Online Steering Committee

November 2, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. in the Carriage House with committee members Mike Russell, Melanie McClellan, Kathy Kral, Matthew Clay, Ara Volkan, Tom Padgett, Janet Gubbins, and Melanie Clay in attendance.

1. Melanie Clay started the meeting and briefly discussed the history of the Distance Learning Steering Committee including that the committee chose WebCT as the university course software. Clay (Melanie) also stated that were two main items on the agenda for today’s committee meeting: 1) review of technologies to enhance WebCT, including Tegrity and Horizon Live 2) SACS recommendations/suggestions. Janet Gubbins distributed a folder of handouts to all attending. The handouts were the SACS Exit Interview Recommendations and Suggestions, a DL Advisement Sheet, Possible Questions to Add to Evaluate Student Services (attached), Evaluation Summary for Distance Courses (attached), Proposal for Online Course, GSAMS Student Evaluation, and Distance and Distributed Education Student Evaluation.

2. Melanie Clay referred the Committee to the SACS Exit Interview Recommendations handout. Clay addressed standard 4.2.5 of that handout regarding orientation and advisement for distance programs and its orientation. Then, Clay directed the committee’s attention to the newly-created Distance & Distributed Learning Advisement sheet. Clay asked that the committee review the Advisement sheet and inform her of any possible improvements. Clay suggested distributing the sheet to all faculty. Janet Gubbins suggested putting the Advisement on colored card stock that would be laminated. It was also suggested to put the Advisement sheet on the Web, so students would be able to access it as well. The committee approved the one-page Advisement sheet, with the understanding that McClellan would make small changes as needed.

Next, Clay directed the committee’s attention the Possible Questions to Add to Evaluate Student Services (see attachment). These seven questions were obtained from Darton since they did not receive a SACS recommendation in this standard. McClellan suggested that another question be added to enable us to determine which distance students take some courses on campus. These questions were approved to be added.

Melanie McClellan suggested "online orientation for students." Gubbins stated that we used to conduct a face-to-face WebCT Orientation for students in each college but that only about 12 students showed up. In addition to an easier-to-locate Online Orientation, Clay stated that the DDEC will start to offer the face-to-face sessions again, and publicize them more.

3. The next item was standard 4.5 of Recommendations made by SACS. It was decided that departments would have to address this standard and the committee could not.

4. Clay next addressed standard 4.8.10. This standard requires that faculty evaluations be used to increase improvement in distance programs. Clay directed us to the Evaluation Summary for Distance Courses handout to fulfill this standard (see attachment). Volkan felt that department chairs should be receptive to this evaluation summary. The departments should require the evaluation summary. The professor, the chair and DL could all have a copy of the evaluation summary. In addition to meeting the SACS recommendation, the completed forms would be used by the DDEC to adjust training objectives as needed. The DDEC would also post overall (not individual) patterns of the summaries on a website for the use of all distance faculty. Tom Padgett stated that we would need cooperation from the deans. Volkan suggested that we have a meeting with the deans and/or the department chairs to introduce them to the evaluation summary form.

5. Next, Janet Gubbins led discussion as we skipped from SACS to technology. Gubbins mentioned Placeware, Tegrity, and Horizon Live. Gubbins pointed out that Horizon offered quality synchronous delivery and Tegrity delivered content better. Placeware is similar to Horizon Live but costs far more, and thus Horizon Live seems to be preferred in education, while Placeware is found more often in corporations. Gubbins announced that Epic Learning (which uses Placeware) (Nov. 6), Horizon Live (Nov.8), and Tegrity (Nov. 7) would be doing live demos.

- Gubbins presented Horizon Live. Horizon Live supports all browsers and computers; however, Placeware does not support Macs. Students need Real Audio for Horizon Live. Mike Russell suggested guest
speakers as a use for this platform. Mike Russell and Matthew Clay agreed that faculty would not be in support of the idea of sitting in front of a PC camera. No committee members were overly impressed with Horizon Live based on its initial cost of $25,000 and $4500 per year ongoing cost.

- Gubbins moved on to a discussion of Tegrity. Tegrity requires whiteboard. Tegrity is more affordable than the other options (low ongoing cost) but is more of an asynchronous tool that allows faculty to develop short video clips and archive them. Tegrity does allow for some live interaction, Mike Russell noted that traffic may be a concern for any of these technologies. Russell also brought up that content delivery was more important than these sorts of technologies, and that we already have the capabilities to do video streaming. He also expressed a concern that the demand might not be very high. However, Clay and Gubbins pointed out that some faculty have expressed a real need for an easy-to-use WebCT enhancement that allows for more visual and audio interaction. Janet Gubbins said that the pilot test of Placeware had very good student feedback; but that not all students were able to connect.

1. Melanie Clay returned the discussions to SACS and standard 5.0 (Scope and Accountability) of Recommendations. It is required to consistently evaluate student development services and programs for DL programs. Melanie McClellan said that she has some resources for DL students. Students have to come to campus for counseling. Janet Gubbins suggested that students email in needs and concerns. McClellan asked, "Does the university have an obligation to a suicidal student in Kansas?" Questions are: 1) which services do we offer distance learners? 2) And, who makes that decision? 3) What is the definition of development (student development services)?

2. Janet Gubbins showed an archived demo on Horizon Live.

3. Melanie Clay directed attention to the SACS Exit Interview Suggestion 5 (Educational Support services). Faculty must demonstrate competency in distance learning. Melanie Clay discussed three ways of addressing this.
   a. Clay mentioned Clayton College’s successful web-course and pedagogy seminar. This seminar is led primarily by faculty and focuses on issues such as building community, communication tools, learning environment, teaching strategies, and student-centered evaluation. The committee agreed that the DDEC should collaborate with faculty in developing a program. Clay suggested that it would be offered three times per year, with each session being about 7 hours long.
   b. Clay pointed out that the Online Course Proposal form requires faculty to agree to participate in training or certify that they have enough experience or have already received training. Volkan asked how Clayton got all distance faculty to participate in training. Melanie McClellan suggested a checklist and self-evaluation. Faculty could take the self-evaluation online. Tom Padgett said that WebMBA and eCore faculty are required to train and evaluate. The committee suggested making some changes to the Online Course Proposal form which would detail the competencies needed for those who felt they did not need training, and make a self-evaluation available to them.
   c. Melanie Clay introduced the development of a three-tiered certified DL instructor program with Level I, II and III certification. Elizabeth Bennett is working with Melanie on that. The program would promote training and enable a structured format for incentives and mentoring. Clay said that Bennett suggested that portfolios be one way to meet Level I requirements. When asked who would evaluate the portfolio, the committee discussed that the portfolios would not be assessed; rather they would either be done or not done.

4. Suggestion 4.3 (Graduate Programs) was unclear to committee members.

5. Mike Russell suggested IDEA forms/evaluation. Volkan said that those types of evaluation forms are not popular with faculty.

6. Melanie Clay suggested that the committee meet again in a few weeks.

7. Adjourned at 12:45 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Christy Talley