UCLA FACULTY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Minutes of Meeting June 12th, 2012

Approved July 2012

Final

Committee Attendees: Bawn, Domingo, Hardinger, Lew, Loeher, Mamer (Chair), Pires, Reiff, Rugg, Snyder, Wendrich. Guests: Rob Rodgers (OID)

1. Notes from 4/6/12 were approved without changes.

2. We thank Rob Boyd, Bill Grisham, Reem Hanna-Harwell and Jan Reiff for their service to the committee. If you have faculty you would like to suggest as new members for Fall please email their names to Michelle Lew so that they can be contacted.

    The committee segued into a discussion regarding the committee's role. The Academic Senate currently has an Ad Hoc committee on Instructional Technology and will likely make this a regular committee. The FCET has had a long history of participation in significant campus educational technology issues like CCLE and now online instruction. The FCET is appointed by administrative officers (Judi Smith and Jim Davis). It was felt the FCET will continue to offer advice and opinions and help connect the administration and academic viewpoints with regard to technology in instruction.

3. Discussion regarding online courses

    Members noted that as courses make more heavy use of technology it is changing the partnerships that are needed to produce education and is having an impact on the nature of teamwork in education for both educators and students.

    The committee contemplated a need for a redefinition of 'contact hours'. The number of contact hours used to be something that was tracked more carefully, but online courses would very likely be in violation of any strict calculation of contact hours.

    In addition the University needs to develop a definition of what constitutes an online course. Must a UCLA online course be reviewed by the senate? Currently if a course number has been approved it can be taught online or face to face. Major changes have to be approved again by the FEC. Should we distinguish an online course versus something that is essentially a correspondence course? Is an online course completely asynchronous? Some feel that a true online course is where the instructor picks more difficult materials for synchronous discussion which leads to students parsing their instructional time differently. As we struggle with designing online courses and students taking online courses we need to think about shifting key elements and this will vary by course and discipline. Knowing that complex material can be replayed by students can help decide what to shift.

    Online presents lots of stress on issues surrounding quality control. Currently quality control is mostly informal, but online courses are opening this up for scrutiny. Is it okay that currently student evaluations are really the only formal evaluation for on the ground courses? Should the University be looking at quality control for bricks and mortar courses as well? The infrastructure for addressing some of these issues is being laid out as we move evaluation surveys online. This will allow for question changes and additions to be more easily implemented.

Members voiced concern that there doesn't seem to be any evaluations of the summer session online classes and yet these are continuing to increase in number each year. It was noted that Summer Sessions recently indicated that they have funding to test other modalities for online instruction. Experiences with OIPP/UCOE have shown that what we have learned in the process of designing and offering online courses comes back to the on the ground courses, but there is still a need to formally evaluate the different models. The committee recommended sponsoring a faculty talk or symposium around the subject in the near future.

4.   General Assignment Classroom update (Rob Rodgers)

Rob Rodgers reported that his group recently completed a survey of wireless connectivity in general assignment classrooms.   There are currently three different official wireless networks offered on campus. These are Eduroam (for secure/authenticated access), UCLA_Wifi (formerly UCLAWLAN), UCLA_Web (public access). Wireless coverage in classrooms is not complete. Where there is wireless access the students' behavior changes drastically with a majority of students using phones, tablets and laptops during lecture. They are currently talking with IT Services about the possibility of instructor only wireless access being placed in the classrooms.

One of the reasons to increase wireless coverage is for classroom configurations such as flexible rooms with moveable tables. Unfortunately a room loses about 40% of its capacity when it is converted to flexible seating. The committee asked if these flexible rooms had been considered for rooms seating several hundred rather than the more typical 40 seats. Currently there are no plans to converted larger lecture rooms to a flexible style. Members noted that a professor at another university (Robin Wright, University of Minnesota?) has done some investigation in the area of large flexible seating courses.

Another upgrade scheduled for classrooms is switching equipment from analog to digital systems. The first two rooms scheduled for this switch will be Boelter 3400 and Dodd 147. This upgrade will also allow for digital touchscreen control panels in the classroom. Also over the summer, installation of media equipment in the final set of 30 classrooms will be complete bringing the campus to 100% audio visual equipment in the 192 general assignment classrooms.

With regard to demand for video podcasting, Bruincast currently turns away only about 4-5 people. Scheduling is the primary issue. Bruincast is testing remote cameras to help with this, however members of the committee commented that operator error is still an issue (camera not tracking instructor) even with remote operators. Instructors asked if rooms could have just a fixed camera in order to increase capacity for taping. Rob felt in that case it is best to just have an audio only podcast since a fixed camera will not have a very readable board or slides. They are however looking at audio and computer output capture which can be combined to provide an enhanced audio podcast where slides are synchronized to audio.