Blended Learning Taskforce Meeting
January 24, 2014, 11:00 am
Summary

Present: Dr. M. Bishop, Dr. A. Cantrell, Dr. G. Hack, Dr. S. Hanson, Dr. C. Harle, Dr. A. Kane (by phone), Dr. M. Marsiske, Dr. C. Prins, Dr. O. Shechtman, Dr. K. Von Castel Roberts, Ms. Susan White
Absent: Ms. S. Griner (student), Dr. M. Perri, Dr. J. Pomeranz

1. Dr. Hack gave an update on his recent activities and the general university climate regarding the blended learning initiative. Although Academic Technology has officially stated that Canvas is for UF Online courses only, about 9,000 residential students have been added at the request of the College of Business Administration. It was stated that Business Administration faculty must like Canvas, since CITT has moved more courses from Sakai to Canvas.

2. Dr. Hack asked the taskforce for feedback on the course management interface, specifically regarding whether it meets the needs of the instructor. He noted that the first line of making decisions regarding the interface would be whether the tool allows faculty to meet their own instructional goals.

3. Dr. Hack shared his personal preference for Canvas, noting its intuitive interface and user-friendliness for instructors and students. He also noted that if technology takes too much time or resources to use properly, it generally goes unused. For now, the taskforce should focus on operational issues relative to Sakai.

4. Dr. Von Castel Roberts informed the taskforce that her nutritional course on Sakai will be transitioned to Canvas as well, and she will inform the group about the tools available in Canvas once it is launched.

5. Dr. Hack will communicate with the taskforce about any decisions made on the university level regarding the blended learning initiative. These updates are important because decisions are often made without considering the Health Science Center’s different modeling and structure from the rest of campus. These updates may impact HSC decision-making.

6. AP: At the next meeting, Dr. Hack will give the group a full tour of Canvas and send out a Canvas guide and introduction video to acquaint members with the course management system. He will also invite the taskforce into an instance of Canvas with as much permission as possible so they may explore the site.

7. The group next reviewed the student survey and results prepared by Dr. Pomeranz. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the data to be sorted by
course. Overall the data indicated that a majority of students had never taken a blended learning class before but would choose to take one again. It was also decided that it would be worthwhile to have a conversation regarding orientation for students new to blended learning courses in order to assist them with preparation for the courses. It was noted that there was no overwhelming negativity in the qualitative comments by students nor red flags to create cautionary tales for blended learning instruction.

8. Dr. Hanson mentioned the repercussions of having some courses blended learning and others more traditional, and she suggested the need to discuss ways of managing the backlash of students taking both types of courses. It was also agreed that instructors must plan ahead, and not reactively, to accommodate students with disabilities in blended learning courses.

9. AP: Dr. Pomeranz will clean up the survey responses and possibly include distributions in the data results.

10. AP: Before the next meeting, members should review and process the student comments to get a sense of the issues that need to be addressed by the taskforce, such as things to create, put online, or move forward with. The group should focus on trends more than individual comments.

11. Dr. Hack suggested the possibility of a college-wide blended learning course template to create uniformity. AP: Taskforce members should look for template design impacts from the survey responses.

12. It was suggested that a college-wide short video be created to explain what blended learning is and why the college is implementing this initiative. Instructors may also create short videos to explain their specific blended learning courses.