Marquette University Committee on Academic Technology  
November 1, 2013 – Minutes

Attendance:
Present: Bruce Boyden, Michael Class, S.J., Steven Crane, Patsy Healy, Kyuil Kim, Kathy Lang, Patrick Loftis, Shaun Longstreet, Gary Meyer, Jon Pray, Jame Schaefer, Heidi Schweizer, Chris Stockdale, Janice Welburn, Tom Wirtz
Absent: Lesley Boaz (Excused), Scott D'Urso, Laura Matthew (Excused),
Recorder: Steven Crane

Approval of Minutes:

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm with a reflection by Bruce Boyden. After brief review and one minor modification, the minutes for the September 27, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved. This was followed by a round of introductions that was part of welcoming the new student representative to the committee.

Subcommittee Update:

Jon Pray reported on the progress of the e-textbook committee. There were several points of interest.

1. The subcommittee will soon be meeting with a representative from Cengage to see a demo of their new product.
2. The process regarding the negotiation of the new bookstore contract is progressing slowly. There is little new news on this front. So far, only Follett has responded to the RFI and they may be the only bidders. The subcommittee still hopes to be involved in the contracting process as it progresses. Several questions were raised and addressed:
   a. What is the likely timeframe for the new contract? Last time it was 10 years. This time it will be shorter, perhaps on the order of 3 years.
   b. Could the new arrangement be strictly online? It seems likely there will be a continued physical presence on campus.
3. The subcommittee has completed the process of talking with publishers and is now in a position to begin developing materials, etc., to assist faculty with adopting e-textbooks. This will likely involve tips and best practices information.
4. The possibility of exploring customized textbooks, including a potential pilot study is a new item that is being added to the subcommittee’s agenda.

As a point of reference and extension of this discussion, it was pointed out that the einstruction clicker system would no longer be available after the end of this academic year, and perhaps the committee or a subcommittee will need to address some related issues. These include the consequences for students who bought a “four year package” and what possible replacement systems might be.

Tom Wirtz reported that the hardware/software committee has shifted its recent focus to respond to several pressing issues. Foremost was the drafting of a letter of support from the committee to the Provost supporting and stressing the importance of adequately funding the CRP Program. This draft was
circulated and discussed. Several suggested revisions/additions were offered. These included noting the discrepancy between the target 4 year cycle and the actual 6 year cycle, identifying potential alternative funding sources, and clarifying the wide range of impact this program has across campus. The subcommittee will rework the draft to incorporate these suggestions and recirculate the revision for approval.

New Business:

1. Campus Wide Technology Day

Gary Meyer explained that this concept emerged from the Campus Conversation on Technology event last spring. It seemed there was interest in developing an event that would allow for further exploration of technology, promotion of best practices, and bringing a keynote speaker to campus. This event would facilitate information exchange across interested groups on campus and perhaps from technology vendors. The goal at this point is to organize a small group to explore the concept and to formulate a plan for implementation. But first, some general discussion and guidance from this committee was sought.

An extended discussion generated numerous interesting possible directions to pursue. Many of these came from committee members who had experience with similar events at other institutions. These included having a speaker with a nationwide reputation, faculty demonstrations of best practices, training sessions, panel discussions on relevant topics, poster sessions, and perhaps vendor demonstrations/presentations. It was suggested that this event might be coordinated with the Forward Thinking event that is already on the calendar. Indeed, it was reported that the Forward Thinking organizers were receptive to the possibility. This suggestion was favorably received, although potential issues/complications with timing needed to be explored. There was also some discussion of whether there was an advantage to fall vs. spring timing. After some additional discussion, a subcommittee of 7 individuals was formed to develop and refine a proposal for the event.

2. MUSG Wants/Concerns

Jon Pray reported on a meeting with a MUSG representative regarding several wishes/concerns the student group had. These were primarily related to D2L. More specifically:

- Students would like D2L sites to remain open longer than the last day of finals week, which is currently the default practice.
- Students would like more faculty to use the gradebook function within D2L.
- Students thought that integrating the D2L Gradebook with Peoplesoft and the final grade submission process would be an inducement to get faculty to make more use of the gradebook.

Students have an interest in being able to get back into D2L to check grades and other materials after the semester ends. Mechanically, this could be done by resetting the default close date on the D2L system. A handout was provided showing that many other institutions keep sites open considerably
longer than does MU. But there are concerns elsewhere on campus (Registrar and Committee on Academic Procedures) that this could be problematic. There is a need to avoid anything that could delay the grade completion process or that might strain the grade submission infrastructure. It was concluded that the committee should meet with Registrar and the Academic Procedures representatives to learn more of their concerns before pursuing this matter.

Students would like faculty to make greater use of the gradebook feature and hope the committee can develop a plan for doing so. In discussion, a number of issues were raised, including the degree of difficulty associated with the gradebook function, several specific quirks regarding how D2L works, and the completeness and reliability of the embedded recordkeeping. The committee agreed to explore these issues further.

Students see integration with Peoplesoft as an incentive to get faculty to use the gradebook. This issue has come up in different contexts as a potential convenience for faculty. Several technical issues were identified, but it was noted that these are not insurmountable. It was then noted that this prospect was not well received by the Registrar, who has concerns that it could complicate and delay the grade submission process.

Following some additional discussion, Jon Pray noted that the three items likely needed to be addressed individually. The second might be addressed by developing a series of training sessions regarding the gradebook, and perhaps developing a “train the trainer” program. The first and third items could best be addressed after having the aforementioned meetings with the Registrar’s Office and the Academic Procedures Committee. Once these are completed, it might be possible for the committee to develop a proposal that could be sent to the Academic Senate.

**Information Item:**

Kathy Lang informed the committee that the existing test scanning system will need to be replaced in the near future, and that she will be seeking faculty help/input in determining how to proceed with replacement.

Given no other specific business, the committee adjourned at 3:02 pm.