

Committee on eLearning
A Queensborough Community College Academic Senate Standing Committee
2015-2016 Annual Report

Introduction and Thank You

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all Committee members for their excellent service and commitment to shared governance over the past year. This was a successful year for the Committee's goal of providing oversight and support for eLearning on campus. I would like to give a special thank you to two of our members who are retiring from QCC as of the end of the school year and whose work on the Committee has been invaluable: Bruce Naples and Barbara Saur. It has been an honor to serve as Chairperson of this important group of faculty, staff, and students.

– Kevin Kolack, Ph.D., June 2016

Committee Members

For 2015-2016, the Committee was composed of: Dona Boccio (CoC designee), Caf Dowlah (Steering Committee designee), Nidhi Gadura, , Aviva Geismar, Kwang Kim, Dimitrios Kokkinos, Kevin Kolack (chair), Hamid Namdar (secretary), Bruce Naples (President's designee), Sharon Reeves, Barbara Saur, Yaguang Wei (student representative), and Eileen White.

For 2016-2017, Nidhi Gadura's term on the Committee expired, as did that of Kevin Kolack and Eileen White who were reappointed to the Committee. Meg Tarafdar was newly appointed. As noted above, Barbara Saur is retiring from QCC and has been replaced by the CoC with Barbara Rome. Dona Boccio's term on the CoC is ending and a new CoC designee will be appointed. Kevin Kolack was reelected unopposed to serve as Chair and Hamid Namdar was reelected unopposed to serve as Secretary.

Committee Meetings

The Committee met at its regularly scheduled time (Thursdays at 3PM, the week of Senate meetings) throughout the 2015-2016 school year (9/17/15, 10/15/15, 11/12/15, 12/10/15, 2/18/16, 3/10/16, 4/14/16, 5/12/16). Agendas and Minutes were posted on the Committee's web site by the Chairperson.

Steering Committee 2015-2016 charges and responses, including Committee actions and recommendations:

Provide input on technological and pedagogical support for faculty developing PNET and FNET classes.

This is the mission of the ACC's eLearning Institute, from which the Committee receives regular updates. The web page for faculty support (<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/facultysupport/index.html>) which the ACC controls, is (by their own admission) a low priority and is not updated as often as it could/should be (and the same is true for the analogous student support page <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/StudentSupport/index.html>).

Recommend to the Registrar that online courses be better identified in CUNYfirst.

This is out of the Committee's control, and that of the Registrar. The Registrar depends on department Chairs to accurately designate their courses. The Committee and Registrar's office do not believe the problem lies with the accurate assignment of designations to courses, but rather with student and advisor awareness of what the designations mean.

Based upon recommendations of 2014-2015 report, members of the Committee should meet with the Marketing Committee to review possible ways to identify eLearning for students, and advertise strengths of program to non-traditional students.

While scheduling a meeting with Marketing proved to be incredibly difficult, a meeting was eventually held. Marketing chose not to assist with this effort (flyers are no longer allowed on campus and digital signage is mostly not operational), instead leaving it to the Committee to meet with members of Advisement in the various Academies to promote student awareness of the FNET/PNET designations (the only designations of those available regularly used at QCC). Due to turnover in the Advisement office, this will require an **ongoing effort** on the Committee's part. Marketing appears have its own plans to advertise QCC eLearning offerings in concert with another Administrative office, and controls the qccOnline web page (<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/qccOnline/index.html>) which links to the two ACC pages above as well as the student eLearning Readiness Program and information regarding online classes (<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/qccOnline/classes.html>) which prominently notes the meaning of the PNET/FNET designations at the top of the page.

Digital signage should be repaired and expanded, and faculty/staff should be made aware of how to request inclusion of information on the signage (via the online form at <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/communications/dssRequestForm.html>). The Committee will submit signage requests concerning "PNET/FNET designations" as well as "how to request signage."

Marketing, the ACC or the Committee could publish a YouTube video about PNET/FNET designation on the official QCC site (via Marketing) or via a new Senate or Committee channel.

Discuss and review the effectiveness of linking the eLearning Readiness Program (eLRP) to course registration as part of the registration process and/or making the eLRP an actual pre-requisite for online courses, which apparently is not currently easy to do.

QCC does not employ "registration stops" the way other campuses do. While this is certainly a "best practice" that is emphasized in the faculty eLearning Institute, this is left to the individual instructor, and the Committee is taking no further action.

Discuss and review the effectiveness of making the eLRP a part of ST-100, which is moving to a fully online course.

This was accomplished without Committee action. ST-100 is now online and includes the eLRP.

Discuss and review the effectiveness of possibly including an online assignment that would further prepare students for online courses.

This is already part of the eLearning Institute- assignments for online courses are often online, and faculty are encouraged to develop assignments tailored to their courses.

Emphasizing the importance of using Tigermail accounts to students and faculty.

Again, this is already a point of emphasis in the eLearning Institute. Many syllabi for traditional and online classes emphasize this point.

Review the effectiveness of the eLRP as currently developed.

A survey of the eLRP was appended to the Program itself, and students seemed overall satisfied with the Program. Committee members Kolack and Kim initiated communication with the team at Hostos Community College who developed their more advanced Blackboard-based adaptive release eLRP (which was initially modeled on the QCC Softchalk-based eLRP), resulting in a CIRG grant proposal to expand a uniform eLRP across all of the CUNY community college campuses. This effort is ongoing.

Based upon recommendations of 2014-2015 report, members of the Committee should continue their brown-bag series for faculty on effective online teaching (with the use, we would suggest, of simple email blasts to advertise them). The following topics have been proposed: rubrics; effective online group management; using writing in the classroom; and new apps in teaching and learning. The Steering Committee would only add that a session on effective assignments for web-enhanced instruction might also be useful.

Retiring Committee member Barbara Saur coordinated bag lunch seminars on the dates below, using a 20-Minute Mentor Commons video (QCC has a license) as a springboard for discussion. Scheduling during the Spring semester is challenging due to calendar conflicts. A survey was deployed to faculty in November 2015 to choose future topics. Approximately 12-20 faculty attended each seminar on:

(April 1st, 2015: What kinds of questions encourage student interactions?)

October 21st, 2015: Where can I find flippable moments in my class?

Nov. 11th, 2015: How do I assign students to groups?

April 13th, 2016: How do I use VoiceThread for online student discussion?

Effective assignments for web-enhanced instruction was not chosen as a topic because this is already part of the eLearning Institute which is open to faculty officially enrolled in the Institute as well as to those who have already attended it and are actively teaching online.

Committee Secretary Namdar has agreed to continue to organize these seminars, potentially with ACC, CETL or Senate funding providing lunch for attendees to increase attendance. Future topics suggested by the poll include:

How Can I Design Copyright-Compliant Courses?

What Are Five Tips for Writing Effective Learning Outcomes?

How Can I Use Technology to Improve Learning?

How Can I Create an Online Service Learning Project?

In Blended Courses, What Should Students Do Online?

What Do Students Want in Online Courses?

How Can I Align Technology with My Pedagogical Goals?

How Can I Get Useful Feedback to Improve My Online Teaching?

How Can I Assess Critical Thinking with Student-Created Work?

Monitor the QCC website's support of mobile devices and the ability of faculty on the eLearning Committee to import their work to the QCC website.

Respectfully, such monitoring is not an eLearning Committee charge- we feel this is better suited to the Committee on Computer Resources in concert with the ACC, IT, and Marketing. With respect to importing work to the QCC web site, the Chair of the eLearning Committee (like all Committee Chairs) has access to the eLearning web site (but is reportedly the only Committee Chair to update a Committee's site). Similarly, individual faculty and departments are able to update their own web pages via the Cascade server. In the future, should the Senate choose to reiterate this charge, perhaps a representative from Marketing can be assigned to attend Committee meetings to update the community on such matters and provide ideas on how to best encourage faculty to make use of the QCC web site.

Continue to refine the excellent flyer on studying and fitness, and look for ways to disseminate it to the campus population, possibly in concert with the Committee on the Library and the Committee on Student Activities.

Committee Chair Kolack has been in communication with, and attended a meeting of, the Library Committee. Committee Member Geismar has expressed interest in moving this joint project of the two Committees forward, and a "resources" web page of exercises and best practices is in development. How and where to deploy this on the QCC web site (possibly on one of the ACC or Marketing pages above) is a point of ongoing discussion/concern.

Provide input on the college's standards for effective eLearning programs.

This was accomplished without Committee action. The QCC eTeam does this via the Quality Matters rubric.

Provide input on the curriculum of the e-Learning Institute conducted for faculty development.

This was accomplished through our monthly meetings with ACC Director Bruce Naples. The eLearning Institute was reformatted in the Spring 2016 semester to occur on consecutive Fridays, rather than in a condensed version over the summer. Assessment of the program by the ACC is ongoing.

Provide input regarding learning outcomes assessment for eLearning courses.

Course assessments are the same online and offline at QCC. (As noted below, end-of-semester evaluations are handed out as normal in partially online courses, and are mailed to students for fully online courses.) Most faculty teaching online courses assess their courses in some fashion throughout the semester, as is advised in the eLearning Institute.

Monitoring reliability of Blackboard and Epsilen, and provide advice to the college community when appropriate.

Denis Bejar of the ACC does this as part of his job description. Epsilen is no longer in use by QCC- the new ePortfolio platform is Digication (newly integrated into Blackboard) and is as underused by faculty and students as Epsilen was before it. Downtime on Blackboard and Digication has been minimal, although Blackboard sometimes has usage issues. (CUNY is Blackboard's largest customer. Alternatives are being explored by a

multi-campus group on which QCC has a representative (Bruce Naples, currently).) Digication is primarily used as a HIP, but needs further promotion to faculty and students for use as a repository of their work at QCC (see below).

Develop protocols of departmental evaluation such as peer observations for PNET and FNET classes.

The Committee is not sure this is possible, but this point does warrant additional attention. The Graduate Center, for instance, requires a “mentor” faculty member be assigned to new online courses. The Committee is concerned that some faculty members at QCC might see this as an intrusion into the classroom (beyond the required observation of untenured faculty), but is considering proposing this to the Senate.

Review the procedure for Student evaluations of faculty teaching PNET classes.

As noted above, end-of-semester evaluations are handed out as normal in partially online courses, and are mailed to students for fully online courses. No revision is necessary.

If needed, present resolutions restricting class size for eLearning classes.

This is not needed. FNET/PNET classes are already limited to 24 students. QCC has not embraced the MOOC model and there does not seem to be the feared movement toward replacing faculty by enlarging online courses at QCC.

Monitor implementation of E-portfolios as a High Impact Practice (HIP) for the Academies.

The HIP coordinators are already doing this.

Monitor possible implementation of other HIPs in eLearning.

This was explicitly discussed at a Committee meeting, and the Learning Communities HIP seems to be an ideal implementation. However, the Committee was once again faced with questions regarding implementing the practice. Linking face-to-face courses is already problematic enough logistically, but the HIP coordinators are making it happen. They, in conjunction with CETL, could add PNET/FNET courses into the mix for interested faculty.

Collaborate with Committees on Academic Development and Computer Resources in support of workshops to support instructional technology, as well as support for faculty writing technology-related grants.

This is being accomplished without Committee action by the ACC and the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs.

Possible additional collaboration with the committees on Continuing Education & Curriculum regarding the role course delivery might play in structuring course content; as well as Departments (for curriculum-specific best practices & development of more hybrid and asynchronous on-line courses).

This is being accomplished without Committee action by the ACC and CETL.

Request from the Office of Academic Affairs, assessment of the following areas: eLearning Readiness Program, ACC.

The Committee respectfully refuses to request oversight of one department by another

at the present time. This can be revisited in the future if the Steering Committee wishes.

Comment, where appropriate to the Committee charge, on Queensborough's meeting of revised Middle States Accreditation Standard 3: "An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations." As well as Revised Middle States Standard 4: "Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success."

The Committee believes that eLearning at QCC is as successful as traditional courses due to the training and support provided by the ACC and IT departments, as augmented by the Committee's ongoing activities and those of CETL.

Review and Revise, as needed, and in consultation with the Steering Committee, Committee guide.

Only a 2007 pdf version of the Committee Guide could be found. The Committee Guide has been completely revised and is attached and available for Steering Committee input. Word and pdf versions have been posted to the Committee web page to allow for future edits. Please note that the "Guide for Standing Committee Chairpersons" mentioned in the Committee Guide was requested, but no longer seems to exist. We hope that a new document is developed for the benefit of future incoming Chairpersons.

Other Items Acted Upon by the Committee

The Bylaws were never changed to reflect the existence, charges, and proper name of this Committee following its establishment as an independent entity separate from the Committee on Computer Resources. The Committee proposed an update to the Bylaws which was submitted to the Steering Committee and the Bylaws Committee for action in the Fall 2016 semester.

Additional Items for the Coming Year

The QCC IT plan was published in 2016. The Committee will need to confirm that points concerning eLearning are proceeding as planned.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Kolack, Ph.D.

Committee on eLearning Chairperson