QCC Committee on eLearning

Minutes of committee meeting held October 9th, 2014, Room M209

Meeting called to order 3:00pm
In attendance: Julita Haber (chairperson), Kevin Kolack (secretary- left at 4:05), Jodie Childers, Kwang Kim, Barbara Saur, Nidhi Gadura, James Cutrone (new), Bruce Naples (President's designee), Dona Boccio (COC designee- via Zoom.us)
Not present: Eileen White (new; from Speech; recommended by Dona); per the COC, Edward Davis (ET) is a member, but has not been invited to meetings thus far, which will be corrected; Julita will update him and have him added to the Blackboard group

There was some informal discussion regarding generating a list of "best practices" in online classes for the web site and having this list of "what works" potentially result in a publication; Jimmy says he has a reference for such an existing publication

Minutes of the 9/11/14 meeting were reviewed and approved

There was a discussion regarding the day of our next meeting- several people have conference conflicts on various Thursdays in November

Bruce reviewed his report (attached at bottom). Highlights:
- New Blackboard features (upgrade to take effect in December)
    o New "student preview" feature- don't have to turn off editing to see what the students will see
    o Portfolio changes- still awful; still recommend NOT using
    o Delegated grading for graders- we will probably not use as this feature is designed for a faculty member with TAs grading for them
    o Significant figures in grade calculations improved
    o Safe Assign was purchased by Bb, so it will be fully integrated
    o Title IV financial aid reporting- there will be participation level reporting added
- He and Denis will present at the CUNY IT conference
    o Hands-on workshop on SoftChalk (specifically, e-book export)
    o Other seminars may be of interest to this committee; schedule forthcoming
- e-learning institute deadline of 10/31 for new courses for Spring
- Bruce reminded us that we are all invited to the 11/12 e-learning luncheon
- QCC has both a Magna Commons and 20-minute mentor license, available to all; all lessons have supplementary material available
- Voice Thread seminars will be upcoming- like a discussion board in Bb, but more multimedia functionality and with increased interactivity (asynchronous audio, video, text); can dial in by phone
    o can embed product in Bb or just link to it to avoid the vagaries of Bb compatibility
    o Will demo at our next meeting
    o Currently in use in foreign language and English classes here

- o You must have Bruce register your students for you at present, but not as awful as it sounds

Committee members had submitted their requests via email for subcommittees; a project development plan and timeline was discussed for each, as follows:

2014-2014 Subcommittees	Name(s)
I. **Improve the E-learning Readiness Program** (i.e., replace text via media, engage students & professors, coordinate with the video recording studio, assess videos)	Kevin Kolack

- Not sure where existing updates are; Julita will ask Barbara; we believe that text <u>only</u> was changed for the first few modules. (Per an email from Bruce 10/10, he and Denis have the proposed changes from Modules 3 & 4 only.)
- There was a discussion of what format might be best, as Kevin had sent out a PowToon.com update of part of Module 4. The committee agreed that a mix of text and cartoon (or cartoon-like) updates might best get the students' attention and deliver the most information.
- The computer center will provide a list of suggested hardware/software (which changes constantly) and the program will link to that list.
- Components will be developed for Denis to implement/upload
- The existing program is in SoftChalk, which we should consider using…while updating the site with SoftChalk isn't easy, Denis can do it readily.
- Student assistance should be sought, perhaps following a survey of existing PNET/FNET classes to assess what changes users would like to see made.
- Assess now and at the end of the year (all subcommittees)- use SurveyMonkey?
  - o Did you take e-readiness program? Rate it 1-10? Suggestions?
- Next meeting, each subcommittee should have a 6-month plan of activities

II. **Marketing of PNET and FNET campaign** (i.e., design and implement a marketing campaign at QCC for higher recognition of online courses)	Nidhi Gadura & Jodie Childers

- Plan to meet with marketing to discuss.
- Students still don't know they're registering for PNET/FNET, even though we do a decent job of designating most courses.
- Perhaps this info can be incorporated into the freshman orientation program?
- Perhaps "what does PNET/FNET mean?" can be added to the public info screens? (The content is controlled by marketing.)
  - o Perhaps a monitor can be added near Starbucks?
    - ▪ Bruce says they are where students hang out; there was a request for more last year which did not move forward for unknown reasons
    - ▪ This subcommittee will follow up.
  - o Perhaps it can be added to the QCC Connect app (IT would have to add it, but the content is similarly controlled by marketing.)
- Assess now and at the end of the year (all subcommittees)- use SurveyMonkey?

- Did you know you were registering for a PNET/FNET class?
  - Nidhi already surveyed her classes- 30% did not

III. **Brown bag lunches for online faculty** (i.e., coordinate, promote, and run informal but informative meetings for QCC faculty who are interested in online education, whether they have taught online already or not)	Barbara Saur

- Sharing is good! Experiences, best practices, etc.
- Perhaps there can be a theme? eg- watch a 20-minute mentor video and discuss; discuss Gradebook in Bb
- Bruce suggests having an agenda you're prepared not to follow
- First one in Feb? Then April? More next year…
- Since they suggested them, Denis and/or Bruce will of course attend, and this committee should as well
- ACC has space available

IV. **ELearning institute Webpage** (i.e., CREATE the E-learning Institute webpage, work closely with Denis Bejar)	Kwang Hyun Kim

- There was a discussion of possible pages:
  - Examples of "what we do" from faculty
    - eg- SoftChalk sites, on-camera interviews with faculty
  - Emerging technologies, faculty interviews, best practices- things being considered for inclusion

NOTE: Kevin left for class here. Minutes kindly provided by Jodie.

V. **Embed health videos on the E-learning Website** (i.e., select links and recommend fitness program to enhance e-Learning, coordinate the effort with the Health Department, update the website, promote healthy learning online)	Julita Haber & James Cutrone

- There was a discussion about how to incorporate wellness into online learning.
- Content such as websites and videos on health, stress, and wellness will be gathered and then added to the website or to an e-Portfolio through Digication.
- A video by David Pogue will be featured. Bruce contacted Pogue and received permission to use the video.

Julita also noted a need for faculty development. Bruce suggested promoting the twenty-minute mentor videos. Enhancing faculty online learning will be added as the sixth initiative.

Julita also stressed the importance of assessing the impact of all of the initiatives. A survey will be designed to acquire data about students' perceptions of the eLearning Readiness program before improvements are made.

Dona noted that BMCC has a well-advertised online learning program. She collected information about how they market their courses and will share the pamphlet with the rest of the group at the next meeting. She also announced that there will be a University Faculty Senate Conference on Online Learning on Nov. 21st at John Jay.

The meeting ended at 4:25 PM. The next meeting will take place on Thursday, Nov. 20th at 3 PM in room L117. Bruce will demo Voice Thread at the meeting.

----------------material below emailed by Bruce to Kevin------------

Highlights of New Blackboard Features and Enhancements - Teaching and Learning

- **Student Preview** - The new Student Preview feature provides the capability for an instructor to see the course exactly as a student would see it. It accomplishes this by allowing the Instructor to easily transition into and out of a system-managed preview account that is automatically enrolled in the course as a student. This provides all the advantages of a "dummy" account while absolving the instructor and System Administrator of the management overhead.
- **Portfolio Improvements** - Blackboard has improved the Portfolio framework to replace Basic and Personal Portfolios. The new framework will automatically convert existing Portfolios so they remain fully accessible in the newly improved and simplified authoring workflow. Portfolios are now tightly integrated with courses providing students the ability to convert course assignments into Artifacts. Instructors may also formally require a Portfolio as a submission to an assignment in a course.
- **Anonymous and Delegated Grading** - Blackboard has implemented a robust Anonymous Grading feature to add another layer of fairness and impartiality to Grading capabilities. Without knowing who submitted the assignment, a Grader is not influenced by a student's previous performance, class participation, conflicts, race, gender, or perceived student aptitude. Delegated Grading promotes reliability and removes bias by using grades and feedback from more than one Grader. These features may be used together or individually to meet grading requirements.
- **Assessments: Significant Figures** - Blackboard has improved Calculated Formula Questions by adding the ability to define the significant figures required and used in the creation of answers and the automated grading process.
- **SafeAssign** - Blackboard has enhanced the SafeAssign service to provide a more seamless integration with native Blackboard Learn Assignments and updated the SafeAssign Originality Report interface. With this update, the SafeAssignment content type is removed from the content areas, and SafeAssign becomes an additional feature available when creating native Blackboard Learn Assignments. All Blackboard Learn Assignment features are available in tandem with SafeAssign services with the exception of Portfolio submissions to Blackboard Learn Assignments.
- **Financial Aid Reporting** - The Financial Aid Building Block, released as a standalone Building Block in 2013, is now available with the Blackboard Learn 9.1, April 2014 Release. With increased scrutiny in the awarding of United States Federal financial aid monies to students enrolled in courses, there is a need to demonstrate a student's

substantive academic contribution to a course as a justification for the award of such monies. Blackboard is providing a solution to assist institutions in meeting the reporting requirements for Return of Title IV Funds rules (also known as "R2T4"). The *Single and Multi- Course User Participation Report* provide data on the student contribution of academic content within a Blackboard Learn course. These reports are also useful in other regions, as they provide evidence of student activity within courses.