

Minutes - eLearning Council Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2020 | 1:30 PM-3:00 PM

Via Blackboard Collaborate

Attendees: Justin Louder, Brent Guinn, Jody Roginson, Kurt Caswell, Larry Phillippe, Leslie DeBusk, Melanie Hart, Pat McConnel, Kathy Austin, Karissa Greathouse, Teresa Diaz, David Doerfert, Mitzi Ziegner, Lewis Snell, John R. Thomas, Cary Sallee, Sandra Huston, Vickie Sutton, Lesley Washington, Suzanne Tapp, Jongpil Cheon, Haylee Lindsey, Lisa Leach, Katie Randolph, Jennifer Hughes, Marcus Tanner

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Dr. Justin Louder
- II. **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:** Dr. Kathy Austin made a motion to approve and Dr. David Doerfert seconded. Minutes from the previous eLearning Council Meeting, held on 4/16/20, were approved.
- III. **New Distance Program Approvals:**
 - a. **MBA-Inter-Institutional Program (TTU/TTUHSC):** Dr. Mayukh Dass spoke on the MBA-Inter-Institutional Program (TTU/TTUHSC). Ms. Suzanne Tapp made a motion to approve and Dr. Doerfert seconded. The proposal will be voted on in the next Academic Council Meeting.
 - b. **Wind Energy Graduate Certificate:** Dr. Andrew Swift spoke on the Wind Energy Graduate Certificate. Dr. Marcus Tanner made a motion to approve, Dr. Larry Phillippe seconded, and Dr. Vickie Sutton abstained. The proposal will be voted on in the next Graduate Academic Subcommittee Meeting.
 - c. **Wind Energy (Managerial) Graduate Certificate:** Dr. Swift spoke on the Wind Energy (Managerial) Graduate Certificate. Dr. Tanner made a motion to approve, Dr. Phillippe seconded, and Dr. Sutton abstained. The proposal will be voted on in the next Graduate Academic Subcommittee Meeting.
- IV. **COVID-19 Response & Support:** Dr. Louder and Dr. Melanie Hart spoke on COVID-19 Response & Support and conducted an open discussion regarding the summer transition and support needs. eLearning Blackboard support will continuously provide support for all students not just those who are considered fully online students. Ms. Leslie DeBusk, Dr. Lisa Leach, and the eLearning Instructional Design Team created a Blackboard Crosswalk for quick links to help further support faculty during this time. The crosswalk can be useful for faculty that typically teach face-to-face and are looking for virtual options on what they can do, utilizing Blackboard tools that the university already provides. Each link is live and will open eLearning tools documentation or go to documentation found in Blackboard. Faculty are also able to modify the views and options as they are presenting video. Dr. Louder sent out this information to the committee and asks that you please share with faculty, colleagues, schools, and departments. This will help make the transition into Summer I, Summer II and the Fall semesters a little easier because it crosswalks general things you can do in a face-to-face class with things you can do in a Blackboard course. Accessible courses must be fully accessible. eLearning can add on to the already existing information as well as

add additional resources to the crosswalk document as needed. eLearning is also working on documentation for the date management tool to provide that in the future as well.

Regulations with the Coordinating Board and SACS were lessened going into the Spring semester due to the sudden transition. As we move into the Summer and Fall semesters, we no longer have that reprieve. Content must be fully accessible to all students not just those who submit requests to Student Disability Services for accommodations. All online courses must be fully accessible. For assistance regarding accessibility, please contact Ms. Terry Knight from eLearning.

Questions have also been raised about online classes requiring synchronize sessions. Online classes must include regular and substantive interaction between the faculty member and the students and from students to students. Faculty are not required to hold synchronize sessions. They can if they choose to, but they do not have to. These include discussions, discussion postings, responses to the discussion postings, rubrics and faculty member comments on graded items, announcements and faculty member sending out communication to students. We do not want a correspondence class; all communication is one way and is student initiated. Correspondence classes do not receive federal financial aid dollars. If faculty require students participate synchronously the students need to be aware. For the classes that transitioned and were originally scheduled face-to-face, the Office of the Registrar is leaving in the days and times in Banner and changing the instruction method from face-to-face to online. Classes initially scheduled online will still have meeting times in Banner, so if a faculty member wants to meet at a synchronize time they can do so in their regularly scheduled class. It is up to faculty members to decide, but we ask that they do not change the scheduled face to face meeting time because it can conflict with students' other classes. Faculty members also have the option of just having an asynchronous class. If online classes include synchronize, students need to be aware before the semester begins. Information needs to be in the syllabi and students need to have the ability to drop the class (if they cannot make it work) or synchronize sessions cannot be tied to grades if they were not made aware of beforehand. It is recommended that regardless of the modality, faculty need to be prepared to teach remotely if this situation were to occur again. The university may not have the same exceptions that we had in the Spring as we transitioned to teaching completely online. It is also suggested that faculty send out an email to students letting them know if their course is a synchronize class and letting them know if they are required to sign in on a certain day and time.

An eLearning newsletter tailored to instructional design recently went out to faculty, staff, and students. The newsletter included tips, articles, and things to considered from the eLearning Blackboard Support and Instructional Design teams. There are articles about the two short courses that eLearning has developed to help faculty teaching online as well as articles on course structure, module design, how to engage students and how to make courses accessible.

- V. **Blackboard Updates:** Dr. Austin spoke on Blackboard updates. Dr. Austin reminded the Council of the upgrade on the Blackboard environment that is conducted twice a year. The next scheduled Blackboard upgrade will be held on Friday, May 29, 2020. This date was deconflicted with the end of the Spring semester, the Maymester, the beginning of the Summer 1 semester, the Law school calendar, and our code by working professionals' program. There should be no courses occurring during this time and all Blackboard services will be unavailable. Notifications will be sent out to faculty and include what the upgrades will entail. The upgrade will provide backend functionality which may include the mobile function speed and add some additional features without changing the user experience.
- VI. **US News & World Report Committee Update:** Ms. Haylee Lindsey and Dr. Austin spoke and presented on the US News & World Report committee update. eLearning received the results from Hanover regarding their analysis of performance in eLearning courses and programs. eLearning took a quick summary and conducted a review. The US News & World Report Committee augmented further data analysis through a summative report. There were 3 different surveys that TTU participated in. The Online Bachelor's in Education Program performed the best followed by the Graduate in Engineering Program and lastly the Graduate Education courses. The committee recommended two things that TTU can do to improve our impact factor ratings and education; require distance learner training for instructors and formalize decisions for analytics for distance learning. It was recommended that the eLearning committee compile a group of training options as well as review retention, performance, and debt load in the general academic base for our distance learners. If the project is accepted, it is suggested that we get a mini view from colleges and college profiles for strategic support decision making.
- VII. **Classroom Engagement Technology Assessment:** Dr. Austin spoke on Classroom Engagement Technology Assessment. This tool was formally known as Responseware, driven by the Provost and the SGA. The IT division is close to identifying 3 products and the next step will be to have an extended demonstration. The council will be invited to attend virtually and provide comments.
- VIII. **Computer-based On-Demand Training Assessment-Fall:** Dr. Austin spoke on the Computer-based On-Demand Training Assessment-Fall. The current solution is CBT by Scosoft. The IT division would like to seek competition to make sure we are getting a good deal. There are several vendors on the invitation list and they will have the opportunity to submit a proposal. There will be more information to come.

The IT division will be convening a large group to discuss NBC Learn, a computer-based news archive tool that many faculty currently use. It was just discovered that NBC will be decommissioning this tool. The same committee that worked with the Provost in the past to launch this tool will convene to put a plan together to decommission it. If you enjoyed using this tool, Dr. Austin asked that you reach out to her as she will attempt to petition the NBC executives into reconsidering.

- IX. **Ed Puzzle:** Dr. Austin and Dr. Louder spoke on Ed Puzzle. There are several great free tools available such as Flip grid. This tool is used very heavily in TTU K-12. Ms. Suzanne Tapp from

the TLPDC brought the security features to attention. When IT performed a security review on this tool it was discovered that there was a problem with the data that was being collected and where it was going to. The terms and conditions were also not ideal. IT will be reviewing them to make sure there are no privacy issues. Another tool that is commonly used is called Piazza. This is similar to the discussion board feature that we have in Blackboard. This has been reviewed by eLearning, the office of CIO and the IT division. There have been significant concerns with the accessibility of Piazza and the accessible content that is included. Although it is said that they follow FERPA guidelines, those are Piazza guidelines and not the TTU guidelines. We ask that you refrain from using this tool and utilize some of the other approved tools that are available to the university. Some tools like a Wiki service with Blackboard and the IT division, tools within Office 365, Microsoft Forms and Microsoft teams. Those are tools that are available and supported by TTU and follow TTU guidelines. If you are aware of someone using tools that may not be approved by the university, please let eLearning and the IT departments know so that they can refer them to acceptable tools. Playposit has interactive tools that are also available and can do many of the things that the other tools, such as Feedback Fruits and Yellow Dig, can do. A lot of tools are loaded into Blackboard automatically but that does not mean they are approved by TTU. We are working through these. We want to be supportive, but we want to make sure we are also protecting our students and our university.

- X. *Open Discussion:*** Dr. Louder discussed the need for another eLearning Council meeting to be held during the summer. Dr. Louder took a poll to see if the committee would like to meet the 3rd week in June, the 3rd week in July or forgo any meetings until the Fall semester. Dr. Austin suggested that we continue these monthly meetings through the summer because we do not know what the Summer II semester will look like. This way if there are proposals or issues that come up, such as the monitoring of students and queuing software, we will not get too many students in a class. Dr. Louder chose to schedule another eLC meeting for the 3rd week of June and decide on a July meeting and moving forward at that time.
- XI. *Adjourn:*** Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

