



**MINUTES**  
Distributed Learning Council (DLC)  
August 16, 2010

**Members Present:** Kathy Austin, Hansel Burley, Dennis Fehr, Mary Fehr, Ariel Fernandez, Steven Frazee, Karissa Greathouse, Fred Hartmeister, Bob Hickerson, Patrick Hughes, Hossein Mansouri, Julie Martenson, Michele Moskos, Amy Murphy, Carla Myers, Jean Scott, Vicki West, Kent Wilkinson

**Members Excused:** Matt Baker, Ariel Fernandez, Sherry Herzog, Glenn Hill, James Hoffman, John Kobza, Isis Leslie, Melinda Mitchell, Valerie Paton, Vickie Sutton, Suzanne Tapp, Kimberly Vardeman, Patricia Watson

Patrick Hughes welcomed everyone to the DLC Meeting. Hughes welcomed our special guest, Provost Bob Smith

**Guest:** Allen Young

**Office of the Provost**

1. Strategic Plan and the DLC - Provost Bob Smith

Provost Smith asked the members of the DLC to introduce themselves. Provost Smith provided a copy of the 2010-2010 Strategic Plan "Making it possible...", as well as two additional handouts to the DLC members. Smith noted the importance of Texas Tech's first president, Paul Whitfield Horn's statement on page 20 of the Strategic Plan, "Everything that is done on these West Texas Plains ought to be on a big scale. It is a country that lends itself to bigness. It is a country that does not harmonize with things little or narrow or mean. Let us make the work of our college fit with the scope of our country. Let our thoughts be big thoughts and broad thoughts. Let our thinking be in worldwide terms." Smith mentioned that as we consider Paul Whitfield Horn's quote as well as information found on pages 23-26, 33-34, 40, 48, we begin to see a broader view of Texas Tech. As we review the Strategic Priorities, found on page 48 of the Strategic Plan, which is TTU's vision, and see the new mission statement "2020 Mission", which was approved by the TTU Board of Regents on May 14, 2010, we understand that the vision is where we are headed and the mission describes how we will arrive. The DLC fits into the Strategic Plan's Priorities to increase enrollment and promote student success.

Provost Smith directed everyone's attention to the article that he wrote for the Houston Chronicle, Sunday, August 15, 2010, entitled "Propping up for-profits in education?" For-profit institutions are serving 8-10% of students nationally, but they are receiving 25% of the country's federal aid through Pell and other grants. However, these students have relatively low graduation rates, compounded by high default rates on federal loans. There is an additional challenge with regard to their workforce, as full-time, state supported and colleges, faculty members teach at these for-profit higher education institutions. Provost Smith reminded everyone that for a full-time TTU faculty member to teach outside of the system, a "**Request for Approval of Outside Employment or Consulting and Disclosure of Significant Financial Interests**" form must be filled out and approved at the

Department, College and Provost levels. We need to ensure that we maintain the highest standards of instruction and services for students at Texas Tech, both now and in the future. Following a brief period of questions and answers Provost Smith thanked everyone for their service on the DLC and the importance that it serves to the vision and mission of the university.

The members of the DLC thanked Provost Smith for addressing the meeting today.

### **Action Items**

2. Approval of Minutes of July 19, 2010 – Patrick Hughes (Attachment #1)  
Hossein Mansouri made a motion to approve the minutes from July 19, 2010 as distributed. Jean Scott and Fred Hartmeister seconded the motion. Motion Approved.
3. Proposal: Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction (Ph.D.): Curriculum Studies/Teacher Education Concentration – Blended Delivery – Hansel Burley (Attachment #2)

Patrick Hughes noted that the Sub-Committee on Academic Programs met to review the aforementioned proposal with a recommendation that it be approved. The proposal was also placed on the DLC BlackBoard site.

Hansel Burley stated that this Ph.D. proposal is not new, but simply a change in modality. There is great interest in the Hill Country, at Angelo State University, and in the Dallas Metroplex for this proposal. Burley noted that we are hoping to enroll students in San Angelo with hopes of expanding to the entire state of Texas. This proposal is a clone of the Ed.D. in Higher Education which was declared an “exemplary proposal” by the DEAC. Burley further stated that they have a good support structure in place in the College of Education as well as the TLTC.

Patrick Hughes opened the floor for discussion and asked for a motion.

Hossein Mansouri moved and Kathy Austin seconded to approve the Proposal: Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction (Ph.D.): Curriculum Studies/Teacher Education Concentration – Blended Delivery. Motion passed.

This proposal will now proceed to the Graduate School for approval. Fred Hartmeister will deliver the proposal to Cliff Fedler. It was noted that Hansel Burley will attend the Academic Programs Committee in the Graduate School to address any questions that might arise. Once approved by the Academic Program Committee, the proposal will be forwarded for approval to the Graduate Council, Academic Council and then the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

### **Information Items**

4. ADA Regulations – Kathy Austin and Allen Young (Attachment #3)

Patrick Hughes introduced Kathy Austin to address the DLC regarding ADA regulations with respect to information technology resources. Kathy Austin stated that there has been a lot of discussion regarding accessibility issues here at Texas Tech. In compliance with the Texas Administrative Code, each institution must appoint an Information Technology Accessibility Coordinator. Mr. Sam Segran, TTU Chief Information Officer, appointed Allen Young institutional information technology accessibility coordinator. Larry Phillippe, Director of Student Disability Services, is the institutional contact for accessibility and Young has been collaborating with him regarding accessibility issues. In your attachment, the U.S. Department of Justice states that, “Under Title III, individuals with disabilities, including students with visual impairments, may not be discriminated against in the full

and equal enjoyment of all of the goods and services of private colleges and universities; they must receive an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from these goods and services; and they must not be provided different or separate goods or services unless doing so is necessary to ensure that access to the goods and services is equally as effective as that provided to others.” Obviously, this letter has propagated much interest, concern, and discussion. Austin noted that as we look at the big picture, our current version of Blackboard (our learning management software), has several features that are not compliant with state guidelines for accessibility. Therefore, we are taking a number of steps to address this concern. Kathy Austin and Mary Fehr have been tasked with conducting a Learning Management Software Assessment that will include interested faculty from the campus community. This group has already convened and they are currently conducting a market review to identify alternative solutions for the faculty to review. Austin also noted that they are looking to integrate BlackBoard with Banner over the Christmas holiday break. The TTU Office of the CIO is also working in concert with the College of Education, who has hired a consultant to convert a BlackBoard course into a format that will be compliant with ADA regulations. The TTU IT Division is also researching alternatives that can provide course materials in a format accessible to those with disabilities.

Allen Young explained that the version of BlackBoard in production at TTU uses several Java-based components that are not accessible with screen readers and other technology used by the visually impaired. Examples include the white board, grade book, and chat; some faculty use these features heavily in their instructions and others do not use these features at all. In particular, the grade book incompatibility poses a problem for both the visually impaired student and faculty member using BlackBoard. Young noted that the new version of BlackBoard, BlackBoard Learn, just received an accessibility award from The National Federation of the Blind, so the assessment group will review that product during the evaluation process.

In response to some recent discussions regarding TechMail, Young indicated that the mail reading programs that we provide via Microsoft Outlook 2007 and 2010 are fully compliant, to include the web-based mail access programs associated with Outlook. For further information regarding TTU electronic mail and accessibility, Young invited the group to contact him at [allen.young@ttu.edu](mailto:allen.young@ttu.edu) or 742-2904.

A brief period of questions and answers followed. Mary Fehr reminded DLC members that accessibility is part of the Principles of Good Practices training.

#### 5. IT Updates / Update on MediaSite Server – Kathy Austin and Allen Young

Allen Young informed the DLC members that the MediaSite Server is in production and area staff have been trained. The new infrastructure is robust and redundant, after the CIO provided resources for a substantive upgrade to the enterprise media server architecture. In addition, the TLTC has a mobile unit that faculty can use and University College (Mike Schaudies) is in production and working on content.

Austin noted that a recent presentation to the Provost Council had raised concerns regarding MediaSite accessibility. Young and Austin explained that MediaSite is a tool for capturing lectures and delivery in video format, not the sole means of course delivery. As with any course tool, faculty should be prepared to offer alternative formats for any content delivered in a modality not conducive for those with disabilities. Several faculty concurred and indicated that providing a text version of the lecture is a suitable alternative.

Kathy Austin announced that Communications and Marketing, in conjunction with the TTU Office of the CIO, has been doing a “refresh” of the TTU web sites. The TTU CIO appointed Austin to

conduct usability studies and phase two of those studies targets distance learning students. Austin requested that some of the DLC members volunteer to have their students participate later this fall; she will be in touch with the group as those usability studies resume. Austin also reported that another group of faculty have been reviewing WIKI (blogging and forum software) technology. They have evaluated dozens of products and the WIKI Assessment Group has made recommendations to the Chief Information Officer, Mr. Sam Segran. The plan is to offer a pilot of the recommended product this academic year. If you have an interest in piloting this software, please contact Kathy Austin.

## **Discussion Items**

### 6. DLC Membership – Patrick Hughes

Patrick Hughes reported on the current status of DLC membership.

#### The following DLC members' terms have ended:

- Dennis Fehr, College of Visual and Performing Arts
- Fred Hartmeister, Graduate School
- Glenn Hill, College of Architecture
- Rosslyn Smith, Office of the Provost
- Vickie Sutton, School of Law
- Patricia Watson, Faculty Senate

#### The following new and/or reappointments have been made:

- James Bush, College of Visual and Performing Arts (new)
- Don Collier, Faculty Senate (new)
- Cliff Fedler, Graduate School (new)
- Valerie Paton, Office of the Provost (new)
  - Note: Paton will also continue to serve on behalf of the Office of Planning & Assessment
- Vickie Sutton, School of Law (reappointment)

#### Appointments and/or reappointments still needing to be made:

- College of Architecture

### 7. **Other**

Bob Hickerson reported that they will be traveling to El Paso on Thursday, August 19, 2010 for their commencement services.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.