Distance Learning Steering Committee

Minutes of the Meeting

7/6/01

Members Present: Melanie Clay, Janet Gubbins, Matthew Clay, Paul Smith, Tom Beggs, Bob Gehling, Kathy Kral, Elizabeth Bennett, Diane Williamson, and Carol Goodson

This meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM in the Carriage House.

I. Melanie reviewed the minutes from our last meeting on 3/5/01.
II. Melanie presented three Distance Education issues to be discussed, in regards to SACS prep:
   a. Advisement
   b. Evaluation
   c. Notification / Inclusion of DE students in campus-life (student e-mail accounts)

   a. Advisement

   All recognized that advising distance students is a current challenge in that many advisors are not fully aware of all Distance Learning programs and issues. Dr. Goodson suggested regularly scheduled chat sessions or chats/phone calls be appointed.

   Question: How do we identify advisors for this purpose?

   Answers: Call for volunteers, the Freshmen Center, those with majors make appointment with advisors within their dept.

   Question: How do we notify faculty of the service, protocol, and call for volunteers? How do we notify students?

   Answers: DDEC Newsletter; e-mail and listerves; the Freshmen Center; presentation at General Faculty meeting and New Faculty meeting; press-releases to newspapers; posters; website; laminated cheat-sheets for faculty; information in student orientation folders.

   Question: What types of information would we include on a faculty cheat-sheet for advising distance students?

   Answers:
   - How does one know how much of a course is online, GSAMS, or face-to-face?
   - What makes a successful DE student?
   - Does the student have the necessary technology and skills?
   - DE terminology/concepts
   - Contacts
   - Resources (Library, etc...)
   - How to find directions to GSAMS sites
   - Quick FAQ
   - Ecore and WebMBA FAQ

   NOTE: Ask Linda Wagner to review sheet and for Freshmen Center input

a. Evaluations
The Distance Learning Department does evaluations for GSAMS and online evaluations for WebCT. Melanie raised the question of what structures can we put into place to ensure that faculty are using this feedback to improve the quality of their DL courses. This is an issue with SACS.

The group agreed that there should be an evaluation form developed to combine both regular evaluations and DL evaluations but that this process may take too long because it would probably require an act of the senate. In the meantime, the group agreed that we should try to get Dr. Hynes to make the Distance Learning Evaluations part of the Department Chair’s evaluation process because this is an issue with SACS. An issue was raised that the DL faculty member may not like this because DL evaluations tend to be lower because of the technology. Carol stated that there would only be a question asked as to how the faculty member is using the DL evaluation feedback to improve their course and this would not effect their promotion and tenure.

b. Notification / Inclusion of DE students in campus-life (student e-mail accounts)

A SACS issue was raised as to how we are including the Distance Learning students in our campus life; how do they have a voice in the student government; and how do faculty reach distance students in order to notify them of important course information before the course begins? SACS suggests a uniform e-mail system or database of DL student e-mails. The Online Steering Committee members discussed the following two options:

1. Currently we issue every student a campus e-mail address but not all students activate this account. The SACS committee on DL program approval recently made the following recommendation: Make it mandatory that DL students use their UWG e-mail accounts. Even if it is only to set the account to forward mail to the student's personal e-mail account. Faculty, students, and support staff have been asking for some type of notification solution, as well. (Often, Banner addresses are out-dated). This solution would cut down on confusion about what is an "activated" UWG e-mail account versus a "non-activated" account and give the faculty one sure-fire way to contact students easily. We understand that we cannot guarantee students will use or read their student e-mails. But by virtue of setting up the system, sending the updates and student government information, making it a widely stated policy that it is their responsibility to use or forward this mail, we have upheld our end of the bargain. The OSC committee decided this option may indeed be the easiest one to implement but the hardest to enforce. (It would be easy to add a notice to the term registration form that students are responsible for all accessing info or forwarding the info that will be sent to their UWG assigned mail account).

2. Add a "preferred e-mail" field onto the Banweb online registration form, as a required field. Though this e-mail would surely be most utilized, accepted, and used by students, this solution may be too difficult of a baseline change to be made to the Banweb form. Also, admissions and the registrar's office may object because of the additional hurdle it will place on students with "no" preferred e-mail account.

Next steps:

Janet is to address this issue with Melanie McClellan, Bonnie Stevens, and Admissions, to see which solution best.

I. Melanie suggested that we add more A&S faculty and student services representation to the DL Steering
Committee. The following people were suggested: Michael Crafton, Joe Wilford, Melanie McClellan, and Bill Lankford.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacey