MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
April 30, 2007
Wednesday, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Kerr Hall Rm 129

Present: Murray Baumgarten (Chair), John Borrego, Henry Burnett (Media Services Director), Rachel Dewey (NSTF Rep), Ruth Harris-Barnett (CTE Director), Lindsay Hinck, Kevin Karplus, Roxanne Monnet (Senate analyst), Cynthia Polecritti.

Guest: Robin Ove, Faculty Instructional Technology Center Manager.

Chair's Announcements

At the recent Instructional Technology Center (ITC) meeting investment options were discussed and will continue at future meetings. Chair Baumgarten will keep COT apprised regarding this topic.

There will be COT meetings on May 7, 14, and June 4. The May 21 meeting will only occur if there is sufficient agenda to warrant a meeting before June 4 which will be the final meeting of the year.

Draft minutes from April 16

The minutes from April 16, 2007, were accepted.

Director's announcements and updates

None.

Learning Management System Assessment

Robin Ove, Faculty Instructional Technology Center Manager, visited COT to give an update regarding the Learning Management System Assessment (LMSA) and to seek the Committee's feedback. Handouts were provided. The presentation will also be given to the Committee on Computing and Telecommunications (CCT).

The current focus of the LMSA is to determine what UCSC wants the future to be with regard to technology to support learning and teaching.

COT was apprised of the history and current usage of WebCT at UCSC. WebCT has been in use at UCSC since 1999 when ~12 courses began making use of it. During 2006-07, 313 courses will have used WebCT. In an unduplicated count, greater than 5,000 students will have used WebCT per quarter during the academic year in progress.

UCSC's license for WebCT ends June 2008, making that an especially good time to implement a change in software. Two options currently being reviewed are Sakai and Moodle. Since both of these are IMS compliant, the transition should be fairly simple.

It was noted that the Library is considering replacement of ERES with an application that would serve multiple needs. The Library is represented at the ITC meetings.

The advantages of moving from department support for instructional technology to what is called Enterprise Application Services was discussed. Enterprise services, while costing more, provides more comprehensive and up to date services with the benefits that come from having staff support devoted to these needs. How to fund Enterprise Application Services has yet to be determined.

Comparison statistics with other UC campuses for centralized instructional technology support were reviewed for the Committee. UCSC has .4 staff FTE whereas the next lowest amount of staff at a UC is 1.8. UCLA is in the process of moving to centralized instructional technology support. They currently have 6.0 staff FTE just for the humanities. Some other UC campuses have already centralized their instructional technology support. UCSC's budget is ~$53K. The next lowest budget in the UC system is >$100K.

Faculty and students using WebCT at UCSC were surveyed. Student responses were largely positive (60 percent of students responded positively versus 16 percent who responded negatively). Of the student responses, 25 percent were regarding the program itself, with the balance related to how the program is used. Of the ~200 faculty who currently use WebCT, 18 percent responded positively to the survey, 24 percent were neutral, 43 percent responded negatively. The balance did not respond. COT would like to know how many of the faculty responses were for classes with enrollments greater than 200 to better understand whether this may be a contributing factor to the high percentage of negative responses. It was noted that the written comments associated with the negative responses indicate that those instructors want to continue using WebCT in the future regardless of their responses to the survey. Figures from official class size reports indicate that in 1986 28 courses enrolled greater than 200 students. By 2006 the number was up to 142 classes, a number of which enrolled over 400 students.

COT was asked for advice on how to engage the campus leadership in the discussion on how LMS should fit into UCSC's academic planning and future vision of a modern teaching and learning university. The Academic Advisory Committee and the Senate Executive Committee were suggested as two groups they could consider bringing into the conversation.

It is hoped that there will eventually be a single login for students using multiple WebCT pages.

COT wants to know that tripling the investment in ITC has gains that make is sufficiently worthwhile before confirming its support for the increased investment. COT recommended that they survey non-users to advertise the gains and to better understand why some faculty do not use WebCT.

It was noted that some campuses have decided that the system they select must be open source in order to be more flexible and nimble locally.

COT requested a sketch of the pros for the new software options and a list of possible gains, ideally including some that may spill over into benefits on the research side of faculty and student work. COT will recommend to next year's committee that they give further consideration to this topic.

Focus groups are planned for the fall. Now ITC is looking for ideas for use cases. It was underscored for COT that now is not the point in time for a technology decision to be made and that the LSMA is at the point of supporting faculty to make decisions as to what they need and want for learning and teaching technology.

Mini Grants

Three mini grants were funded, for a total of $3817.44. Two were denied. Decisions on two were deferred in order to get more information from the applicants.

Annual Report

At the next meeting the Committee will consider assignments for members to draft portions of the annual report.

Attest,

Murray Baumgarten, Chair
Committee on Teaching