

**Present:** Stacey Anderson, Marilyn Bejma, Cheryl Cluchey, Elise Gramza, Dave Nicol, Robbie Teahen, Spencer Tower, John Urbanick

**Guests:** Fritz Erickson and Mary Holmes

**Call to Order:** 10:07 a.m.

Robbie expressed her thanks for the group's attendance in light of the passing of Ellen Haneline, Dean of the College of Allied Health Sciences and member of our team. We will deeply miss Ellen and her contributions to our effort; our thoughts and sympathy go out to her family.

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN THE ONLINE CLASSROOM**

Mary Holmes, E-Learning Systems Administrator, reported that classes are brought over from BANNER into FerrisConnect when offered as online courses by submission of a Course Request Form. Should all classes be brought over? Presently, a little over half our classes are in FerrisConnect. This could be because faculty may be using MyFSU, could have their own websites, could be e-mailing their own syllabi, or have some other means of teaching a course that has worked well in the past and is preferred over FerrisConnect. It is possible to open all classes in FerrisConnect, and faculty will have to open up the connection to allow students to open their connection. There is a switch in Ferris connect to allow only faculty to open a course. Courses loaded into FerrisConnect do not take up much space until they are opened and faculty builds on them. If a student tries to open a course too soon, a prompt will come up indicating that the course is not available yet. Wording could be added to the prompt indicating that this course may not have a FerrisConnect presence so that students will not be confused and assume that because the name of a course appears online, it will be taught online. Mary indicated that there is an option to have a course generated only when faculty requests it, which is the current process. Under Special Announcements, a notice could be placed to students that "either this course will not be offered or it will be available the first day of the semester." Even if faculty does not want to teach through FerrisConnect, there are many reasons to build the course there as a resource. Should FSU handle this as our default policy? Mary will list for us all the options for faculty and what will result from each. Mary is invited back to our next meeting to follow up on this issue.

We realize that students need to be informed what dates online classes meet at the time they sign up in BANNER to avoid attendance problems if possible.

The first wait listing will be piloted in the spring in Humanities.; Two years ago, a draft policy said, "all online courses must be taught through FerrisConnect;" but stability issues prevented implementation. It was brought back and then went into a holding pattern due to negotiations. We must have a policy in place or be in trouble – we need to be able to define "attendance." Students "posting" is not adequate proof.

We must have an institutional policy that will allow us to be able to demonstrate and document the presence or absence of students at each course. Robbie distributed copies of the Audit statement from Baker College that documents what Baker did not do. With 80% of our students receiving financial aid, we risk running into the same problem and the same consequence of returning aid received for students whose attendance we cannot document. Our attendance policy must be university wide and apply regardless of the class-delivery method. Our attendance definition must be reasonable for faculty. It must be based on an attending activity, such as handing in assignments.

The Department of Education concluded that Baker College did not adequately maintain records. We retain our attendance records for four years, but they can be retrieved after being archived. One possibility is to have online students receive a prompt when opening a class that would require them to check a box as proof of attendance. Students should be warned that non-participation in class may endanger any financial aid they may have been awarded. The FCTL is available to tutor faculty who may need it. Tracking is automatically turned on for each student, and when a student logs in, it was suggested that perhaps a question could be asked, such as "Are you actively engaged?" Some suggested that we may want to separate an attendance policy from the use of FerrisConnect draft policy that will be revisited.

We may need focal groups to tackle these different issues. We may need to examine what we are doing in our face-to-face classes as well in order to come up with a well thought-out way to comply. Robbie will talk to other institutions regarding this and will research what we have as our policy in the Student Handbook.

### **FUTURE OF FSU E-LEARNING**

We discussed with Fritz the direction e-learning should take. Should we create a new task force, appoint another group to develop our plans, or continue to take on the responsibility ourselves? We have our university-wide Core Values and Mission to link to.

Some students use online courses to facilitate degree completion along with other media, and others use online as a stand-alone method of education. Our first step is to define "online" for the institution, then detail all the policy, etc., questions. We need to have a broad enough discussion and must put together a group that has full engagement across the university. We could consider community forums and engage as many triggers as possible to involve participants campus wide.

Questions such as who gets to teach an online class, who gets to take an online class, class size, and how does the money flow must be addressed. We do not want to see unintended consequences, such as creating rules and policies that cause people to do "work-arounds."

One suggestion was that we could frame some very tight focus group questions over 4-5 weeks of sessions, facilitated by us and other groups, and come back with results. Our E-MAT group should take the lead and use this opportunity to act on the results of community feedback. Online education has

become so important that we will create a real problem if we do not bring it into full focus as part of the institution. Our E-MAT Team has been charged with planning strategically for e-learning, and we should be willing to accept responsibility as endorsed by the Academic Senate. The group expressed their interest in taking this leadership role in the development of a comprehensive plan and vision for online learning at Ferris.

Fritz wants our efforts to coincide with those of SPARC and will communicate with Leonard Johnson to assure this. He also indicated that the full participation of the E-MAT faculty members, noting that only two were in presence at this meeting, along with other faculty of the institution must be achieved.

#### NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, October 27, 2010, 2:00 p.m. in CSS 302.

Meeting adjourned 11:34 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bejma