

**Academic Technology Committee**

MINUTES OF MEETING: 02/01/08      APPROVED BY COMMITTEE: 04/04/08  
Submitted Exec. Committee: \_\_\_\_\_      Approved by Exec. Committee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Submitted Academic Senate: \_\_\_\_\_      Approved by Academic Senate: \_\_\_\_\_

Joint meeting: Academic Technology Committee and Advisory Committee on Academic Technology

ATC Members Present: Ardavan Asef-Vaziri, Hilary Baker, Larry Chu, Barry Cleveland, Ellis Godard (chair), Xiyi Hang, Kimberly Embleton, David Levin, Gloria Melara, Patricia Miller, Jacek Polewczak, Magdy Rizk, Ashley Skylar.

ACAT Members Present: Sue Cullen, Kavoo Blourtchi (for Jerry Stinner), Harry Hellenbrand (chair), Stephanie Nguyen, Steven Stepanek.

Excused: Tyler Blake, Patricia Born, Lynn Lampert.

Guests: Spero Bowman, Wayne Smith, Linda Coburn (Sundial student reporter)

Minutes: Jennifer De Iuliis

**1. Introductory remarks – Hellenbrand**

Hellenbrand opened the meeting with comments about of the complementary roles of ATC and ACAT:

- The Faculty Senate committee, ATC, is a policy recommending committee.
- ACAT was formed as an administrative committee to make recommendations to the Provost and the President regarding the cost of technology and operational issues in carrying our policy.
- The goal is to ensure that both committees are consulted for important decisions to ensure that the needs of all members of the university community are considered.
- The committees will meet jointly a couple of times each year and several members sit on both committees ensuring interchange.
- The Moran Report made recommendations for an IT Governance structure comprised of several committees, including ACAT, which have been established.

Polewczak asked which of the two committees (ATC and ACAT) would serve as the overriding group if differences exist on a particular issue with each committee. Hellenbrand stated the issue would be run back through both committees and believes a resolution could be made among them. However, if consensus could not be reached, then Hellenbrand would decide and explain the final decision to both committees.

Polewczak asked whether the purchase of a Microsoft Exchange server was brought to ATC and ACAT. Hellenbrand stated this was a campus-wide decision that ran through several committees. Baker noted that this was discussed at the Technology Infrastructure and Services Committee (TISC), which is one of the other IT Governance committees. Stepanek is a member of TISC as well as ACAT.

Polewczak asked about the need for so many committees. Hellenbrand stated ACAT exists in part to assist him in raising the technical questions necessary to make informed decisions. Having several committees reviewing decisions assists Hellenbrand in making the most informed decision.

## **2. Initiatives at the CSU and at CSUN – Levin**

### *a. Academic transformation, course redesign, and hybrid courses*

Currently, there are seven course redesign projects within the colleges. The work that is being done by the faculty members in this area will have a great impact now and in the future for everyone.

### *b. Online programs*

Hellenbrand, Baker, and Levin have met with each college over the past few months to discuss the college usage and future plans for Information Technology. Discussion around online programs occurred at most of the meetings. Colleges and departments are encouraged to consult with Extended Learning if they have an interest in pursuing these ideas.

### *c. Learning management systems*

LMS assessment being conducted by Fitzgerald and Godard, has gathered data via surveys and group forums. The information gathers what we are currently using, what features are required, and our support needs (technical and faculty/student support). At CSUN, Extended Learning is using Blackboard for many courses and utilizing a Blackboard's ASP service. There are Moodle experiments on campus being conducted by John Noga and other faculty in Computer Science, and by Brian Foley of the masters program in Educational Technology.

The CSU contract with Blackboard, which owns both Blackboard and WebCT, is coming up for renewal. Twenty-one campuses are also currently using either WebCT or Blackboard, and two are using to Moodle. Humboldt State and San

Francisco State have moved to use Moodle, and Monterey Bay is also planning to move to Moodle. An RFP has already gone out to vendors and, at a CSU meeting being held today, the group will determine which of the responses to accept and review. The CSU is not looking at only one solution. Price and support are the main decision-making factors.

The Director of Academic Technology at San Francisco shared that the expense to transition to Moodle is about \$1.7 million; although no license fee exists due to off-campus hosting, there are still significant costs involved. Godard asked for a breakdown of the Moodle expenses at San Francisco State. Levin will obtain the breakdown details from his peer at San Francisco State. Hellenbrand notes that any system that is chosen will have high integration costs. Melara asked about the length of time for San Francisco to implement and move to Moodle. Levin stated that it took them approximately 2-3 years from testing to go live.

Polewczak asked if we are looking at using more open formats to be independent of platforms. Levin shared that a CSUN online repository is being created using DSpace, an open source product. The content is tagged to be easily retrievable to everyone.

Cullen noted that many of these projects overlap and that ATI needs to be considered within the review process.

Smith stated that there are course-level LMS and University-level LMS. For example, in academic advisement there is an early warning system available. Hellenbrand shared that many needs are independent of LMS, i.e. grades and video streaming. Infrastructure staff needs to provide some input; concerns about the costs associated with LMS and return on investment. We may not need a LMS if we have a repository – such as the DSpace repository. A vision is needed to outline where we want to be 2-3 years from now, not only where we want to be next fall. Costs involved now will continue to be greater as time progresses (renewal, support, etc.).

### **3. Future learning environment at CSUN (classroom and online) and how this impacts the organization of academic technology at CSUN to deliver what the campus needs – Hellenbrand**

Below the masters level, the need for totally online classes and programs is minimal. The Tseng College of Extended Learning has the advantage of a different funding and budget structure. For the rest of the university, there should be a focus on hybrid courses. This focus addresses the issues of space constraints and time pressures the campus is currently facing. If savings are generated by holding the hybrid courses, then the college will be able to retain those savings within their own budget and reallocate the funds as needed. The overall interest has been to have some things

online, but not all. There are a number of concerns around support issues for academic technology that need to be addressed. Issues facing the CSU are high student fees, high book costs, and high transportation costs. While the actual CSUN fees are relatively low, the overall cost of attendance is high due to the high cost of living in California. Determining the ways to utilize technology to help lower these costs is important short and long term.

Cullen was requested to attend the next ATC to speak about ATI. She also plans to present to the other governance committees in March.

Skylar shared that she (along with Levin and Baker) attended the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative conference last week and learned about elaborate online projects that had a lot of support at their institutions. She noted that many faculty attended the conference with their IT representative. Skylar said she believes CSUN is lacking in this area as pioneers and many faculty in the colleges may not be aware of the resources that are currently available to them. Cullen said that we need avenues with various pathways to obtain information, especially to cover the varying levels of use and comfort with technology. Blourtchi suggested having a certification available once a faculty member has completed training. Cullen agreed and stated that this could serve as one pathway, similar to the approach that HR uses to roll out the online sexual harassment training program.

Skylar noted that technologies that are being used increasingly include podcasting, wikis and blogs. The book “Second Life for Dummies” has very inspiring information on virtual environments and communications. Miller stated she has used Second Life in language learning where students can interact with those from other countries and cultures. She will share the link with the committee. Stepanek asked about the impact of ATI with technologies like Second Life, podcasting and other new technologies? Cullen stated while we want to embrace technology, we can’t leave those behind that need accessibility. The systems or instructors need to be able to provide equally effective information for someone with accessibility needs.

Smith suggested having faculty that currently use online and hybrid technologies train other faculty and be another resource for each other. Polewczak asked why we want to move toward more hybrid and online courses, because the quality of teaching seems lower and students may not get the most out of a class. Hellenbrand stated this is a demand-based on culture and student need.

Hellenbrand noted that it is important to determine whether we are getting value from these courses. Cullen added that making thoughtful purchases and the use of instructional design outcomes are key. Many times we are rushed and more thoughtful progression is needed and many ways exist to get the proper learning outcomes. Polewczak suggested that we have further discussion regarding hybrid and online courses with this committee and with other committees.

Cleveland asked whether there was any feedback from student responses from WebCT last term. This was the third term teaching online courses, and only about 25% of the students provided evaluations. Hellenbrand stated a low point was in September/October but then things went back up to usual usage levels.

Godard asked whether we are looking at clicker standardization. Hellenbrand stated this is another project and we need to keep our priorities straight because we are not able to do all projects. We need to make decisions on what is best and getting them done right. For example, should we evaluate clickers or evaluate Second Life? With a fixed budget, how do we keep up? The responsibility of the committees is to review what we are doing and ensure we stay on track.

Godard and Hellenbrand will work on scheduling a date for the next ATC-ACAT meeting later this year. Hellenbrand offered to join other ATC meetings based on agenda items.

The joint meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM, ACAT members depart.

#### **ATC meeting continued:**

Godard noted that there is no particular agenda for this portion of the meeting and offered the time for open discussion.

1. *Open Format* - Polewczak shared a draft document he created regarding use of open formats. He would like the committee to review the draft and consider a final copy that can be used to distribute to faculty and staff. Baker suggested thinking about when the need exists to use open formats based on the audience and areas with different functions. Sometimes people are not aware of the impact of technology when they don't know the audience (i.e. bulk email messages). Godard suggested the document be more brief and possibly having it posted to the ATC website. Godard also mentioned that he receives Word documents from the Faculty Senate office. Baker stated the possible need to send documents in two formats for those that need to cut and paste from a Word document and a PDF for those that don't. Cleveland stated that RTF may be a better format for those who do not have Adobe Acrobat.
2. *SOLAR* - Godard received some complaints regarding SOLAR. Classes with a lab require students to sign up for both independently. Another reported complaint is that not all faculty are allowed to issue permission numbers. Baker stated that if a separate grade is required for the class and lab, then they are considered two separate classes; however, if one grade is issued the class and lab can be linked in the system. This is a business process issue and can be changed, but there are cost implications. Cleveland asked whether department chairs are aware of this, as it has come up in meetings. Godard stated that as communication is moving from paper to email, chairs sometimes don't pass on the information. Miller added that she found out that the assistants in her department

Polewczak asked about availability to enter remarks regarding placement in SOLAR. Levin spoke with Eric Forbes and who reported that this feature is available in the system but it is not currently activated. It is not just an on/off button to activate this feature; it will require a project to be initiated. Baker reminded the committee that they had previously discussed inviting Forbes to attend a future ATC meeting and suggested that they invite him to hear their SOLAR concerns first hand.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10PM.