

Minutes - eLearning Council Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021 | 1:30 PM-3:00 PM

Via Zoom

Attendees: Justin Louder, Kathy Austin, Melanie Hart, Celia Merrill, David Doerfert, Jody Roginson, John R. Thomas, Leslie DeBusk, Suzanne Tapp, Jameshia Granberry, Jongpil Cheon, Liz Beaty, Marcus Tanner, Pat McConnel, Cary Sallee, Dennis Arnett, Lisa Leach, Katie Randolph, Otto Ratheal, Clay Taylor, Vickie Sutton, Larry Phillippe, Mitzi Ziegner

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m. by Dr. Justin Louder
- II. **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:** Dr. Marcus Tanner made a motion to approve and Dr. David Doerfert seconded. Minutes from the previous eLearning Council Meeting, held on 1/21/21, were approved.
- III. **New Distance Program Approvals and Changes**
 - a. **M.Ed. in Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language:** Dr. Comfort Pratt spoke on the M.Ed. in Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language. Dr. Doerfert made a motion to approve and Dr. Tanner seconded. The proposal will be voted on in the next Graduate Academic Sub-Committee Meeting.
- IV. **Learning Assistants:** Ms. Suzanne Tapp spoke on Learning Assistants. This is a new pedagogy to Texas Tech. Typically undergraduate students who have taken a course in the past, come back to assist the faculty member by creating an interactive environment. Sometimes instructors require these students to pass the course with an A or a B before becoming a learning assistant. These students facilitate problem solving sessions and other activities during class time that help move theory to application. This may allow students to help other students learn content and solve problems differently. Learning assistants are typically seen in STEM classes, but other classes on campus have also adopted this pedagogy. In cooperation with the Office of the Provost, eLearning, TLPDC, and IT, Learning Assistant is a new option that has been created in Blackboard. These learning assistants need access to the course they are helping in. They are FERPA compliant. Learning assistants will not have any involvement in grading. This new role allows them to see course content but no student data or assessments. This process is being filtered through the TLPDC program called Step Learning Assistant. Faculty members who are incorporating in learning assistant into their courses are working with the TLPDC and making sure students have completed FERPA training with the Registrar's Office. Faculty members are also working with Leslie DeBusk to gain access to the appropriate content through a learning assistant role in Blackboard. The TLPDC has seen on campus that a learning assistant is a pedagogy that has gained some interests of funding agencies and large proposals that incorporate the pedagogy of learning assistant. They have also seen a lack of unification on campus about the definition of a learning assistant. It is inappropriate to have undergraduate students grading other undergraduate students. Make sure we are using best practices, working with each other's experiences, and learning from each other. The university is filtering requests through the TLPDC. They have an OP in draft right now in the Provost Office to operationalize the role of

a learning assistant in the classroom. This pedagogy is going through the TLPDC to make sure this is being handled in the most appropriate way.

- V. *Incompletes & Course Audits:*** Dr. Louder spoke on Incompletes & Course Audits and opened the item to the council for discussion. When students are given an incomplete with a course and they work with the faculty member to come up with a plan to finish the incomplete, the student needs to complete the original course. eLearning and IT Help Desk are still seeing several requests from faculty asking to load the student into current courses in Blackboard to finish the incomplete. That is not something that we can do because of privacy and other factors. The student must have a grade in the original course as well. Ms. Liz Beaty inquired about students being able to access information from the original course. Ms. Leslie DeBusk informed the council that a student has 4 months from the last day of class to access the course information. Blackboard can open the course and block access to students who do not need it. Dr. Tanner suggested presenting this issue at the Chair's Council to be dealt with at the department level. Dr. Melanie Hart and Dr. Louder have brought it up to the Chair's Council in the past but the issue is still reoccurring. Dr. Cheon inquired about two options, keeping a student in the original course, and creating a second course. Dr. Louder and Dr. Kathy Austin explained how creating a second course would be problematic because of integration into Banner and grading. The best way is to is for the student to complete the original course and look at modifying assignments they may have missed.

Several current and former Texas Tech students have asked to audit online courses as part of some continuing education for them. After speaking with the Vice Provost, Provost's Office, and Dr. Stewart, Dr. Louder was asked to put together a working group to come up with a university audit policy for students who want to audit classes either face-to-face or online. The purpose is so that the language from Student Business Services, the Registrar's office, the student catalog, IT, and eLearning all mirror each other. The small working group includes Andrea Jewels and Brenda Martinez from the Registrar's office, Dr. Austin from IT, Dr. Louder from eLearning, Ms. DeBusk from Blackboard, Dr. Mayukh Dass from the Rawls College of Business, Dr. David Roach from Arts & Sciences, Dr. Doerfert from the Graduate School, and Ms. Christine Blakney from Student Business Services and Finance. The group will convene within the next two weeks to begin working on an audit policy and process so that when students ask to audit a class in the future this will be in place.

- VI. *Classroom Engagement – Vendor Award and Briefing:*** Dr. Austin spoke on the Classroom Engagement – Vendor Award and Briefing. The university has entered a long-term contract with Top Hat. IT is working with the Office of the Provost, eLearning, TLPDC, and Student Disability Services to provide information to students and the campus. IT will create an integration plan so that those who are using other response devices or applications will be migrated to Top Hat. Top Hat will be the only classroom engagement response solution offered in Blackboard. If a faculty member would like to use a different tool, a student cannot be charged for it and no funds from the student fee can be used for the purchase. TTU will begin to receive credit from bookstore sales that include Top Hat response-ware

sales. After 4 years or so the university will have recouped our investment. The university has chosen to do this to make this as cost effective as possible for students who must purchase multiple software tools.

VII. *Video Captioning and Transcription – Updates on Selection:* Dr. Austin spoke on the Video Captioning and Transcription – Updates on Selection. The Video Captioning and Transcription service has been completed and agreed upon by the group to award two different vendors. Because contract negotiations are still ongoing, IT cannot publicly announce who the vendors are yet. The two vendors chosen will be providing video captioning services for our campus. IT will have more information to follow.

VIII. *Student Engagement Tools – Updates on Process:* Dr. Austin spoke on the Student Engagement Tools – Updates on Process. A group put together a survey to write requirements on how faculty are using engagement tools and products as well as conducting an evaluation of what video conferencing tools are being used and how. The survey includes questions regarding recording, where faculty store lectures, solution ratings, classroom engagement tools, and student engagement tools. This survey is to find out how faculty are using these tools. Once the group finds out how specific tools are being used, they will be able to create requirements around that. The survey will be submitted to all instructional faculty this month for completion. This survey will not be targeted to any staff members. Dr. Austin will provide a briefing and executive summary to the council once the results from the survey are provided.

IX. *Accessibility Requirements Discussion:* Dr. Austin spoke on the Accessibility Requirements Discussion and opened the item to the council for discussion. Mr. John R. Thomas's appointment with the state, as the Technology Accessibility Representative for the university, allows for the review of requisitions for products. Many of the products purchased are not accessible. Dr. Austin proposed creating a small working group with people who have expertise in accessibility and accessible technology to access what institutional products should be purchased. The group would be committed to electronically providing their opinion on the products, make sure that the products adhere to accessibility standards at a national and federal level, and be able to bring attention to what a product may be missing to comply with all accessibility needs. Dr. Louder concurred, this idea follows along with the eLearning Accessibility Strategic Plan. The group will include Ms. Terry Knight, Dr. Louder, Dr. Larry Phillippe, Mr. Thomas, Dr. Austin, Ms. Amanda Solis, Ms. DeBusk, and a representative with legal authority. Dr. Phillippe expressed the importance of approaching accessibility from every angle possible. Full compliance with accessibility is a requirement by Federal law, university operating policy, and standard procedure. It is not an accommodation.

Dr. Austin suggested that an accessibility training and presentation be conducted at an executive level to promote and emphasize the importance of compliance with accessible products. Dr. Louder expressed that a campus wide training is also a part of the eLearning Accessibility Strategic Plan and his team are in the process of implementing it. The working

group will convene once the implementation is finalized and the council will be briefed with updates as they arise.

- X. **COVID-19 Instruction:** Dr. Louder opened the forum for discussion regarding this matter. No items for discussion were brought forth.
- XI. **Academic Partnerships & CEU Updates:** Dr. Louder spoke on Academic Partnerships & CEU Updates. There are no new updates. The Office of Continuing and Professional Education continues to work on implementing the new student information and registration system for CEU's and Blackboard integration.
- XII. **Blackboard Updates:** Mr. Thomas, Ms. DeBusk, and Dr. Louder spoke on the Blackboard Updates. The transition to a managed hosted SAS environment went smoothly. The next step will be to transition to UltraNav original course view. The course content will remain the same, but the navigation around the screen will change. This environment will change the Blackboard environment to look more tile based, the way other applications are moving. The tentative date for this transition is May 17th. The goal is to eventually move to the Ultimate Course view, which is an entirely different environment. It will be an updated environment to show how they are presenting courses and course information to keep up with the new technology. IT has been working with Ms. DeBusk from eLearning to put together some information and training material to distribute to the faculty to inform them of the new changes, look and feel. There will be more information to come as we get closer to the transition date.

A problem occurred when the Respondus Blackboard integration was upgraded. Respondus Quiz Maker will be available for use and is currently working. Ms. DeBusk is working on updating instructions on how to connect Respondus Quiz Maker to Blackboard. The updated documentation will be distributed through Easysoft. Dr. Louder asked the council to inform their faculty that eLearning and Blackboard are aware of the issue and are working diligently to solve it.

- XIII. **Open Discussion:** Dr. Louder opened the forum for open discussion. Dr. Vickie Sutton inquired about the request to inventory the number of online courses versus face-to-face courses. Dr. Hart assured the council that the TPD courses are considered face-to-face courses, they should not affect the percentage of online courses, and students are not charged the OLD fee. Dr. Austin explained that the request was made because TTU may receive funding to offset some of the costs that the university has spent to conduct pandemic or TPD courses. The online versus face-to-face inventory requests are for internal use only.

Dr. Louder realized that not all colleagues from TTU as well as from TTUHSC have access to Microsoft Teams. When Microsoft Teams becomes available for all to access Dr. Louder will consider transitioning eLearning Council meetings and materials to Microsoft Teams. Until further notice, the eLearning Council meetings will be held via Zoom and materials for meetings will be shared via OneDrive.

XIV. ***Adjourn:*** Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.