



UNIVERSITY COUNCIL ON TECHNOLOGY

*Friday, March 2, 2012
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
316 Kent Student Center*

Attendees: Paul Albert (Educational Technology), Mark Ashmore (College of Technology), Cathy Bakes (Faculty Senate), Gina Campana (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), Marcy Caplin, (College of Nursing), J. P. Cooney (Graduate Studies), Ken Burhanna (University Libraries), Paul Farrell (Faculty Senate), Pam Grimm (Business Alternate), Deborah Huntsman (Continuing & Distance Education), Jan Kover (Regional Campuses), Preeti Palvankar (Course Management), Jeffrey Pellegrino (FPDC), Jason Piatt (College of EHHS), Richard Rubin (Provost's Office), Arden Ruttan (Chair), Rose Tran (Vice Chair)

- I. Welcome and Call to Order – Chair Ruttan called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.
- II. Minutes –Draft minutes from February 2, 2012, were approved with one minor correction.
- III. Informational Item – Blackboard Learn - Paul Albert distributed a Blackboard Learn handout and provided a summary on Kent State's transitions from WebCT to Vista to Learn. Kent State initially purchased WebCT. Blackboard acquired WebCT branding it Vista. About 1 ½ years ago, Blackboard merged all their tools together consolidating their core Blackboard product and Vista into one product. Kent implemented Vista in the fall of 2010 in a test area and then piloted 10 to 15 courses in the spring of 2011. Vista was put into production in the fall of 2011. For the past year, both Vista and Learn have been offered to allow time for migration. About one-third of the courses have migrated to Learn.

As of fall 2012, Vista will no longer be supported. The distributed handout provides information on the migration timeline, processes and procedures, and open lab sessions in the Stewart Hall training room. In addition, there will be Blackboard training sessions focusing on specific areas such as communication tools (discussion, blogs, and journals), tests, Wimba, and other topics of specific interest identified through polling of faculty. Some training will also be performed upon request, i.e., English, specific campus requests, etc. Support documents and help articles are available and searchable at support.kent.edu.

An e-mail was sent last month to each department chair, school director, and regional campus dean listing their courses taught in Vista which did not have a corresponding class in Learn, along with some help documents on migration and how to use Learn.

Blackboard problems should be reported to blackboard@kent.edu. Information Services will attempt to resolve the issue in our current Blackboard system. If IS cannot resolve it internally, the issue will be forwarded to our system support representative, Jeremiah, for resolution. Jeremiah will verify that the necessary attributes have been activated, look for missing building blocks, etc. After exhausting his area of expertise, Jeremiah will forward unresolved issues on to Blackboard as needed.

Paul Albert suggested inviting Shelly Marshall to UCT since Geauga adopted Wimba earlier and we could talk with her about how they have been using it.

A request was made for tailoring error messages in Blackboard. It was reported that while grading assignments, Blackboard returned an error message without identifying the problem. The company acknowledged it was a known problem but did not relay that the problem only affected a particular student. Kent State cannot change the content of the software and maybe the need to tailor all error messages to be driven out of a separate file to be managed by the University should be reported to Blackboard. Another suggestion was made for adding a message such as "do you really want to leave this page" upon exiting to avoid accidental loss of the data being

worked on. General comments noted vast differences between browsers and expectations for at least Firefox and Internet Explorer checks.

Chair Ruttan suggested an action group for addressing Blackboard problems.

IV. Online Teaching with a Synopsis of the Current Administrative Goals and an Overview of Current Plans for New Online Teaching Initiatives by Associate Provost, Richard Rubin, and Executive Director of Continuing Studies, Deborah Huntsman – Deb Huntsman announced that Val Kelly was unable to attend today's UCT but will be here in April to present the distance learning website which will have lots of support, especially pedagogical. We will also be rolling out a lot of training for online pedagogy. We are looking at two tiers in terms of new online development and support. Those areas include 10 to 12 new graduate programs online to attract new markets that are strictly geared to our own Kent State students. We will continue to focus on education and training for jobs for the decades ahead. Our goal is for Kent State to be the go-to university in the state for transfer module. We are working with chairs across the university to identify faculty and courses. Some will be marketed in 2012. Twelve percent of the entire university credit hours are online. We are distinguishing ourselves in the nation and are at the point where we need to be very strategic. Online courses and degrees will have the Kent State look and feel. We will continue to have a significant amount of support for courses in specific areas for the colleges that are not OCDE strategic.

Associate Provost Rick Rubin stressed that online learning cannot be done by one unit; it has to be a result of collaborative efforts. Many discussions are taking place and collaboration will be essential. Strong liaisons are needed with deans, faculties, Admissions, Registrar's Office, etc. For spring 2012, twelve percent of credit hours are online. A relative small percentage of those online credit hours are undergraduate hours. Historically, we started online learning with graduate programs. About one in three students are taking an online class with most of that third taking just one online class. Online students are in regular programs. The biggest users are our summer students with 38 percent of summer courses online. We offered 440 unique courses. Graduate offerings are substantial but far less than undergraduate offerings.

Val's presentation will stress the point that quality is everything and we will promote quality by having a process that takes the faculty all the way through the design process. Our website will be designed for faculty assistance and will provide lots of advice. She will discuss the building of a social net, a pilot test for your review and input.

Resources are being devoted to online educational designers allocated for online programs and to transfer module. Paul Albert noted that many areas such as regional campuses, colleges, and departments are bringing in their own educational technology designers. IS has not had problems handling request volumes to date but could if every department becomes very active with online learning programs.

Rick Rubin noted that all the transfer modules were run through a program. It's a big market; so, we looked at the size and filtered it down to about 50 transfer module courses. We will be visiting units including regionals to inquire as to what they want to do. We will try to put together a package and move it through. Our website link will be forwarded to Chair Ruttan. There will be some modules there about how to get started, cautionary tales about what to tell your students, etc.

Chair Ruttan stated that UCT website will include a link to the online learning site instead of establishing a separate group.

Interest was expressed in migrating online courses to the higher levels. In order to do so, there is a need to look into novel ways of doing the things we are currently doing; i.e., we cannot run a synchronous course on the fly because there is no way of annotating. The technology is there but not available. We need to support investment in this area, nothing big, just something to lend out for experiment. Others felt that undergraduate students would prefer to take their major courses face to face even though they do prefer to take their core courses online. Rick Rubin stressed that pedagogy is extremely important at the University, and there are several answers. There is a whole market of people who cannot physically get here (family, on army base, etc.). However, most of the other students prefer face-to-face interaction over online courses for their major classes. Therefore, an either/or perspective is not the way to evaluate this issue. When we review upper level courses, they are small classes with

higher prices. You need enough students in the class to pay for it or make up the dollars somewhere else. Upper level courses could be terrific for us; we just have to be judicious about it.

Concern was raised about increasing online development and the present need for all the support that comes with them--academic, writing/tutoring, addressing students with issues, how to do advising, etc. Some areas are experiencing a lack of support for online learning. Vice Chair Tran responded that her staff students take quite a bit of courses online from undergraduate all the way up to upper level courses. The last two years, undergraduate wanted to move forward with online tutoring, and we have one pushing to do online advising. We now have a new dean and we will have a new provost. Rose would be happy to push for these online programs. Deb Huntsman acknowledged the need for the surrounding support around online classes. When designing online learning, we considered with the online terminology that you have to have the same array of support available and that those providing these services have to be involved. The online student needs everything the face-to-face student needs but just delivered in a virtual way. This is foreign territory, we are seeing changes, and we have to continue to put resources to this end. The website is the beginning

Each state where we have an online student has to certify the online course, adding to the costs. Currently, we have about 20 state waivers. These state regulations have been in place for a long time and do not just apply to online learning. It also applies to clinical, experiential experience, anything taking place out of state, faculty teaching online who live out of state, etc. We must be in compliance by the summer of 2013.

Another area of concern noted is that some students without 24-hour availability were not aware of the synchronous status of some of the online courses they registered for. The designation of online meeting times needs to be more prominent. Deb noted that distance learning posted on their site is a listing of the online courses for identifying asynchronous and/or synchronous statuses. About 99 percent of fully online courses are asynchronous.

A request was made for a proctoring test form that is accepted across the board which would benefit all campuses. It was noted that Regional Campuses are working on some kind of a shared form. At the same time, distance learning is looking at new available tools for proctoring. We identified two new tools that we think show promise for providing for students who cannot access campus. We are in the pilot stage currently and when results are back, we will share them across all the campuses.

Chair Ruttan noted that he is still a little concerned that there is no real support for innovation while the need for innovative platforms and teaching techniques exist. We need the establishment pushing for this. Rick Rubin added that about a year ago, the big challenge was online labs in the sciences. A team of faculty members were appointed to the task and the results were incredible. Online innovation grants make a lot of sense. Some noted that there is a hesitancy of faculty in taking grants due to fear of losing control of intellectual property. Rick Rubin stated that we look for joint effort; we want either the dean of the regional unit or the chair to be able to use the course. Most online courses have no revenue beyond the online tuition. We are moving in the direction of a shared piece of property. A dean can take the online course but they cannot take your notes, etc.

V. New Business

- A. How to Find Action Group Volunteers? KNUG? –Based on previous discussions, this process may be in development for distance learning. KNUG is the Kent Network Users Group with a listserv membership that tends to be system administrators. No objections were voiced to advertising widely for group volunteers. Paul Albert suggested when Jay Frye is present to push this item through him.
- B. New Software Look for Clickers – Jeff Pellegrino stated that following three years of the same system, a new software look is being rolled out which is quite smooth and helpful for Mac users as well as PC users. We have some emerging support. We will be working on a 45 minute tune-up session for them. Clickers are standard at the University. Students are highly encouraged to get them but it is not binding upon them until they see them on the syllabus. Smartphone connection is an issue because faculty members do not want outside devices due to the security concerns. Vice Chair Tran's group will offer courses for students for clicker training (handouts, etc.)

VI. Member Concerns –

- A. Search Concern - Pam Grimm noted that they had someone who is not yet a student who they wanted to enroll as a guest in class and were searching to obtain access. The first page returned by their search was either for Ashtabula or Stark and the Kent campus link wasn't returned at all. Shouldn't this be filtered to Kent if you are performing the search on the Kent campus? Paul Albert advised that a dropdown box for campus selection was added for filtering searches.
- B. Guest Access - Jason Piatt reported that there seems to be problems when setting up guest, and we are getting more and more quests. Currently, we have people who can get into FlashLine but are missing about ten tabs. They cannot use their swipe card in the Library because the systems are not communicating with each other. Paul Albert requested that Jason send an e-mail to him on it. These issues may have to do with provisioning. At first, they are given minimum clearance. When they come in, they have to go through security to be escalated. Jason added that they cannot get into databases that Google scholar will allow you in. The guests were visiting scholars in specialty programs. Paul Albert suggested bringing in HR because automating systems runs off of Banner. We have to have a way for these affiliated folks to appear in Banner.

VI. Meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.
Minutes submitted by Debbie Dobrilovic