



## **DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

### **Adopted Minutes**

**April 23, 2012**

**Room 101**

**2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Dale called the meeting to order at 2:39 pm.

Roll: Dale Crandall-Bear, Chair; Karen Cook; Marylou Fracisco; Jeffrey Lamb; Philip Petersen; Roy Pike; Philip Summers; Sandra Rotenberg; Robin Sytsma

Connie Adams – AS Admin Assistant

Absent/Excused: George Daugavietis; Scott Ota

#### **1. Approval of Minutes – March 12, 2012**

Motion to Approve – Roy Pike; Seconded – Marylou Fracisco; Passed - Unanimous

#### **3. LMS Update**

Dale reported that the Pearson LMS proposal is on the May 4 Governing Board agenda and he briefed members again on the process for students to choose whether or not to purchase Pearson eBooks for online classes that use Pearson books. The College will not be charged for the LMS and only students who choose the Pearson eBooks will be charged the \$80 fee which should include all the supplementary materials from the publisher but instructors should verify with the Pearson reps. Dale explained that \$80 would be the flat fee for each class whether instructors use a Pearson textbook or include study guides, labs or other Pearson materials. He opined that even if two separate ESNs are used in the same class, they should fall under that flat fee.

Prior to this meeting Dale received a call from the Pearson Sales Rep Coordinator because a rep reported a College instructor's misunderstanding that faculty will have to adopt Pearson texts. Dale asked members to clarify for colleagues that use of Pearson texts is not a requirement. Faculty can continue to teach as they have with materials of their own or from other publishers, but if they currently use or adopt a Pearson text, then their students would make the choice of whether to pay the \$80 fee to access the Pearson eBook. The phone conversation also made it clear to Dale that the Pearson reps need clarity on the LMS agreement as well.

Phillip brought up a recent Pearson textbook support issue. Jeff pointed out that the Pearson textbook company and the eCollege LMS have merged yet they are still functioning separately and support would need to be addressed through the relevant area. Roy explained that in his department, based on the outcry from students regarding costs of texts, they are trying to have four or five of the textbooks being used available in the school libraries and make it mandatory that students either buy the book or come in and do the research. Dale responded that Pearson is bearing the burden of whether this works for them and instructors should not be concerned with that and should teach the way they always have. Jeff noted the Pearson three-year contract includes annual reviews which would allow Pearson to choose whether or not they want to continue. Dale added that the contract included a 60-day termination clause and when

argued it was not nearly enough time, Pearson agreed to one year. Based on that information, Jeff recommended, as a group, DE should be prepared for an earlier transition.

#### LMS Fall Transition

Dale will be getting the list of courses, begin creating the shells, enroll instructors, and send out a request form for eCompanions this week. Regarding Canvas, the official transition will begin with pilot courses in two years once a contract is signed with Canvas. An unofficial transition will begin next academic year with a number of pilot courses. Because Canvas is an open source LMS, instructors can go to the website and set up shells which won't cost instructors, students, or the College. When Dale has the list of instructors who want to pilot early he will set up a couple training workshops, including one before the end of this semester. Shells without content will be set up in eCollege and the first page will show how to access the course in Canvas. Dale will contact participating instructors to attend informal group meetings. He plans to move all of his fully online classes to Canvas and experience what it is like to run a full load there. DE Committee members should inform their colleagues that rosters have to be handled manually during the unofficial program as Canvas won't be connected to BANNER. Canvas has a system where instructors can send one email invitation to their entire class to enroll in a Canvas course. When students click the link they will be taken to the Canvas site, they click on the invitation, register, and they will show up on the roster. Instructors who want to participate should email Dale as soon as possible.

#### **4. Canned Courses**

Dale updated members that Pearson presented a proposal to S/P Laguerre and some faculty last week for a full program completely taught by Pearson. They teamed up with ACE (American Council on Education), a group that reviews courses and recommends where credit should be awarded but the College would still have to grant credit. The way the system was proposed: a student buys the course for \$299; they self-pace through the course; they take practice and final quizzes; passing is based on the exams, and; the course offering consists of objective exams with multiple choice for everything, except English, which includes tutors looking at students' work. Pearson online Smart Tutoring is built into it with up to ten hours tutoring per student using a chat room. Dale, Diane White (CTA), Charlene Snow (CTA), Senate President Thom Watkins, and other faculty who attended were alarmed because the proposal was essentially a correspondence type of program and the DE program has been working hard to distance itself from those types of courses. Dale felt Pearson was genuine in proposing this as a solution to College budget problems by picking up students turned away from classes and teach them in conjunction with the College. Faculty at the meeting argued it might be useful for a tutoring kind of program or a study session program but not as a course.

Other companies beside Pearson are doing the same thing by acquiring different components, packaging and creating fully self-contained courses that they own all rights to. Publisher reps will: pitch these programs; suggest teachers try them; tell them they won't add to their workload. Student essays would be scanned and computer generated comments returned. Publishers have been working on this for years and the College isn't prepared to address issues of technology and publisher promoted programs. Dale proposed starting another task force with members from the DE Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Curriculum Committee to develop policy. Concerns about canned courses have been raised in all of these committees as well as the CTA looking at workload equity issues. At a recent Senate meeting, Richard Kleeberg pointed out that face-to-face classes need to be part of the discussion as well, not only online. The issue of canned courses has been discussed but a policy has never been developed, there is nothing to prevent instructors from using these courses and some are doing that now. The Curriculum Committee doesn't approve outside or canned courses, but members opined they should be involved in this process. A Policy would need to be faculty-led, clear and enforceable. Student contact expectations need to be spelled out with exceptions allowed for certain courses. Dale pointed out there are some reading labs, power points, and other items that could be used as supplemental work, but interaction with

the students is crucial. Dale recommended there should be faculty on the task force who would bring a good mix of different situations, such as My Labs, English, and CTE. Dale's goal is to identify the task force and have at least one meeting before the end of the school year. Phillip Summers, Jeff, and Karen (tentatively) volunteered to be on the task force.

Dale reiterated the importance of moving toward a faculty crafted policy to pass through the Senate and the Governing Board that administration would hopefully respect. Jeff noted this will be a good opportunity to establish: clear understanding of what the components would be of an online class that would encourage regular, effective contact; what instructors want and need, and; agreement on what should be included. Roy pointed out simple things beyond book learning, such as threaded discussions relating experiences, reinforces learning and makes more sense to students.

## **5. DE Reports from Schools**

Roy would like to see a resurrection of the e-teachers' group. Marylou suggested this is a perfect time to begin again to learn a new platform, share abilities, courses, excitement, and ideas. Dale suggested the second DE meeting of the month could become an informal e-teachers meeting. Members considered scheduling different days and/or times that would be posted at the beginning of the semester in consideration of instructors' teaching schedules. Roy reminded members how teachers brought their own products to share during Flex Cal and other members agreed those were valuable experiences to initiate again.

Jeff suggested the Committee might want to decide what the online portal should look like and meet with Scott Ota who is working on the Solano College website redesign.

## **6. DE Program Standards**

Dale queried members thoughts on what would be the best, most effective way of making sure faculty are trained and refreshed to teach online.

- A course written by Solano online teachers. Sandy's ideal would be for instructors to train with their own cohort and the training would fit the way they teach.
- The procedure that you get the information through – Roy has always been encouraged by up-flow from peers and relishes opportunities to work with them. Sometimes the simplest method is to have a scribe to write everything on conference pads for all to see and facilitate brainstorming and collating of ideas.
- Sandy opined training should be done online, because one of the benefits of training is when the instructor becomes the online student.
- A sequence of training with a certificate of completion, find a way to piggyback on what is already happening here organically and be more systematic about it.
- Jeff suggested that the TLC (currently on hiatus) could be a conduit again for regular trainings and also provide a push for people to actually be there. With a policy for online instruction, overall instructional improvement would be seen, as well as higher attendance and greater involvement in work that is already being done, rather than creating a whole new training process.
- Faculty training would be best if run by faculty and not just having them go to tutorials.
- To address the issue of workload and enforcing training, Dale heard an idea that instructors teaching online would have that percentage of their flex be devoted specifically to online. That could be part of the policy. Jeff suggested the Flex questionnaire could include a box for online instructors to check.
- Ongoing training will be important with a new LMS that adds updates regularly.
- A Canvas training shell could be created for all online instructors.

- Restarting an e-teachers' group.
- Creating an archive of videos, best practices, etc.
- The white paper states "you will have a mentor".
- On their own, instructors could become a student of other colleges' courses to see what they do.
- Maybe first year instructors should be evaluated in their first semester. Should the Committee, DE Coordinator, or dean do some sort of review or tracking?
- Bring each online instructor (voluntary) to the full Committee or a subcommittee to look at their course.
- Bring course to the DE Coordinator for feedback.
- Create a more open-door, collaborative environment and an online college culture with greater expectations and a wealth of opportunities.
- Reviews done in own departments or in related areas.
- Each department or school could take turns hosting e-teacher groups and invite everyone.
- Achievement of technical competency
- Introduction of pedagogical concepts

The task force will publish and generate materials and courses and work on policies. The Committee will discuss the College online program and standards, so clearly the two committees will be distinct but also will converge. Program Review, outcomes, and plans to be accomplished will also be Committee goals.

Counseling and student services representatives should be on the Committee.

## **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm