

Minutes of Meeting March 8th, 2011

Approved April 13th, 2011

Final

Committee Attendees: Hardinger, Jansma, Lew, Loehner, Mamer (Chair), McDonald, Pires, Reiff, Snyder, Steen, Wendrich
Guests: Rob Rodgers, Annelie Rugg (on behalf of Reem Hanna-Harwell and Julie Austin)

1. Quick Topics

- a. Minutes from 12/2/10 meeting approved for posting with no changes.
- b. Inquiry from ASUCLA regarding their attendance at future FCET meetings. The committee found ASUCLA's December presentation and discussion around e-books very useful. The committee welcomes ASUCLA to contact Michelle Lew when they would like to have FCET feedback on other items, likewise, the FCET will keep in mind possible ASUCLA input into its future agenda items but the Committee would prefer not expanding the regular membership at this time. ASUCLA should also note that FCET past agendas and minutes are posted at: <http://www.oit.ucla.edu/fcet/>
- c. Inquiry from faculty asking for FCET opinion on whether or not it is still challenging for students to access internet based resources or if it is now acceptable to require students to purchase a resource available only online. While the committee was not aware of any survey data to support this, anecdotally all felt confident that there was sufficient access and many faculty had already done similar online-only resources or assignments.

2. UC Online Instructional Pilot Program (OIPP)

Background materials: Draft UCLA Statement by Jim Davis, List of OIPP Letters of Interest which were invited to workshop, copies of LOIs chosen from UCLA.

There are at least two places where the FCET is being invited to weigh in on the issue of online instruction. Since the last committee meeting, FCET Chair John Mamer has attended several meetings with Judi Smith, Jim Davis, David Unruh and others regarding Online Instruction. This group sees a place for FCET to interface with the UC Online Instructional Pilot Program. Earlier this week, John Mamer was also contacted by the College FEC which recently saw a presentation by Brian Copenhaver about his efforts with an online general education class this past summer (done with the assistance of TFT's production staff). College FEC chair Ray Knapp has asked to meet with John Mamer and wants to know if the FCET can help the College FEC think about a campus position on these local online efforts.

The committee engaged in a lively exchange of information and experiences regarding both the UC OIPP as well as what steps UCLA should take locally. Some points discussed include:

- At the OIPP Workshop it was made clear that each local campus senate would need to weigh in and approve any OIPP course before it is offered.
- Perhaps we should help advise our own Academic Senate and College FEC to work out ground rules or questions to consider.
- It is unfortunate that the OIPP project appears to have reached over the existing campus management structure of Deans, Chairs, and Curriculum committees.
- It is incongruous that assurances are made that any OIPP course will maintain an (undefined) "UC-Quality", yet the mechanisms for guaranteeing that have been bypassed.
- The Committee reiterated its desire to clearly define the goal of OIPP. What problem is it trying to solve? Going by a quote from the request for LOI's : "The project seeks to evaluate the efficacy of online instruction in a variety of disciplines. Preference will be given to high-enrollment, lower division courses, especially where they include the discrete units that taken together complete and introductory sequence (e.g., US History 1, 2, and 3)"
- There is a feeling that the administration is telling us to offer more sections yet there is no money for TAs. There is a concern that Professors will be asked to do more TA work and that this will dilute the quality of the courses. Is the bottle-neck being moved from physical space to TA resources?
- Is this a misallocation of resources being pushed to technology? Students can't graduate because they can't get into a class. Will this magically be solved with technology? Technology is not a panacea; it is not useful everywhere and it's not cheaper. Have all the non-technical solutions been fully explored? For example how much efficiency would be gained from moving the drop date up to week two or three? We need to be cautious and clearly identify the problem and look at the whole system of which e-learning is just a part. Before we throw resources at technology have we explored other options?
- What is happening at the other campuses? Are other campus FECs or Senates considering these issues?
- We are doing technology adjustments during a sea change. It seemed that teaching was once only a by-product of other activity at a research institution. The world is changing; with rising tuition there is pressure to increase the amount spent per capita on teaching. We will need to spend more on instruction, but we need to spend wisely.
- Since the FEC and Senate will need to approve online courses (do they?) then we should work to help them.
- It was noted that the Academic Senate has had *ad hoc* committees that have looked at some of these issues in a broader context. Perhaps some entity like the FCET should pull this information together so that UC can be consistent.

- Advantages of online: potential to increase class capacity beyond physical restrictions. Some class experiences could be genuinely improved by online features.
- People make the assumption that a webcast lecture equates to online instruction. There needs to be a clear definition of the multiple formats of online instruction.
- At what point does a course become an online course, versus simply augmented? This needs to be clearly defined and understood. Synchronous or asynchronous? Produced videos? Is there no live audience, or is it a recorded regularly-attended lecture. These are all getting lumped together in the discussion.
- Many faculty feel their teaching is affected by having an audience to interact with when they teach. In addition, the quality of the students that you are working with makes a difference, is the community of learners being considered?
- Online assessment/testing are real weaknesses that do not seem to be sufficiently addressed. What about performance evaluation? How will we judge the quality of what we produce?
- A different way of approaching this is for a campus or system to provide a set of foundational tools and let the faculty decide what works for them.
- Has Systemwide projected some ability to increase admits that will offset the cost of additional TAs needed for an online mode?
- Can you really fill that virtual seat an infinite number of times; can it really be reused?
- The expectations of the end-user changes when instruction is synchronous versus asynchronous. Experience indicates that expectations rise dramatically for higher production values for asynchronous materials. Students are much more forgiving about production values with synchronous streamed modules.
- Do the bells and whistles really enhance education or do they just give the appearance to students that it is better? This may affect teacher evaluations. Currently quality of course is defined via student satisfaction on a Likert-type scale. It's very volatile. Studies have shown that extraneous factors can significantly affect student satisfaction.

By the end of the discussion it was felt that the FCET would collect issues and questions for the College FEC to consider. FCET Chair John Mamer will draft some points from this discussion for circulation to the whole committee with the intention of sharing these points at an upcoming meeting with FEC Chair, Ray Knapp.