

Curriculum & Instruction Committee

December 4, 2012

Minutes

Present: P. Beavers, V. Dallas, K. Feathers, J. Fitzgibbon, J. Moseley, J. Rankin, K. Martinez

Absent with notice: B. Bosch, R. Hoogland, R. Villarosa

Absent: A. Furtado, A. Pandya, J. Potoff, P. Khosla, S. Terlecky, S. Gandhi

Guests: A. Ezzeddine, J. Mazoue, N. Simon, V. Bielat

J. Fitzgibbon suggested that online courses should provide information about technical expertise and extent of required work. Students may register for online courses without realizing the capabilities and the amount of time required. V. Bielat added that the Online Programs website under FFAQ indicates that a computer is not necessary to take an online course.

Another problem is defining credit hours for online courses as well as addressing quality of online courses. V. Bielat indicated that the task force that developed the July 2012 report did not make use of the earlier report on distance education done in 1999.

Ahmad Ezzeddine and Jim Mazoue arrived. We began with introductions. Then A. Ezzeddine was asked to provide some background information about the report. He said that t

A. Ezzeddine: The Task Force began under President Noreen. The charge was to look at structures around online instruction and to develop guidelines, and to coordinate and expand online offerings. With changes in administration the task force was not doing much. Under Provost Brown the task force was reactivated. The guidelines are based on *Guidelines For Evaluation of Online Programs*. A few things that we kept in mind during the process. We wanted to make sure that whatever we came up with was not contradictory with things that we did with face-to-face courses. We did not want to impose something that we could not do or ask the faculty to do face-to-face. So we were very cognizant of faculty academic freedom and their space. We wanted to also not come in as big brother imposing these guidelines. Some of the schools and colleges have already done some very good work and have their own structures. So we wanted to give some flexibility to every unit within these guidelines to develop their own depending on their faculty and their programs.

J. Mazoue: One of the hallmarks of the report is respect for faculty governance; so in terms of design and development and the implementation of these guidelines is that faculty have primary responsibility for that. It really takes root at the department or college level. We currently have some really good best

practices and some that are not so good. This was an opportunity to develop guidelines to insure the quality.

K. Feathers asked what the intent of these guidelines is.

A. Ezzeddine: We need to have a conversation with different units with the Senate about how is the best way to implement and the roles and responsibilities. We do not want to be the enforcer here. What we can do is help track, help provide resources and help facilitate delivery of online programs based on these guidelines. The idea is that moving forward we have a conversation, a road show, and talk about these things. To talk about how they are not just on the website; they exist; we want you to start working on delivering them, on developing your own units based on these things, and we will help you in that process. We want an advisory group, and we want current task force members to serve on that group and we want the chair of this committee (C&I) to serve as well. “

What role will the advisory group play?

A. Ezzeddine: They will help plan what the implementation will look like and help us start the implementation process.

J. Moseley: You said you will guide us through that process but how are you going to actually see that carried out, what resources will you provide?

A. Ezzeddine: How we have worked with Social Work is a good model. It was a faculty driven initiative to put their program online. But we can play a role. We can work closely with faculty; we can mobilize existing resources and bring it to bear.

J. Mazoue: The Office of Online Programs is a central organizational unit that is created to utilize existing resources to provide institutional support. Basically what we do is we are the ones who have our eyes on all aspects of online program development and deal with the issues, faculty development, student services, policy. So we're the unit that basically is concerned with overseeing the entire process.

N. Simon asked whether they have talked with the Student Services Committee of the Academic Senate?

J. Mazoue answered, “Yes”, which N. Simon indicated was not the case.

V. Dallas: What are your methods for getting out to the colleges?

J. Mazoue: We contact the colleges.

A. Ezzeddine: We work with the Deans and Chairs. The OOP has Jim, one instructional designer, and a technology person. We have a lot of courses that we do not have the resources to support, that is why it is important that we hire a new person for the OTL.

V. Dallas: Will your office be part of the OTL?

J. Mazoue: No.

A. Ezzeddine: The reason we worked with Social Work was because they wanted to take their complete program online. We work with those units that want to do online programs. That has been the primary focus of the Office of Online Programs. OTL needs to be working on the specific faculty member that wants to put a course online.

V. Dallas: So they focus on the mechanics of it?

A. Ezzeddine: Exactly. We deal with complete online.

V. Dallas: so you are more involved in online programs.

K. Feathers: So if I want to put a program online You are the people to go to; if I want to put my class online I go to the OTL?

A. Ezzeddine: Yes. But we work together and Jim's office is located in their space. We need to make sure that these boundaries are clear and people know where to go. We do also a lot of hybrid. We have 392 online sections and probably close to 1,000 hybrid sections-20-70% online. That requires some attention and you would be working and coordinating with the OTL. So that is another issue. To go back to your issue on student services. We have not offered any student services different for online courses. And that is going to be an issue for us as we continue to expand because you cannot ask people to complete an online program but for advising you have to come to campus. If we are going to be online, we have to have the services to support it.

J. Mazoue: the task force identified online student services as one of the critical areas we needed to support. As far as recommendations, that was one of the areas that the task force identified as a crucial area where we needed to marshal institutional resources. My office has dealt mainly with faculty development-faculty training , workshops, summer institutes for faculty and we reached about 3 dozen or so faculty in the process. So we have been interacting with faculty on course and program development and our priority is on increasing the number of general education courses that are online because surveys and our students tell us that they want to take more gen. ed. courses online for convenience or scheduling flexibility, and we also want to develop more degree programs. That is hard to do because it takes a much greater commitment and it also requires negotiations with departments.

V. Dallas: How are you going to assess progress?

J. Mazoue: One of the recommendations does address the need to assess the effects of the implementation of standards. Kind of a 4 part focus. One is to draft a set of guidelines, and the guidelines we identified are in the literature. We also need implementation; we don't just want a set of guidelines, we want to implement those effectively, and then we want to assess the effectiveness of that implementation. So there is an important assessment process to this, part of it is to reevaluate the SETs for online courses.

V. Dallas: That is the problem. We are putting all these courses online and we have no data on progress. We don't have information on online course because not enough students respond to provide reliable data.

A. Ezzeddine: There was a parallel process going on at the same time we were meeting. These are the challenges we face as we try to put some guidelines together.

V. Dallas: Students want this and there is a pressure to do this, but I am afraid to because there is no data.

J. Mazoue: I think this is an issue where the advisory committee would be very helpful in drafting. The School of Social Work has a good process of evaluating courses. What they have done, and I think this is a model that we recommended is that the process be one of peer review where faculty work together within a department or college and determine exactly the particular ways they can evaluate themselves, their program or their courses. Right now it is a one on one process, between the faculty member and department chair, but it can be broader where the process provides feedback and recommendations on the effectiveness of the course. That is the model Social Work has adopted. It is a very inclusive process where there is a rich environment of information concerning effectiveness of the course. So this whole issue of evaluation is one that can be transformed by an inclusive process, one of peer review.

A. Ezzeddine: There are two issues we need to address. One is how we get faculty to understand the way it works. From what I understand now, faculty send an email. They have to request that evaluations are sent to students. So if the faculty doesn't notice the email that comes, or ignores it, no evaluation goes to the students. So we need to automatically send it to the students.

J. Fitzgibbon indicated that she had a class last summer and paid attention to the email and responded but only 4 students out of 30 completed the evaluation.

V. Dallas raised a concern that undergraduate students may not be ready for online courses and to participate in this form of evaluation.

A. Ezzeddine: And the other issue is that the SET evaluation is not made to evaluate an online course. And you cannot just add questions to it because there are things that you really want to evaluate about their experience, a whole lot of issues.

V. Dallas: An if you are working with gen ed, you are working with an undergraduate population many of whom don't know what it takes to do an online course. An early undergraduate.

A. Ezzeddine: One of the things we are working on is to have an orientation to online; this is what is involved in an online class before you commit to it. You want to make sure also that the experiences within these various courses are consistent. We have some instances where all faculty do is post their lectures online and that's it. There is no other thing they do that is different than their face to face.

K. Feathers: but that raises a question about what Jim said about having departments set up their own way of reviewing the courses and the programs within their department. If what you are saying is that we need consistency across the programs, across courses, across departments, how do you let each one individually decide?

A. Ezzeddine: We need to have a system, some base.

K. Feathers: That is my point.

A. Ezzeddine: There is going to be a base which I think they follow these guidelines that will give them that base. It is a very challenging thing; what do we impose. I cannot go in a classroom and watch a faculty teach, but I can walk by the classroom and see that they are in the classroom. With online, I have no idea.

P. Beavers raised the issue of the larger problem of assessment; that there is a huge amount of variation in how departments report that they are certifying that actual learning is going on in courses. The guidelines provide some guidance but how is this implemented?

A. Ezzeddine cautioned that the OOP will not be responsible for this assessment.

V. Dallas asked then who will do these things in the report?

A. Ezzeddine indicated that the idea is to “consult around the implementation. It has to be college and unit driven. If someone is going to implement a new online program we can ask them how are you going to address all these issues, what is your plan to address the quality, the teaching load, all of these. They need to come up with a plan at this point. We can have them think through the issues and the items that are here. We can have an advisory group that reviews these things and can raise these red flags.

K. Feathers: OK you have these guidelines, you have this program, they develop their plan, who is going to look at that plan and say yes you have satisfactorily met these guidelines or no you haven't.

J. Rankin indicated that new courses and programs are vetted through his office. That he has other appropriate individuals provide input, but he is the approval person.

J. Moseley asked whether anyone has looked to see how all of this will be aligned with certification that will be coming up in about 3 years.

J. Rankin indicated that he already keeps this in mind for all courses and that he requires all courses to include learning outcomes.

J. Mosely asked about how foreign ministries view online courses. A. Ezzeddine indicated that online has not picked up in other countries to the extent it has here. Some students on visas are limited in how many online courses they can take.

A. Ezzeddine indicated that we need to think about which courses/program to offer online so that we offer possibilities that meet the needs of different populations. We also need to make sure we are using appropriate technology to meet the needs of different courses. This was followed by a brief discussion of the different systems being used to deliver courses.