

Distance Education Advisory Committee Minutes of the Meeting of March 5, 2015

Members Present: Leonor Cabrera, Gloria Darafshi, Don Lariviere, Ana Miladinova, Candice Nance, Lisa Palmer, Jane Rice, Janet Stringer

Members Absent: Gregory Anderson, Peter Bruni, Chialin Hsieh, Diva Ward

Guests: Anniqua Rana, Julian Taylor

Janet Stringer called the meeting to order at 2:20 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the DEAC meeting on November 6, 2014, were approved.

Online Education Initiative (OEI) Update

Janet Stringer presented an update on the activities of the Online Education Initiative and their relevance for our college. OEI is an initiative of the CCC Chancellor's Office, funded by the California legislature in 2013, to provide online courses and services within a statewide CCC online education ecosystem. An initial pilot of courses is currently underway, and a "full-launch" pilot will take place in the fall.

OEI has selected Canvas as the common course management system (CCMS) for all participating colleges. The eight colleges in the full-launch pilot will begin using Canvas in Fall 2015, and it is expected that it will be made available to other colleges for both online and face-to-face classes within the next year.

OEI has selected Link-Systems International (LSI) to provide online tutoring services. It is anticipated that by fall, colleges outside of the pilot will be able to buy into the LSI tutoring services contract at a reasonable cost. Work on a means to assess student readiness is also in progress and is expected to be available within the next year as well.

Update on Online Tutoring

Julian Taylor, the new Tutoring Coordinator for the Learning Center, presented an update on the online tutoring pilot. Student tutors have been responding to email questions and have provided "real-time" online tutoring to students, if requests are made during the online tutoring hours. Tutors usually use Join.Me, which he reports is "hit or miss."

Julian outlined three main options for online tutoring going forward:

1. Keep tutoring in-house. The Learning Center will need to hire more online tutors and have a dedicated platform with data tracking.
2. Join an online tutoring consortium. We could possibly join with other colleges to share each other's tutoring resources. It would require expansion of current service availability,

as well as careful coordination with the participating colleges and IT integration with the tutoring platform.

3. Hire a full tutoring service. There are various companies that provide online tutoring services, including Smartthinking (which is a Pearson company and used by CSM), NetTutor, Brainfuse, and Link-Systems (which has been selected by the OEI).

Each of these options has pros and cons and will require greater funding than is now available. Given the selection of Link-Systems by OEI, taking advantage of that offering might be most cost-effective for us. We should have more information about that option by this summer.

Voice-Authoring Tool Status

Janet reported that she got pricing information for both Voice Authoring (which used to be called Wimba and is now part of Blackboard's Collaborate, which used to be called Elluminate) and Voice Thread (a separate web-based service that claims to integrate with Moodle). The pricing for unlimited use by all three colleges in the district for three years would be \$92,300 for Voice Authoring and \$85,000 for Voice Thread. The cost of Voice Authoring would be added to our Moodlerooms contract, whereas Voice Thread would be a separate expense. Voice Authoring might present more technical problems for students, as it is written in Java, although Blackboard is in the process of moving it to an SaaS-based platform that will also be more mobile-friendly.

Since this is a tool that should be provided at the district level, Janet forwarded the information she collected to VP Anderson, who will try to involve the other two VPs in finding a solution to this need for all three campuses. It was also noted that Canvas, the CCMS selected by OEI, has voice and video capabilities built into it.

Update on Online Public Speaking

Janet reported on a meeting with representatives from the other two community colleges who were selected by the CSU Chancellor's office to pilot online public speaking courses that fulfill the general education requirement Area A1. Each of the three colleges selected chose a different course. Cañada is piloting COMM 110 - Public Speaking, which is an important course for online degrees. Jessica Kaven is teaching the pilot COMM 110 online. Each instructor has learned a lot from the pilot, and the meeting included discussion of common problems and solutions. The general education folks at the CSU office will continue to monitor the success of these pilot courses before making the decision whether to accept online courses for Area A1.

DE Student Survey Results

Lisa Palmer presented her collation of the DE student survey results from last semester. She looked at the open-ended questions relating to student success factors and created categories for the responses from the 224 students who submitted the survey. As a result of her analysis, she presented these best practices for online faculty and students:

Top ten factors our students want from distance-ed faculty and courses:

1. Availability and **responsiveness** * (31)
2. Clear or frequent **communication** (timely feedback, update the course to remind students to stay on track, interaction with students, relationship with students, weekly engagement) (31)

3. Organization: **clear, and advance schedule** (some want the whole semester laid out) with **clear expectations** and prerequisites (such as PowerPoint) and consistent/clear weekly due dates (28)
4. **Clear instructions** (10)
5. Online resources (**recorded lectures**, videos, PowerPoints of lecture, interactive lecture) (11)
6. Appropriate and/or **flexible deadlines** (stressed/disabled/working students) (10)
7. **Face-to-face time** with someone (instructor or tutor; nights) (9)
8. **Connections among students** (online study groups; discussion forums) (7)
9. **Work equivalent** to (rather than more) a f2f course (3)

Skills and attributes our students say help them succeed:

1. **Time management**, prioritization, organization, punctuality (31)
2. **Self-discipline**/motivation (9)
3. **Communication** with instructor (9)
4. Signing in every day/regularly (6)
5. Study, **focus**, and **effort** (5)
6. **Determination** and maturity (3)

Lisa noted that students especially value clear organization, frequent interaction with the instructor and other students, and instructor responsiveness to questions. Many online students are very busy with jobs and families and some have disabilities; thus they appreciate having flexible deadlines and knowing the schedule far in advance so that they can plan ahead. Lisa also noted that some students expect instantaneous responses, both day and night, so it is important to shape expectations by being available at regular times and letting students know at the beginning of the semester when they can expect to receive responses to questions.

We will not be conducting the DE student survey this semester, as the college has planned two other large surveys of students this semester, but will conduct the survey again in the summer and fall.

Other Issues

Candice Nance said that she would appreciate opportunities at flex days for online faculty to share ideas with each other and asked whether this might be organized for a district flex day. Along the same lines, Leonor Cabrera suggested an online means for faculty to share ideas.

Committee members were encouraged to attend the district DEAC meeting on March 18 at 2 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Submitted by Jane Rice