

Academic Technology and Online Education Committee Minutes

February 12, 2013

HUB 123

3:30-5:00

Present: Christian Roberson (Chair), Cheryl Baker, Denise Burchsted, Hridaya Hall, Jong-Yoon Kim, Kristine Levan, Scott Robison, Meagan Shedd, Mark Turski, David Zehr

Unable to attend: Nancy Betchart, Daniel Bramer, Marylynn Cote, Zach Dziura, Rich Grossman, Liesl Lindley, Eun-Ho Yeo

Scribe: Christian Roberson

Acceptance of December 2012 minutes

Discussion: Turnitin Pilot Program

Scott provided an overview of the Turnitin pilot so far. About twenty people have used it so far this semester. Scott is looking for help in deciding how to survey the faculty on whether or not we want to purchase this software. How does LTOE get a sense of what faculty are thinking. JoAnn is using it for some assignments this semester. Cheryl pointed out that the new graduate term begins on March 1st. Scott mentioned the pilot ends June 30th. Mark pointed out that the overall interest level is one good metric we can look at. JoAnn is allowing students to submit once per day up to the deadline for checking for errors. In particular JoAnn is looking at grammar and mechanics. Scott met with the Writing Center and Jane has had some request to use Turnitin in collaboration with the writing center and she is trying it with some students this semester. Scott also spoke with Student Senate about having something presented at one of their meetings to give them a chance to be informed and asked questions about the product. Christian asked about group sessions with faculty. Scott mentioned that turnout was low and feelings were mixed from those who have come so far. Jong asked about any testimonials or evaluations. Scott pointed out that we are the only institution among our peers without an institution-wide license for this type of software. Cheryl asked if it would be helpful to try and attend various department meetings to talk with faculty about the system. Hridaya asked if we could bring it to the full faculty for discussion. Meagan mentioned it would be important to find out how students are using it. She also feels that the ideological discussion and just because others use it. Is there empirical evidence that supports the use of this tool. Should we survey students? Mark asked if we adopt it, where do we draw the line? Should it be used for admissions essays? Cheryl mentioned that assessing writing is part of NCATE requirements and some students use it for self-assessment of writing. David mentioned some unintended consequences, citing an Academic Integrity Panel case where the student was trying to use the tool to try and make sure things were cited correctly and after the cutoff the student was brought based on the results. Meagan cited a 2009 WAC Journal article showing many examples of plagiarized work were simply common phrase used by many. They have made changes, but do they fix the issue. Cheryl asked if it would help reduce Academic Integrity cases. Mark pointed out that it is very hard to find an impartial review of Turnitin online. Hridaya pointed out it feels like a tool that points to potential issues but doesn't remove the work of checking to see that the hits are legitimate concerns. It still requires discretion. Scott is encouraging people to become familiar with the tool since it has changed recently and some people may have concerns based on outdated information. One example is the change in the way the repository submission works to be optional. Rich did some quick Googling about Turnitin cliché issues and noticed the way it is described has changed. Christian asked if we should look at doing something like a survey to the faculty to gather information. Perhaps we can look at crafting questions at the March meeting.

Discussion: Professional Development Funding for Online Education

Christian asked Mark to summarize his thoughts on professional development for sending faculty to conferences to learn more about technology and education. Mark mentioned conferences like ITSE and how they are very helpful to talk about potential pitfalls and benefits of rolling out various tools for online education. This would be helpful to try and get other non-expert faculty out there and tied in to the discussion of online at PSU. This helps to build a larger core group of faculty with awareness of these new technologies and issues. You can't wait until the software is perfect before adopting. Maybe starting to look at little things like user groups to help people curious by these technologies. Funding these types of initiatives isn't cheap though. How can we lobby for funding? Exposing students and faculty to a variety of software applications is good for everyone. Christian asked the question of the committee how do we advocate for increasing professional development opportunities for faculty in the face of the administration's push to drastically increase online enrollments. Mark mentioned the possibility of looking at alternative grants and funding sources for some of these initiatives. JoAnn mentioned a pilot with ten faculty working with iPads to develop e-textbooks currently in process. Scott mentioned the new Academic Technology Institute as one potential place for this type of thing. David mentioned that clear articulation of what the issues can be solved by funding this type of development. Cheryl mentioned that this can also help as a recruitment tool for students showing that we are comfortable with these tools and technologies. Perhaps we can visit some of these bleeding edge schools and learn from their processes. Meagan pointed out that both overview and embedded in aspirational programs/departments have value for this type of development. Meagan also mentioned study abroad opportunities to learn from other countries' educators. We could even take cohorts with faculty as part of this model. How do we look at disciplines that are less interested in K-12 and their integration of technology? Christian asked what is next? Ask for money? Mark suggested articulating a clearer vision of what this should look like before we start asking for money.

Next meeting: March 12, 2013, 3:30, HUB 123

Meeting adjourned at 4:45