The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. in the Carriage House with committee members Janet Gubbins, Barbara McKenzie, Melanie Clay, Christy Talley, Kathy Kral, Mary O'Neill, Micheal Crafton, Diane Williamson, and Carol Goodson, in attendance.

1. Melanie Clay started the meeting and briefly reviewed the Agenda. Clay (Melanie) stated that there were two items on the agenda for today’s committee meeting:

   1. Review Institutional Distance Learning Goals and assessment results of how effectively we are meeting each goal
   2. Review results from the Spring 2003 Phone Survey of Distance Students
   3. Review recommendations received from campus-wide SACS review, as they pertain to Distance courses
   4. Ask for input on forming the VISTA Migration Team

2. Melanie reviewed the Institutional Distance Learning Goal #1, its evaluation, and asked for feedback. Dr. McKenzie asked if her department still needed to go a step further and provide assessment as it relates to their specific program, versus the overall distance program. Melanie and Dr. Crafton were unsure – they asked that Dr. McKenzie get with Dr. Ara Volkan to resolve this question.

3. Melanie pointed out the pattern in the Goal 1 assessment results… our ratings were always highest in the Summer, when most truly distance students took courses; our ratings were lowest in the Fall, when so many student new to distance ed enter. Overall, however, data was generally positive.

4. Melanie questioned the assumption that instructor to student interaction is a necessary component to DE success. She said that research shows that some courses may not require as much student to faculty interaction, instead gaining more from student to student interaction. Dr. McKenzie stated that her department is doing research on just this issue now and that she would share the results at a later date.

5. Melanie suggested that perhaps the interaction question be divided into two separate questions. Dr. Crafton agreed and noted that we should reword the question so that one distance course is compared to another distance course rather than to a traditional course. Melanie also noted that perhaps a distinction should be made between feedback and content interaction comments from faculty.

6. Melanie noted that the data results from the phone survey, though conducted randomly, did happen to pull a disproportionate amount of results from students in CISM 2201. Suggestions for getting representative results from distance students in graduate-level ed courses included conducting the survey at night and on the weekends, instead of during normal weekday work hours.

7. Melanie suggested that we add question #11 on the phone survey to our online version of the course survey. All agreed.

8. Goal 2 did not elicit any feedback; all were satisfied with the data.

9. For Goal 3, Melanie pointed out that 44% of students said that they received their orientation from the instructor, versus the information we provide online or one of our
classroom presentations. Therefore, Christy Talley has been writing orientation
documentation, in many different formats, for the purpose of giving faculty the tools to
provide an all-inclusive/standardized orientation. Faculty will be able to use only the
portions they wish, but are asked to provide access to all info online and conduct the
student “test” of the information (the test will be provided). The committee agreed with
this plan. Christy said that the orientation packet should be complete by the end of next
week.

10. Regarding Goal 4, Barbara McKenzie made a second request for assistance with
running the evaluation data as it pertains specifically to their program. Janet explained that
the IRP dept will be able to help more in the future, as Banner markings improve, but that
they would still only provide aggregate data. Diane Williamson suggested that departments
contact the Marketing dept. and ask that students run the data as part of their coursework.
Melanie reiterated that we the DDEC cannot coordinate the interpretation of research for
each individual department.

11. For Goal 5, Melanie reminded the committee about our DDEC DLA 2003 conference
in June. The committee asked that we publicize the conference across campus listservs.
Janet and Christy stated that they would make sure this was done.

12. Melanie announced that we will no longer conduct GSAMS classes after December
2004. She presented the committee with data illustrating the reasons why continued
GSAMS delivery is no longer economically feasible. After seeing the data, the committee
agreed. However, Dr. McKenzie expressed frustration that her department was not given
enough time to transfer the course to online versus GSAMS delivery. Melanie explained
that we are proceeding with using PolyCom as a replacement system between here and
Newnan. Stacey and Kathy explained the technical and logistical aspects of why PolyCom
works between here and Newnan but would not work to other sites on the WWW network.
Dr. McKenzie stated that they are having to ask students to drive to campus for more for
courses and she fears they will lose enrollment because of the inconvenience. Melanie
suggested that they consider having 1-3 extended face-to-face sessions, in lieu of GSAMS.

13. Melanie reviewed the SACS recommendation #4, as it pertains to DE. She noted that
as it is explained on page 31 of the document, we are currently unsure as to whether the
work we have already done here for the SACS substantive change review will suffice as a
response to the overall campus-wide SACS review recommendation #4. Dr. Crafton thinks
that it will suffice but was unsure. Melanie and Dr Crafton said that they’d need the
opinion of Dr Ara Volkan, as to how to proceed.

14. Melanie gave the floor to Christy Talley, to review the specific phone survey results.
Mary O’Neill suggested that we add data such as age, ethnicity, and sex, to the survey.
Christy said that it would be awkward asking those questions over the phone. Dr Crafton
noted that since we have the students’ SS#, we can look that data up on Banner, without
having to ask. Everyone agreed with this latter method.

15. Dr. Goodson suggested that “does not apply” be taken off as an option for #1. Kathy
Kral asked whether the question meant to pertain to advisement received via distance
means – or did we mean any advisement at all? Kathy suggested making this clearer we
should switch the order of question 1 and question 2. The committee agreed.

16. Mary O’Neill asked if we could perhaps ask more pressing follow-up questions in the
survey. For example, if students do not like the new WebCT Discussion Board… “why?”

17. Dr. Goodson suggested we eliminate the “does not apply” for question 3, as well. The
committee agreed.
18. Janet gave a brief overview of the upcoming migration to WebCT’s new VISTA product and the need to form a VISTA Migration Team to help make administrative decisions, design the institutional template, and gather data from the test courses that will first migrate to the central server. Janet proposed the following Team members and structure:

Primary VISTA Migration Team:
Melanie Clay
Janet Gubbins
Christy Talley
Kathy and/or Madison
IT rep from each college
Some faculty - Bennett, Lloyd, Goodson, Crafton, O-Neill (because they are on Online Steering Committee)
Library - Chris Huff
Edwin Rudolph, CS Dept., by request

Later, additional sub-committee members charged specifically with designing the UWG template:
John Smith
Student services rep
Admissions
Grad School
EXCEL Center rep
Student Development rep

All committee members present agreed to participate. Janet asked for suggestions for others who should be asked. Diane suggested that Dr Padgett also be on the committee. All agreed.

19. Janet discussed the possibility that USG may require that we host our courses on their central server. Melanie asked us to discuss objectively the pros and cons of such a move. Janet noted that we’d have less access to do certain helpdesk tasks. Kathy noted that it would be cheaper, as far as hardware and personnel costs. Dr. Crafton said that he felt the USG central office had done a good job of supporting the eCore student and faculty – but that he’d find out for sure by asking more questions. The primary concern presented by Janet and echoed by Kathy and Diane, was the effect that the bandwidth slow-down would have on on-campus courses using WebCT to do in-lab testing. Janet said this was a major problem during the one term when WebCT was moved to the central server last Fall 2002. Janet explained that we would need to move a few test courses to the central server first and run extensive tests on in-lab testing, to see what effect the bandwidth issue would have on the usability of WebCT. Diane Williamson suggested the course BUSA1900 as one of the courses we should test. Janet reported that the CS department wants to be included in the trials, as well. Kathy felt that either way, if we have the proof of a problem, the USG would do something to assist.

20. Dr. Crafton asked what would happen if we refused to go to the central server and simply wanted to run the old WebCT. Janet reported that on our own, the “old” WebCT – the one we run now – would cost around $30,000. Also, Janet was told that the BOR would not approve the expenditure.

21. Melanie Clay adjourned the meeting at noon.