**Distance Education Committee Meeting**

**October 25, 2013**

**Draft Minutes**

Present: John Reho, Dave Stoffel, Debbie Cresap, Victor Magray, Kim Patterson, Donald Poffenberger, Pat Stroud, Pam Sharma (Chair).

**Approval of Minutes:** Don made the motion and Dave seconded it. Minutes were approved as presented.

1. HLC report and online programs (This document was distributed at the last meeting).

Page 25 of the HLC report cites concerns related to high levels of frustration among users of the instruction technology that supports the distance education and a “disconnect” of information sharing across the institution including distance education.

Pam Sharma encouraged the committee to provide input on what resources such as training or documentation distance education faculty would like to have to address these concerns. Committee members were not aware of the training available to faculty through WVNET. According to Kim, as part of the Memo of Understanding (MOU), WVNET agreed to provide thirty (30) hours training each semester. When asked what kind of training, Kim indicated it is not clear but she will email her contact at WVNET (Mary) to get more information. Committee members can then choose from the available training. When asked if it is possible to have training this semester, Kim indicated she is not sure but she can request information from her contact.

The other item of discussion was on the Organizational Structure related to distance education on Page 26 of the HLC report. This was tabled and the committee suggested that specific questions need to be formulated for discussion during the next meeting. Pam will formulate questions on organizational structure for discussion.

1. Online Steering Committee questions and VPAA’s response; Clarifications of questions related to DE committee minutes and other email communications.

Pam selected some of the questions related to Distance Education and VPAA’s response emailed on October 15th for clarification. A discussion followed. Question, VPAAs response, and the ensuing DE committee discussion follows:

Q.: Is additional training in Blackboard or whatever delivery software/system that is going to be used? (More than an hour crammed into faculty week)

**VPAA: Training in Blackboard is provided on demand by the DE Coordinator. As part of the MOU with WVNET, WVNET will provide, if requested, up to 30 hours of instructional design and Blackboard training per term.**

DE Committee: *Kim was not sure what does 30 hours of training include. She was asked to get the list of available training for faculty. She indicated it may be too late to request any training this semester due to the busy schedule of the trainer.*

Q.: Are ALL full-time instructors going to be given new equipment and software for their offices such as (a) Dragon Speak software; (b) Cameras with broadcasting and recording capabilities? If not, why not? (The answer “we do not have the money” will not suffice)

**VPAA: A computer system has been purchased for faculty use in creating closed captioned, audio/video and other multimedia for use in Blackboard. The system includes an iMac quad core pc, Camtasia and Adobe eLearning Suite. Other software packages may be investigated if there is a faculty need identified. The system will be housed in the DE Coordinator’s office and will be available for faculty use on a by appointment basis.**

DE Committee: *According to Kim, the computer is not installed yet. It will be in her office for faculty use. Kim will provide the training. She has not prepared any training documentation/resources for faculty use yet. Committee made the recommendation to move the computer out of Kim’s office to a location where faculty can use it when Kim is not on-campus or otherwise not available. Committee members agreed that computer should be available in a separate room.*

Q.: Why are we forming a new "steering" committee when we already have some of the most experienced online faculty on the "distance education" committee?

**VPAA: The DE Committee is primarily a faculty committee. The Steering Committee is a broad based, institutional committee charged with addressing internal, implementation questions. Faculty representatives from the DE Committee serve as members of the Steering Committee and will be an interface between the two, as needed.**

DE Committee: *Questions were raised why distance education Chair/committee was not contacted to nominate members to serve on the Online Steering committee. Why two new committee members who never attended the Distance Education committee were selected to serve on the steering committee? Pam was told by the faculty Assembly president that when she received the request from the VPAA, she was under the impression that the DE Chair is already on the Online Steering committee.*

Q.: When was the policy regarding new online courses approved?  The last I knew it was still in draft form and hadn't been approved formally by the distance education committee or anyone else, but some faculty who have asked to do an online course were told they would have to follow the requirements of this "draft" policy to have their course approved.

**VPAA: Faculty assembly comments and those of the DE Committee chair were incorporated into the document in December 2012. As no faculty comments were received, the process has been utilized in summer 2013. “DRAFT” will be removed.**

DE Committee: *Pam distributed New Online Course Request form -2 and 3 (the most recent form), and read from the email VPAA referred to in her response. The relevant excerpts from the December 2012 email are included below. The email clearly shows that the form 3 was not and is not, to date, approved by the DE Committee or faculty assembly and remains a draft. DE chair agreed with VPAA to keep the procedure as “draft” and continue to develop the process overtime as more faculty are involved in QM Process.*

*December, 2012 email excerpts:*

“ *the second page that we have incorporated your suggestion to eliminate the bullet points under the DE Coordinator process working with the review team. These items will be incorporated in a later document to be developed for faculty reviewers.*

*In addition, you may note that the procedures page is still noted as a draft. We will need to continue to develop our process over time as we get more faculty involved in the QM process. This gives us a form/document that we can post for our internal use and that HLC can identify that we are moving forward.”*

Q: Are the on-line courses coupled with traditional delivery double the load count when fulfilling our contracts and getting overload pay? If no, why not? (The answer “we do not have the money” will not suffice as this move equates to substantially more work for instructors)

**VPAA: The current faculty workload standards apply. The college will not be putting 100% of the programs and courses online. Faculty load should not be impacted.**

DE Committee: Online Course Procedure restricts full time faculty to two online courses. Restriction of two courses in “Online Course Procedure “need to be revisited. Pam indicated the issue of number of online course restriction to two courses for the full time faculty was debated extensively during the procedure development. Faculty expressed concerns about the quality of the program and how it will be viewed by the Accreditation team. VPAA suggested revisiting the two online course restrictions when programs will be offered online (Sept 2010 minutes). A conversation on workload requirement (is it possible for a full-time faculty to teach only distance learning courses?) is also suggested in HLC report Page 30 (question #4)

Q: Since the curriculum is supposed to be faculty driven, if we are not using the distance education committee, which has heavy faculty representation, will we have this new committee weighted appropriately with more faculty than staff or administrators?

**VPAA: Curriculum remains driven by the current faculty process. The Steering Committee does not address curricular issues. There are three full time faculty members on the Steering Committee who are also members of the DE Committee.**

DE Committee: *There was a discussion on the three full-time faculty members who are members of the DE Committee. Two of the faculty members had never attended any distance education committee when they were selected to serve on the committee. The two new members joined the committee in August 2013 and the first DE committee was held in September 2013.*

Online Course Request form (the second page Draft).

Committee members expressed concerns about the review process on Online Course request (OCR) form where the second page is listed as Draft. VPAA’s response to the questions on the steering committee questions prompted a clarification on the “draft” issue. Pam distributed New Online Course Request form -2 and -3 and read from the email VPAA referred to in her response to clarify the following:

* Email sent to Pam Sharma in December stated that the bullet corresponding to the review process has been removed. These items will be incorporated in a later document to be developed for the faculty reviewers. No such document is developed to date. This was further confirmed by the Peer reviewers and the DE coordinator.
* Email also states, “Procedure page (the second page) is still noted as a draft. This gives us a form that we can post for our internal use and the HLC can identify that we are moving forward.”
* Pam suggested we need to work on the review process. Committee expressed concerns about the quality of the review since there are only two faculty reviewers. The other two reviewers are administrators; Kim Patterson and Lucy Kefauver. Faculty felt that DE coordinator should not serve as the reviewer as it presents a conflict of interest.
* There were several questions raised on the implementation of the QM standards in new online courses.
  + If a new designer wants to design a course what training should be completed?
  + The other question was presented as a scenario:

**“*John, the new designer jumps through all the hoops and has an online course. Dave decided to teach the same course. Kim copies the course John created and assigns that course to Dave. Dave does not like how activities are aligned or the objectives are written or the number of discussions assigned. So he makes changes to the course.”***

* + **Does Dave have to take Applying the Quality Matters Rubric**

**(APPQMR)?**

* + **Does the newly arranged course Dave is teaching has to go through the peer review?**
  + **What happens if the course Dave is teaching is presented to an external QM expert as internally peer reviewed course?**
* Committee felt these questions need to be addressed as part of the review process. Pam will forward these questions along with minutes to VPAA.
* To sum up the discussion, the following motion was made by Don and seconded by Kim.

**Motion: Designer MUST complete the Blackboard training (available as a faculty resource in Blackboard and Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) before designing the course.**

**The newly designed course must be evaluated by peer reviewers who have completed the peer review course. Peer reviewers can consult the designer to complete the SME requirements.**

4. Quality Matters update from the conference Don and Pam attended on October.

Don and Pam attended Quality Matters conference in Nashville in October. Both presented a paper on Quality Mattes Standard 8. This standard addresses Accessibility issues. Both found the conference to be informative.

1. New Business

Pat Stroud volunteered to be on the Distance Education Committee to understand how the Library staff can help online faculty and student needs. She was concerned however that the Library leadership is not represented on the new steering committee; a significant area that online students will be involved in.

Pat Stroud raised the following concern:

I have been on the committee for several years.  I first asked to be on (even though I do not teach) in order to understand an online class, how it is structured, and to possible try to determine the best way that I can support the distance educator.  I have learned a great deal just by listening to the faculty discuss distance education.  I continue to be frustrated in not being able to deliver the library support that is needed because I am usually blocked by budget issues and not having administrative support.  In today’s meeting I find out about the new Distance Ed Steering Committee.  It was formed to add all departments involved in the support of distance education to develop the new online classes. – I was not even invited to be on the committee.  Library services will be one area the HLC people will look at – so why am I not even in the discussion?  Right now I am trying to get a collection of forty thousand eBooks added to our collection (especially for the distance students).  I do not have the administrative or monetary support to continue nor does it seem to even have my voice heard in the steering committee.

Adjournment: Dave made the motion to adjourn, second by Kim. Meeting adjourned at 3:45PM.