



DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Adopted Minutes

November 14, 2011

**Room 101
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

1. Call to Order

Chair Dale Crandall-Bear called the meeting to order at 2:37 pm

2. Roll Call

Dale Crandall-Bear - Chair; Karen Cook; George Daugavietis; Ferdinanda Florence; Marylou Fracisco; Mary Gumlia; Scott Ota; Roy Pike; Sandra Rotenberg; Robin Sytsma; Connie Adams
Absent/excused: Jeffrey Lamb

3. LMS update on the RFP

Dale announced that this is the last DE meeting opportunity to discuss platforms before the RFP draft is taken to administration and the Governing Board on Wednesday. Marylou questioned why the DE Committee was not given time to review the numbers and draft. Sandy explained that the numbers are the same rough numbers as presented at demos and the decision will not be limited by numbers. She will email the RFP to Committee members. Administration created the deadlines.

The RFP Review Committee includes Dale, Sandy, Academic Senate President Thom Watkins, two faculty members who attended all of the demos, an IT rep, and Dean Lamb. S/P Laguerre and EVP Reyes have also been invited to the meetings.

The RFP covers, in 29 pages, all questions that came up at through the process. Scott suggested that a list be prepared to include all items faculty want for review of platform responses. Sandy stated that everything faculty wanted was included in the RFP and that anyone who wants to add further input will have to review the RFP and respond quickly.

Mary Lou felt that Committee time was wasted without reasonable time for the process or to review the RFP, as well as not being included on the Review Committee. She pointed out the importance of how the questions are worded and queried if that isn't the job of this Committee. Sandy responded that she's done the best she can, as well as Dale and everyone else involved with the limited time given. She took into account all of the input, was told to use the bookstore RFP as an example, and took verbiage from other colleges' reviews. The Committee is open to suggestions on how to do the evaluation from faculty who have reviewed all of the platforms. After the evaluation, a grid could possibly be sent out to the DE Committee for additional input. LMS companies could be invited to return. A proposal conference will be held on November 29.

Roy noted the biggest concern that he has heard from faculty that is also his concern. He put in much time and effort, as did others, to establish courses ten years ago and the fear many now have is that, if the platform is changed, faculty won't get paid for the transfer workload and, if it is handled outside of faculty, it could lose something in the interpretation. Sandy replied that there have been conversations about faculty stipends for transitions. S/P Laguerre and EVP Reyes will likely be the ones to make that decision. Because eCollege is making changes, no matter which platform is chosen, changes will have to be made. Sandy opined that there will be a gain rather than a loss because all platforms reviewed have been better.

Ferdinanda questioned the process to take courses from eCollege and make it work and if they will charge extra for that. Sandy replied that eCollege will charge \$240 per course to put in a transferable package and added there are big “ifs”. If faculty handle their own content, at least they’ll know what they want and understand the process. While that isn’t ideal, it will probably be the reality.

The eCollege contract expires in June. It is uncertain if spring and summer will be used to complete the transition. This task has been 99% budget driven, we’ve been informed that the DE budget will be cut on July 1, 2012, and, if we don’t have another system in place, they won’t pay for eCollege either. The potential savings may have already been spent.

Mary Lou stated it won’t be possible to have an 8-week summer course ready and it sounds like an exercise in futility. Karen queried if the cheapest platform would be chosen. Sandy replied that she believes the three in the middle look better than the bottom one but all she has now are loose numbers. The platforms will have one set of documents and numbers to work from. Some are basing numbers on FTES and some from numbers out in the ether. Platform costs vary per company for applications as well as what is available. For example, some charge more for mobile, some don’t, some have administrative requirements that are nuts and some don’t. Sandy will remain DE coordinator through the semester, will stay with the RFP process into the beginning of next year and would expect the next DE coordinator (the position will remain at 40% release time) to be involved somehow.

Scott queried if summer was supposed to be used for transition. Sandy replied that it depends on what gets negotiated and everyone will have to keep their heads about them and start negotiating by looking at the RFP. Maybe part of the negotiation would be to keep eCollege until August 15.

Mary Lou suggested the Committee meet with EVP Reyes. Dale noted that it will be difficult to ignore the Committee, which has been working steadily at this from the beginning. There may be a time it would be appropriate to sit with administration. Members expressed concern that the people who will make the decisions won’t listen to the Committee. That is unknown, but if found that they aren’t listening, faculty buy-in will be needed. There will be 4-5 faculty on the RFP Review Committee, and there could be a recommendation of no confidence, if they don’t listen. The Committee could forward a list of concerns about this to administration to be addressed. If any concerns are left out then another route may be necessary. Sandy confirmed there is a statement in the RFP to address the transition period and timeline and added that there is so much unknown including what can be negotiated. Mary reiterated the importance to make sure administration has and accepts input from DE, more DE Committee members present to speak up if needed, or to consider a vote of no confidence if ignored.

Dale asked members if they preferred to share what they think about platforms or clarify concerns in the time remaining and they chose the latter.

Important concerns:

- If a company says they can transfer courses, can they or will they go back to the office and try to figure out how to do that or other things they promise.
- It is significant that there are other groups recently bringing up the “no confidence” issue in this and other areas of concern.
- Faculty buy-in will be important if management does not back us. With accreditation work and other tasks at hand it was difficult for faculty to fit demos and sandbox experience into busy schedules.
- Decisions are being made that aren’t rational, including the deadline.
- Transition timeline.
- Transition will take trial and error and faculty should cooperatively support each other as needed.
- Summer courses migrated without instructors having looked at them. Sandy responded that that won’t happen.
- Faculty should handle their migration.
- A contingency plan will be needed and one could be to reserve the right to use eCollege again if the other platform doesn’t work or an interim conversion with the upcoming eCollege social

learning interface and open courses that any faculty can use unsupported for free. That would depend on eCollege's ability to migrate courses there as well as other questions that would need to be answered.

- Funding automatically dropping by 50%, it is uncertain what plans really are, and if more funding will be available for transition.
- The transition would affect many more people who use eCompanion. Sandy stated that no one would charge for eCompanion.
- The exceptional impression of DE the Accreditation Team had and kudos given to the DE Committee could help unless administration thinks they don't need to give DE more. The fact is more student services are needed.
- Would the Team have been as impressed as they were with Karen's course if it were viewed in another platform?
- Will the old or new platform be used for summer classes?
- Technical support.
- Student support. Dale noted the RFP addresses both tech and student support.
- Need to have the services included in basic costs and what costs extra clearly defined.
- What do we consider vitally essential? Sandy suggested reviewing and weighting vital items at the December DE meeting.
- Stipend, workload, and contract issues.
- Training for faculty and students. Dale noted that Canvas is intuitive and easy to understand.
- Is the training timeline, March 1 – June 29 enough time? Sandy replied that training will likely be ongoing. Some platforms are much easier to get into and move around than others and some have incredible video support for everything.
- Certification for instructors. Some companies stated that it is part of their support package. Offering a course in-house would make more sense than doing the eCollege one. There are many things to weigh.
- Contact DSP and make sure they know how to contact students. Dale replied that the RFP addresses that.

Sandy concluded the discussion offering her personal excitement about Canvas and the many new ways to do things and added that she doesn't want someone else to transfer her course.

4. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m. as eCollege reps arrived to present their demo to the Committee and other faculty members.