Blended Learning Taskforce Meeting  
February 21, 2014, 11:00 am

Summary

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

1. The taskforce continued discussion on the student survey and results prepared by Dr. Pomeranz. The group agreed that an orientation is needed to assist students with their expectations of blended learning courses. The survey results show 72 percent of students had never taken a blended learning course before. Student comments from the survey have indicated that they would benefit from information on how to prepare for a blended learning course, what to expect from online work and in-class meetings, and the time commitment required for online work and preparation for in-class activities. Overall, students commented that they enjoyed the styles of teaching in blended learning courses, and they hoped for more in-class activities. The students also gave positive feedback on the online quizzes and assessments offered in current blended learning courses, and Drs. Cantrell, Marsiske, and Prins outlined their methods for online assessment. **AP: The group agreed that it would be useful to separate the survey responses by instructor.**

2. Dr. Hack suggested some possibilities for orienting students to the blended learning format, including a general college-level orientation video that could be personalized for each class. He also suggested blended learning course syllabus sections explaining design and intent of course, expectations of students, and time commitment. He proposed the inclusion of standard objectives specific to the blended learning model. It was agreed that there is a changing student culture regarding styles of communication and class preparation, and an explicit section stating expectations would be helpful for instructors to include **AP: Dr. Hack will draft a communication section for possible inclusion into the course syllabus template.**

3. It was noted that most of the students’ dissatisfaction with the blended learning courses occurred with in-class portions of the courses, not online portions. Instructors have focused time on online portions of the course due to training and set-up, and the task force will need to attend to in-class instruction and activities. Dr. Von Castel Roberts reported that when she completed online training for her
nutrition course, she noticed that the college’s online courses are ahead of those explored in the training. She supports the idea of out-of-the-box thinking regarding in-class activities.

4. The taskforce brainstormed ideas for creative in-class activities that would engage students and have them practice the learning objectives for the courses. Dr. Hack suggested that in-class time should be used for higher-order learning, and the group discussed general problem-based learning initiatives.

5. The group then discussed concerns regarding access to help and instructor feedback when students get stuck on online course materials prior to in-class meetings. Anonymity appeared to be a factor in how students asked for help online, and it was agreed that accessibility to out-of-class assistance should be addressed in the blended learning course template.

6. There have been cases of computing issues for some students, and it was suggested that online training be included in the student orientation to blended learning. A library of videos detailing how to work through online courses could be created for the college. Short instructional videos to help navigate tools and introduce online assistance may be beneficial.

7. The group discussed concerns about whether instructors and teaching assistants are up-to-speed on how their online materials apply to in-class instruction. In some cases, there need to be more fluidity between online work and in-class work (e.g., connecting the online and in-class components. This connection may be assisted by orientations on blended learning strategies for faculty and TAs.)

8. Extra time working on online course development may affect how faculty report their work in the Effort system. A clear statement from departments detailing their effort reporting guidelines may be needed to establish consistency of development time for blended learning courses.

9. Dr. Hack gave a preview of what he will review of Canvas at the next meeting. He suggested that a general Canvas introduction video could be created for the college in order to reduce workload for individual instructors. He also suggested circulating a Canvas survey to obtain valuable open-ended feedback from instructors.

10. AP: The taskforce should identify actions that are needed to develop clear standard objectives and best practices for blended learning courses. Also, the group should consider best practices for increasing effectiveness of in-class activities and application of knowledge in classroom environments. Non-negotiables for the blended learning template should be outlined, as well as the minimum requirements needed to make the courses successfully work for both students and instructors.

11. AP: Dr. Hanson has been investigating moving to Canvas before the rest of the campus.

12. Dr. Von Castel Roberts raised concerns about being able to use Facebook for nonFERPA activities. Dr. Hack suggested that a formal request to the CMS committee is needed to review the use of Facebook on Canvas. The Privacy Office
will also need to provide input, but Dr. Hack believes that Facebook can be used on Canvas without violating FERPA policies.

13. It was suggested that the taskforce invite a second student to join the group and serve as a non-active member until the end of the current student representative’s term. **AP: Taskforce members should consider possible student candidates.**