

Distance Education Taskforce Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 9, 2015

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

Prepared by Victoria Carson

Attendees:

Sean Pollock – COLA, CTL

Todd Pavlack – CTL

Terri Klaus – CTL

Burhan Kawosa – RSCOB

Gavin Doll – Student Government

Christopher Beck – COLA

Courtney Simons – Lake Campus

Jim Menart – CECS

Theresa Dorn – CECS

Sheri Stover – CEHS

Tom Webb – ODS

Gina Oswald – CEHS

Amanda Steele-Middleton – Registrar

Mary Holland – Registrar

Jonathan Jackson – CATS

Chris Roberts – CTL

Deb Arms – CONH

Gary Burns – COSIW

John Gallagher – CECS

Chris Beach – CTL

11:00 AM

New members are introduced.

Discussion: determining terminology

- Todd Pavlack introduces the topic to new members, reviews the discussion.
- Burhan Kawosa says that the faculty survey isn't dependent on the definitions.
- Sean asks if determining the definitions for these terms should be a task for subgroup 4.
- Deb Arms asks how much else subgroup 4 is doing
- Sheri Stover doesn't think that adding this would be too much, but that she does think that these definitions affect every other taskforce.
- Sean Pollock says that the Faculty Senate has online learning in mind with this taskforce, and asks if should we include IVDL in the final report.
- Courtney says that it is similar to distant learning.
- Sean Pollock says that subcommittee four will take on this charge of terminology.

Decisions: Subcommittee 4 will define the terms.

Discussion: small group reports

- Group 2 report
 - Todd Pavlack reports that they met last week for an hour and went through Gary Burns's and Burhan Kawosa's survey questions.
 - They have discussed e-learning courses versus just online, and they did not decide whether to send multiple surveys to each faculty (one per online course taught) or to just send one per faculty member.
 - Jim Menart thinks it would be easier to organize the data if we had a questionnaire for each course, Burhan Kawosa agrees.
 - Gina Oswald asks how many questions there are for each survey.
 - Gary Burns says there are less than fifteen questions in the survey, and explains the format.
 - Gina Oswald asks if there is a backup plan if faculty don't respond to the survey, because she has had problems in the past following up with faculty.
 - Burhan Kawosa suggests that each of the representatives in this taskforce becomes responsible for knocking on doors in their college.
 - Sean Pollock asks how many doors that would be in Gina's department.
 - Gina Oswald says she would have to talk with about fifteen faculty members.
 - Jim Menart says that lack of response won't just be an issue in the College of Education; if we want to get a lot of responses we'll have to knock on doors and beg faculty to fill them out.
 - Sheri Stover asks what the purpose of the survey is—to get an accurate assessment of tools that faculty use?
 - Burhan Kawosa says we need to know not just the tools, but faculty's policies too.
 - Sheri Stover says that we could get all the information we need (and probably more accurately) if we use Pilot's analytics features.
 - Burhan Kawosa says that a backup to the surveys, the most labor intensive way, would be to sit down with all the syllabi and figure out each faculty member's policies, but this survey should be an easier way to get the data we need.
 - Sheri Stover says her concern is that we should be able to harvest the data (and get more accurate data) via a method besides relying on faculty responses.
 - Burhan Kawosa says that we have to contact faculty anyway to get some data that would not be available on Pilot, so at least we would need to do both the survey and use analytics.
 - Chris Roberts says that in theory, the analytics is a great tool. But in D2L we don't get accurate information from the analytics. We've been working with D2L to resolve the issue but currently we don't have that ability to pull out the analytics.
 - Sheri Stover says that she has been able to use it, albeit that was a couple of years ago.
 - Terri Klaus says it's not just our system, it's a combination of the variables that make up each system (example: Peoplesoft vs. banner).
 - Terri Klaus says it's not high on their priority list, and the CTL hasn't been pushing them that much, especially because they are reconfiguring the product.
 - Todd Pavlack says that for the purpose of this conversation we should assume we don't have the analytics tool, but if we figure out a way to use that data it might be helpful.
 - Sean Pollock offers to help if people need help knocking on doors in their departments.

- Terri Klaus says that people from the CTL can help knock on doors too.
- Burhan Kawosa says that he is planning on emailing the dean in his college and ask him to get involved.
- Chris Beck asks for a clarification as to who the recipients of this survey are.
- Burhan Kawosa says we are sending it to the list that is already compiled, which is classified as distance education (web 1 and web 2).
- Group 4 report
 - Sheri Stover asks for clarification about policy in distance education section, 21.5.2.3 in document? She wants to know how people interpret this policy.
 - Terri Klaus says that it was purposely vague so there was some wiggle room; its purpose was to be a push to keep courses current. The point is that everyone has different interpretations.
 - Sheri Stover says that the reason she asks is that when she was checking with other universities, there were a lot of policies about keeping courses current with more specifics and details.
 - Todd Pavlack says that he expects actions to be taken based on our report. Those policies weren't written with the expertise in this meeting. We should pay attention to the contract but we don't need to act within it because we might be suggesting changes to it.
 - Sean Pollock asks what she is finding with other universities.
 - Sheri Stover explains that the University of Cincinnati has three different sets of policies for their different locations. She tried to find locations that are union. Once you do a paid contract it is outside of the union, so it can be approved through quality matters. After two years the course goes through a review.
 - Her main concerns (which will be discussed in the smaller group) are quality, peer review, and templates.
- Group 5 report
 - Gina Oswald says there is not a lot to report. She wants to talk with CTL and figure out what is being provided for faculty and why, what should be added, etc.
- Group 6 report
 - Gavin Doll reports that he met with his student government committee (particularly inviting students with online education experience). He met with a group of about 8 students and they came up with a 10 question survey that his subcommittee will examine more closely.
- Sean Pollock reminds the groups that each subcommittee should have a written draft report by the February 23 meeting, and that it should be posted into Pilot as far in advance as possible.

Decisions: Continue topics of discussion in subcommittee meetings, each subcommittee needs to write draft report and post to Pilot.

Discussion: new member placement

- Registrar should be in policies (Sheri Stover's group)
- Tom Webb will be in the student success group, but will be involved in the other groups
- Mary Holland should be in the student success group.
- CATS should be in group 5.

Decisions: Amanda Steele-Middleton is in group 4, Tom Webb and Mary Holland are in group 6, and Jonathan Jackson is in group 5.

The group divides into subgroups

Minutes for Group 6

Original attendees: Gavin Doll, Todd Pavlack, Courtney Simons

Gavin explains that the goal of the student survey is to get a feel for student expectations for online courses and what students think will contribute to their success.

- Todd Pavlack says we also need to do some research into what other universities' do to ensure student success.
- At the community college he used to work at, they had a two part assessment students had to complete before registering for an online course.
 - The first part assessed a student's distance learning readiness with non-technical questions about time-management, reading comprehension, etc. Reading comprehension is actually the #1 predictor of a student's success in an online course.
 - The second part was a survey on the LMS, which meant faculty didn't have to take up any class time teaching students how to use it.
 - In the first semester of implementing this, their success jumped by 37%, although enrollment in online courses went down as students heeded the warnings that they weren't reading to take online courses.
- Courtney Simons asks if Todd Pavlack is recommending adding that sort of assessment.
- Todd Pavlack says that he is considering adding an annotated bibliography on Pilot so people can add sources as they find them. He is certain we can find the data to support implementing an assessment. The bottom line is that we need something.
- Gavin Doll says that while asking students what will contribute to their success will be a useful tool, many students will likely just say whatever will make the course easier for them.
- Courtney Simons wonders if we should ask the faculty what they think would contribute to student success. He asks what Burhan Kawosa's survey's focus is and if maybe we could add a question or two to do the end (rather than send out a second survey to faculty).
- Todd Pavlack says that the other survey has a very different focus, but we might be able to get the faculty to answer a second survey if it's short and we sent it at the same time as the other survey.
- Courtney Simons agrees to come up with some survey questions.
- Gavin Doll says that one of his questions is about textbooks vs. ebooks. Should the questions for faculty include that type of thing or are we focusing more strictly on distance learning?
- Courtney Simons asks about the differentiating terminology (synchronous/asynchronous/hybrid/distance learning/online/etc.)

- Gavin Doll says that he intentionally did not include any of the terminology in the survey questions; he used concepts instead of the terms. Hybrid vs. online is a point of confusion for students.
- Todd Pavlack suggests that a question should be added to the survey that gives a scenario of a class (such as a course that is completely online except on-campus exams), and asks what the student thinks it would be named.
- Courtney Simons asks when the faculty questions should be completed and how many he should write?
- Todd Pavlack says by next week and we want about 3-5 questions. The goal is to determine faculty perceptions.
- The group reconsiders asking faculty any questions: there is already a lot of data out there about faculty perceptions, and we don't want to bother the faculty with a lot of surveys.
- Todd Pavlack says we should get the Student Success Center involved. We need to find out if they provide services for online students.
- Courtney Simons says that Lake Campus provides that sort of help for online students, but he doesn't know about the main campus.
- Courtney Simons says that it would be interesting to get data from specifically our faculty, but isn't sure if it is worth polling the faculty. He says he will think about it and come up with some potential questions.
- Gavin Doll says that the problem with tacking these questions at the end of the Burhan Kawosa/Gary Burns faculty survey is that if a faculty member teaches three courses they will face the questions three times. They would have to put on a disclaimer telling faculty to skip the questions if they have already answered them.
- Gavin Doll reads the questions he and the committee of students came up with.
- Question that determines if students know the difference between synchronous and asynchronous courses.
 - The wording of this question is contested, but the group decides it is really the best way to determine if students know the difference without using the terms.
 - What about the difference between web 1 and web 2? Maybe a question should be added to know if students know the difference.
 - Then again, we don't really know the difference. We need to the registrar here before creating a question about web 1/web 2.
 - We should try to find out from students how we can make that process of registering for different types of online courses clearer.
- Courtney Simons if it would be better for all the questions to have a single scale system (all yes/no questions, or all agree/strongly agree/disagree type questions). He says that is easier to answer a lot of questions if they are all the same style.
- Gavin Doll says that the information they want from students requires a variety of scale systems. He says that from what he has heard from people at the Student Government, you're lucky if 5% of the student body responds to a survey.
- Burhan Kawosa joins the meeting, Gavin Doll reviews the questions with him.
- Change wording for the question about who students contact when they experience problems to who do they *first* contact.
- Gavin Doll asks if anybody has any suggested additions to the survey.

- Courtney Simons says that in the current questions they haven't really captured students' overall satisfaction with the online courses they have taken.
- Burhan Kawosa says that we can have a separate questions asking students how satisfied they are with the use of technology on campus in their courses.
- The taskforce is about online learning, not about web enhanced courses.
- The group decides that the first question should be "have you even taken an online course?" If the answer is no should the survey end right there?
- Burhan Kawosa says that online learning is very broad.
- Gavin Doll suggests that we have a separate set of questions for students who have taken online courses so we can still get an accurate view of student perceptions.
- Courtney Simons suggests that a question should be added about the design of the course to see if students can find what they need easily.
- Gary Burns joins the group to help with the setting up of the Qualtrics survey. He says he can easily build the survey for the group if they give him the questions.
- Gary Burns says that the dean of his college would like to know how many students are assisted by online courses, so a question should be added for that.
- Gavin Doll asks Gary Burns if he thinks different question styles will hurt participation.
- Gary Burns says that shouldn't affect participation; they'll group the different response types together. However, he says that some question styles (such as the sliding bar) doesn't work well on smartphones, so we should test things out because we know a lot of these surveys are being complete via smartphone. He also suggests putting the demographic data at the end unless it's critically important.
- Burhan Kawosa says it is not critical info because we can get some of the demographic data from the registrar (as far as how many COLA students are taking online courses vs CECS students).
- Gavin Doll reviews the questions again, fine tuning wording and choices with suggests from the group.
- Question: E-Books vs paper book question
 - We are not trying to parse out details about price.
- Question: where students complete course work
 - The purpose is to find out how accessible technology is to students.
- Gary Burns says that we should include the questions we are on the fence about because it is easier to trim them down later than add them.
- Question: When registering for an online class do you understand the difference between web 1, web 2, and hybrid?
 - Gary Burns suggests that we ask three individual questions for these three distinctions with yes/no questions.
- Courtney Simons asks if we will be able to separate out traditional and non-traditional students.
- Gavin Doll reviews the demographics questions, which include an age question and asks how many hours a week students work.
- Burhan Kawosa says that one of this subcommittee's recommendations should be about the student help center.

- Gavin Doll explains to the current group what Todd Pavlack suggested as far as the online preparedness assessment (Todd Pavlack had left for a different subcommittee meeting).
- Burhan Kawosa says that we should not have a course for how to learn online; we should have a block on all online courses that is not lifted until the student completes the requirements.
- Gavin Doll says that we will be able to get a lot of our research from Todd Pavlack.
- Courtney Simons asks how we can build the capacity of the student success center
- Burhan Kawosa says that the center will be moving; this is good because the orientation that we might recommend will need to be easily accessible.
- Gavin Doll says it could be run through the student success center or through the CTL. We will talk with the student success center to see what they have and what they are lacking.
- Burhan Kawosa pulls up a course list on the registrar and tries to find the web 1 and web 2 distinction but can't find it. We need to ask the registrar representative.
- Chris Roberts, Gina Oswald, Jonathan Jackson, and Theresa Dorn join the group.
- Gavin Doll quickly reviews what has been discussed so far and reads through some of the survey questions.
- Theresa Dorn asks if students will know what an "online course" is. Maybe we should include a description of online courses. The problem is that we don't have the definitions, and we don't want to bog students down with those definitions.
- Courtney Simons asks Burhan Kawosa if he thinks we could add a few questions to the end of the faculty survey, even if they have a different focus.
- Gary Burns says that these surveys are only going to faculty currently teaching online courses, plus the faculty teaching multiple courses would get the questions multiple times.
- At Burhan Kawosa's request, Courtney Simons clarifies that the point of these questions is to understand how the faculty think they can improve student success.
- Gary Burns suggests that the question could read what the faculty member thinks will improve student success in *this course*, so it is a relevant question for any number of surveys the faculty member will receive.
- Gavin moves back to the first question (have you ever taken an online course) and asks if the group thinks we need to be more clear about what an online course is. He says that he has personally not talked with a student who doesn't know what an online course is, but rather the confusion comes in with hybrid courses.
- Courtney Simons asks what shows up to students when registering.
- Gavin Doll says that hybrid courses are marked, but not very clearly.
- Gina Oswald suggests that we could say 50% or less in-person lecture.
- Chris Roberts suggests "reduced seat-time" as another differentiation/clarification that has been used elsewhere.
- Gina Oswald says that she has never heard "reduced seat-time" and asks if instead we could just put the three definitions. The question could read "have you taken a course at Wright State that matches one of these three definitions?"
- Theresa Dorn says that students will not want to read through a block of text.
- Jonathan Jackson suggests "the majority of the course instruction is online."

- Gina Oswald suggest “majority of course instruction and activities done online,” and the group adopts this phrase.
- Gavin moves on and reviews other questions
- Gina Oswald says we should change the phrasing of the question about synchronous/asynchronous courses from “watch” to “participate.”
- We need someone from the registrar to finalize questions between Web1/Web2/Hybrid.
- Gary Burns reminds them to add a question, “have/would online courses made it easier to complete your degree” with a sliding scale type answer.
- Gavin Doll asks the group again if there are any other suggested additions.
- Courtney Simons says that it takes some of his non-traditional students a while to figure out Pilot navigation, so maybe we could ask students about the user friendliness of Pilot?
- Gina Oswald says that we might want to quantify that question by maybe comparing it with other systems.
- Gavin Doll asks if we want to ask specifically about Pilot or all online learning materials.
- Gavin Doll reiterates that he thinks we can trust faculty more than students when we ask them what will increase student success, because he thinks students will answer how they think things will be easier for themselves.
- Gina Oswald asks how are we defining success: getting A grades or improved student learning?
- Gavin suggests that we ask if live lectures would help students.
- Sean Pollock stops by the group and tells them they should definitely meet before the next taskforce meeting on the 23rd.
- Gina Oswald says that she uses discussion boards as a means of answering student questions.
- Gavin Doll says that maybe we should ask what type of online learning interactive tools aid student learning (live lectures, discussion boards, etc.)
- Courtney Simons says that it really depends on the course design
- Chris Roberts suggests that we have a checklist of items so students can say which tools are most helpful.
- Gina Oswald says that we should ask “which of the following online activities improve your learning?” and then list tools (live lecture, recorded lecture, discussion board, online office hours, email, chat [synchronous], quizzes, telephone, and other [MatLab, StatLab, etc.]) and then have them type in the other).
- Theresa Dorn says that there are lists and lists of tools available, but if we limit them to Pilot and an “other” our list shrinks significantly.
- Gavin Doll says that for the last question that is 8 different sliding scales, which is like 8 different questions. So we have 15 questions, with the last one having 8 sub-questions, which is like a total of 22 questions.
- Gary Burns will get together with Gavin Doll to put together the survey and then they can share it with the rest of the group.

Gavin Doll adjourns the subcommittee at 1:07pm

Action Items for Next Meeting:

- each subcommittee needs to write draft report and post to Pilot