TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
eLearning™

MINUTES
Distributed Learning Council (DLC)
Friday, April 20, 2012

Members Present: Kathy Austin, Hansel Burley, James Bush, Sarah Foley, Karissa Greathouse, Melanie Hart, Patrick Hughes, Justin Louder, Julie Martensen, Jean Scott, Kate St. Clair, Marcus Tanner and Kent Wilkinson

Members Excused: Matt Baker, Don Collier, Cliff Fedler, Mary Fehr, Robert Gonzalez, Donna Hamilton, Glenn Hill, John Kobza, Melinda Mitchell-Jones, Amy Murphy, Carla Myers, Sam Oswald, Valerie Paton, Nicci Price, Robert Stubblefield, Vickie Sutton, Susan Tomlinson, Kimberly Vardeman and Vicki West

Guests Present:
Tom Dolan, David Johnson, Andrea McCourt, Cathy Duran on behalf of James Hoffman, Mike Carter on behalf of Pat McConnel and Kari Dickson on Behalf of Rial Rolfe

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Justin Louder. Louder welcomed the DLC members to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

Action Items

1. *Approval of March 23, 2012 Minutes – Justin Louder (Attachment #1)*
   Motion was made by James Bush and seconded by Jean Scott to approve the 3/23/12 minutes as distributed. Motion passed.

Discussion and Information Items

2. *ADA accommodations/available resources for eLearning – Kathy Austin*
   Dr. Austin shared some important updates with the DLC members:
   Austin stated the importance of accessibility in our environment. A task force has been put together by Dr. Rob Stewart that was designed to address some important issues regarding our compliance with federal regulations for online learning. Representing key areas on campus, his diverse group put together a rich web resource www.ttu.edu/accessibility; not that all of the academic areas and the areas that provide resources to the campus were included. Most of the materials on the website are designed for enhancing instructional materials. Dr. Austin added that TLPDC and our experts in the College of Education worked collaboratively and were very instrumental in this process. It has not been promoted to the campus yet as we want to vet it a little bit more before it is announced as a resource. Dr. Austin invited members to look over the website; any and all suggestions will be very welcomed.

- Dr. Austin addressed compliance with the issue of providing captioning for any videos that are used as a critical component of a course. We are required by Federal law to provide captioning options for students with special needs. She also made reference to The Chronicle and the ramifications of lawsuits when noncompliance is discovered. Our goal is to enhance education; the administration would also like us to limit that institutional risk, also very important, particularly if you have to respond on behalf of the institution. A group was put together that will evaluate vendors/consultants that provide professional captioning services. Dr. Austin shared that they hope to quickly release a request for proposals, establish contracts with guaranteed pricing so that other universities in Texas will be able to leverage these as well. The DIR (IT unit and purchasing unit) is working with them and will be evaluating various solutions and service providers so that we can contract with reasonable fees and reasonable turn around rates so that faculty will have it at their disposal. The Student Disabilities Service Office will coordinate and manage captioning services, as well as compliance with Federal and state law.
- If you would like to be a part of that group or provide any feedback, please email kathy.austin@ttu.edu. During the final stages of that process, Dr. Austin will be bringing a briefing and recommendations to the DLC. Austin invited questions or comments.

3. ***Lecture Capture Task Force – Justin Louder***

Dr. Louder shared that he and Dr. Austin were asked to co-chair a task force regarding Lecture capture here at Texas Tech. The task force consists of DLC members as well as other interested parties. This task force originated because there has been such an increase of lecture capture on campus. He stated that every classroom in the new Rawls College of Business has access to Mediasite; Integrative Studies, Wind Energy and others are using lecture capture. They were asked to look at the policy that was originally put into place in 2006 by Dr. Austin who led the task force. The charge is not only to see if any modifications need to be made but also to make sure that it complements the accessibility group and the work they are doing for accommodations for students. Additionally, the task force is looking at the strategic use and promotion of these capabilities; i.e. what is available on campus through the TLPDC, IT and other places. At the first meeting, it was acknowledged that the group will probably be expanding to other interested stakeholders It is required that if the course is over 50% delivery of lecture, lecture capture and captioning has to be provided. Dr. Austin added that the issue then is, how long we have to keep it, what does the quality has to be, who has to access it and who owns it. Dr. Louder asked that if you are interested in joining the task force, or if you know of a faculty member that or student that we need to talk with, to please let them know. He emphasized the importance of making sure that we are hitting the right stakeholders and getting their input. Lecture capture and Mediasite discussion was invited and general questions were addressed.

4. ***Learning Management Software RFP – Kathy Austin***
   Dr. Austin emphasized that no decision has been made. She explained that they had a large participative group that had completed the assessment to conclude overwhelmingly that Blackboard Learn 9 was the choice. In their demonstration wonderful things were said regarding Blackboard Learn 9 integration with Banner, and how it would seamlessly function. Unfortunately, during technical work as part of the implementation plan, the group determined that the integration was not complete, nor was it included in the software upgrade cost. In order to make the functionality feasible for faculty, it was determined that there would be another $20,000 - $40,000 investment with SunGard to make it work and even then it would not be live updating. Dr. Austin shared that they started looking at total cost of ownership, and institutional investment to date. Learn 9 requires a substantive hardware investment, as well as another $100,000 in infrastructure and software. She outlined some concerns:
   - TLPDC is not staffed to handle the faculty demand
   - Additional server resources and support staff will most likely be needed in the next 3 years
   - Network equipment will need to be added so that we can load balance and so that faculty does not experience delays in courses. Furthermore, with the $150,000.00 that is going to need to be spent on just the Learn software.

As a result, the Office of the CIO elected to reconsider options and re-evaluate our strategic direction. She shared that one of the biggest problems with Blackboard is that we are a Legacy WEB CT institution and that was by far the more complicated product. Blackboard Legacy was started in the K-12 environment and it was not as complex with regard to the assessment tool (the statistical part of it) and the interface was designed with simplicity in mind. It was the easier interface; we were on the more difficult one. When Blackboard procured Web CT, we had to pay extra charges for the level of expert technical assistance we needed.

One of the strategic directions under consideration is allowing Blackboard to host our services. Dr. Austin explained that they started looking at that model, and started negotiating; Blackboard came back with a proposal that was way outside the realm of a feasible. Subsequently, the decision was made to conduct an official request for proposal "RFP," and that all are welcome to participate in the evaluation. Dr. Austin indicated that no institution should allow a vendor to "hold them hostage," further stating that with our growing dependence on this kind of a tool, we need to carefully select our strategic direction and partners. We are making one last attempt to negotiate a reasonable arrangement, and if not, then the RFP will be released in about three weeks.
Session was opened up to questions, concerns or comments. Members present appreciated the effort and agreed with the direction. Dr. Wilkenson specifically encouraged us to stand firm.

5. ***Web Content Management Solicitation – Kathy Austin***
Dr. Austin shared that they are in the final stage of completion and the finalist products are Hannon-Hill (Cascade) and Omni Update (Omni University). They both gave affordable, competitive prices that fell within our budgets. We are now letting the webmasters on campus test each product and provide detailed assessment and preference data. We should be able to conclude the assessment in early May.

6. ***Discussion of additional items - Justin Louder***
   Louder addressed the brief email sent out earlier this week from WCET. The DOE has asked for 42M in federal student aid back from a private Catholic university because the courses that the University indicated were delivered via distance education were actually correspondence in

nature, so they are asking for funds to be returned to them. TTUISD has a policy in place about correspondence VS. distance education and encouraged us to keep that in mind. It is not known what precipitated this audit. Tom Dolan added that it was all about teacher initiated engagement; it was said that teachers were not initiating engagement; engagement being students interacting with other students and with the teacher online, whether synchronous or asynchronous. Louder also revealed that there have been some questions regarding PGP's with the new courses coming out. He added that he and David Johnson will be looking at some innovative ways that Tyler Junior College are handling PGP's to try and make it more streamlined and transparent. It was noted that there has been some turn overs in department chairs that do not understand that we have to do PGP on online courses. Louder will see how the eLearning department can assist in this process.

There being no further business to come before the DLC, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.