

Faculty Senate Meeting
Friday, December 6, 2013, 11 a.m.
Tierney Conference Room, Dickason Hall

Attendees: Erik Baldwin, Bob Riggan (for Jeff Bolton), Steve Bourne, Jan Czarnecki, Melissa Haye (for Vanesa Godfrey), Geoff Hunter, Mike Lilly, Norman Mirsky, Roy Pruett, Adem Ozyavas, Elaine Scott, Dr. Tracy Anderson, Dr. Roy Stewart

- I. Call to Order – There was no quorum, so this was an informational meeting only.
- II. Committee Reports:
 - A. Curriculum Committee – Mike Lilly. Draft presented
 - B. Technology Subcommittee – Tom Cook.

Continuing discussion on whether the college should select Moodle or Blackboard as the official online course platform. HLC has indicated that the college needs to select one. Tom presented a report on Moodle/Blackboard usage at BSC with the understanding that some web-enhanced courses on the Dynamic Schedule are not identified as either. According to Tom, there is not a strong preference to favor one over the other. Tom also presented a draft, primarily authored by the IT subcommittee, with bullet points on what is needed for effective on-line learning.

Blackboard: Most WV colleges use Blackboard while some use Moodle for limited courses. WV Net supports Blackboard. The VA Community Colleges we have articulation agreements with use Blackboard. The platform costs the college about \$40,000/year. The college pays Blackboard to manage it. The costs include hosting and administrative services. Hilda Cochran and Stephanie Musick provide Blackboard support for faculty and students.

Moodle: This is a free platform. The college rents a service for the website that provides firewall and backup support. However, the college must still pay for on campus personnel support. Cody Chambers manages Moodle – his time is split between Moodle and his webmaster duties. Cody also does training and face-to-face help.

Both: According to Tom, teachers report both are easy to use with adequate comfort-level. Both have the same scalability. Sustainability is not a factor. As for reliability – both are mature products. The same issues are present for the hardware and software (although we would have to do the upgrades for Moodle).

Dr. Stewart expressed concern that the college has been reviewing this issue for several years with no decision. He asked if students and teachers had been surveyed as to preferred use (Tracy said teachers had been surveyed, but not recently). He also asked if certain courses work best in a particular platform. (Tom said no.) Tom said students will adapt to either platform.

Tom said support is a major factor. We have to make sure that whichever we choose, that the support is there. We cannot afford to have either system down, and if we select Moodle, it would be the college's sole responsibility. Moodle is great, but it's not really free. Need an academic administrator – need quality control for the integrity of the product. Need a person who would manage policies, procedures – needs to be an academic person. Someone to work with the administration office. No one is manning the ship right now. Need more cohesiveness.

Steve questioned if separate sections of an IVN class are counted as multiple courses rather than just sections of one course.

General Discussion: Have to consider costs for training and moving from one platform to the other.

Dr. Stewart: What do students want? Survey students who are taking both - what do they prefer? Has to relate to learning.

Tom: Both systems are good. Third option: Canvas becoming a commercial product. Personnel costs wouldn't be affected, but still need backup. Many service providers for Moodle. Have to have support – can't afford to have system down. Half of Cody Chamber's duties would be for Blackboard. Audrey Biggs would still have divided duties. Not a material difference in cost depending on decisions that are made. We would just be responsible for any upgrades for Moodle. WVU – started using WebCT years ago (this platform was bought out by Blackboard). Most colleges in the state use Blackboard. Some colleges use Moodle such as Concord (in some classes), but they don't offer very many online courses

Additional general discussion regarding usage and costs: Some instructors prefer Blackboard, some prefer Moodle. But, all costs for both platform have to be analyzed.

Tom: students will adapt to platform. Have to identify where our transfer students are coming from. Also have to include the hosted service.

Dr. Stewart questioned why the decision couldn't be just left up to the instructor. (Accreditation recommendation – use one platform.) It's only form and not content that is affected.

Tracy: key piece is Tom's last slide – the number of schools that use Blackboard.

Tom: Where are our transfer students coming from?

Elaine: All costs have to be considered.

Steve: For cost accounting, have to consider everyone's salary who works on the platform as well as the allocation of time. Present system seems to be working.

Tracy: Need an academic leader who answers to the Provost who can respond to the financial aid, academic integrity, etc.

Steve: Talk to Liberty U that has gone to about 90,000 online students.

Tom: We're being left in the dust (re online courses).

Steve: Should be seamless for students to do this online.

General discussion regarding online programs. Have four online programs, but not making much progress with them. Students we're getting are from the same area – Beckley, Lewisburg, etc. But not getting students from out of the area.

Elaine: - or the military.

Melissa: Need to advertise more.

Dr. Stewart: Top priority should be growing the enrollment.

Roy: Ask the students. Need to survey which ones they prefer.

Dr. Stewart: It seems that faculty aren't really tied to one or the other. Minority of faculty that are very vocal about it.

Steve: Business prefers Moodle.

Roy: We used to be competing with local colleges – not competing with other colleges.

Steve: But we can kill on the costs.

Dr. Stewart: That's a strength of this college.

Tom: No time frame on making a decision.

Dr. Stewart: If this is year four, then it can't be an emergency.

C. CNED issue: unable to vote on resolution since there was no quorum. (One short.)

Dr. Stewart: Why can't people vote electronically?

Mike: Will send out the information to Carol Cofer for electronic vote on the curriculum proposals presented.

D. Senate Bill 330: Scheduled meeting on Tuesday Dec. 10th, 10 am private dining room.

E. Informational Meeting ended at 12 noon.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jan Czarnecki