transfer to and improve a faculty member's face-to-face courses.
- Thomas Wischgoll says that for traditional face-to-face classes there isn't any mandatory training.
- Terri Klaus explains that the CTL exists to help faculty who are experts in their fields but who weren't trained to actually teach.
- Sheri Stover says that is why training in the first week is important.
- Jim Menart says that incoming faculty would probably appreciate an extra week to get comfortable in a foreign environment.
- Gina Oswald emphasizes that new faculty would appreciate the extra time and training, but faculty coming from another university with a lot of experience would probably dislike it.
- Sean Pollock says that it wouldn't necessarily have to be mandatory, it would just be good to offer it.
- Ann Stalter says that incoming faculty who have been assigned to teach a course need to know how that course fits within the larger curriculum for the program.
- Sheri Stover says that one thing their committee did not address is student support. They were hoping that the subcommittee 6 (student success) could go through the categories and rate WSU's current student support options.

Discussion: subcommittee 5 report

- Gina Oswald says that their report draft format is similar to what the final will be. Areas in all caps indicate what will be added. The report begins with current incentives.
- Currently the subcommittee is investigating the literature.
- They are looking at the current dropout rate for distance education courses verses non-distance education courses at WSU and comparing that to national figures.
- Gina Oswald says that based on Sheri Stover's finding on other universities' incentives, they came up with multiple recommendations:
 - Incentives should be for adjuncts and teaching assistants as well.

- Ensure ADA compliance (video captioning services, providing faculty with checks so they can know what's accessible in their courses).
 - Make specific requests of the CTL about working with faculty from different colleges; demonstrate the supports the CTL offers as well as the benefits those supports offer (if we're not forcing faculty to go, we need to tell them why they should go).
 - Offer some sort of concrete menu of things the CTL can help with (with the vastness of material that the CTL offers, faculty may not be able to identify what would be the most helpful for them).
 - Tutorial videos
 - Cheat sheet for faculty to put directly into Pilot for students (if you're having this problem, contact this person at these times, etc.). This will hopefully head off basic problems encountered by new online learning students.
 - Provide/require Pilot training for students (especially those new to distance learning)
 - Show that contacting CATS helps students.
 - Ask CATS to update/install PilotLive on all campus computers.
 - Recommend/require training for new faculty or current faculty new to distance learning (see discussion under subcommittee 4 report)
 - Create a flow chart for faculty about distance learning course review process; build a plan for professional development.
- Fernando Smith comments that he appreciates the part about teaching faculty about assessment of disabilities: showing them this is how you do it and these are the benefits.
 - Ann Stalter says that in her college they use something called an information exchange where all students attend (an orientation?). She wants to know how she can use that interface with Cognos or some other database that will allow them to track completion rates.
 - Terri Klaus says that what she wants sounds like Course Signals, but that just hasn't been expanded. Analytics could also do that if we could get it working with D2L.
 - Deb Arms asks when they will be required to give this information, because she thinks their state funding is based on it.
 - Todd Pavlack says that student success is tracked through the registrar. They have all the data, it's just had to get it together.
 - Terri Klaus says that the point is to get information beyond grades; we've had those for years.
 - Ann Stalter says that for the nursing college, it's about completion rates. They need some sort of report that tells when the student's first class was and if they finished it within the time limit.
 - Deb Arms explains that there is a time limit for students to finish a bachelor's degree or else they cannot reenroll. They want to a way to find out the information before it's too late so they can reach out to students.
 - Sean Pollock suggests that they go to ? because it sounds like a student information question.
 - Gina Oswald says that there are benchmarks in some program (WRAPS—Linda Hopp?). She will check if it is for the whole university or not.

- Sheri Stover says that we need a system that keeps track of competencies (currently use Pilot and TK20, which they hate). The two problems are that analytics aren't working and that the hierarchy of the D2L is set up incorrectly compared to all other universities.
- Terri Klaus says that the problem is that the departments aren't in the system, not even in the registrar. The banner system has to include the field of departments before they can be put into hierarchical order.
- Fernando Smith emphasizes that it is not a D2L problem, it is a Banner problem.
- Sheri Stover says that we really need to get this fixed because even if analytics gets working it won't be organized properly.
- Terri Klaus says that Barb Bullock in Institutional Research began working on this problem that a few months ago.
- Ann Stalter asks if it will help her get what their department needs.
- Sheri Stover says that getting that fixed is just the minimum in order to get the information we need.
- Sean Pollock asks if the CTL is working on this issue.
- Terri Klaus says that this is something that comes up on a weekly basis, but they kind of have reached the end because D2L has done all that they can do. Barb Bullock is the one to make this happen.

Main meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM, members break up into subcommittee groups as necessary.

Next Meeting: March 16

Action Items for Next Meeting:

- Follow up with Barb Bullock