Board of Undergraduate Studies  
Minutes of Meeting on April 6, 2016  
Zilber Hall 470

Present: John Borg, Sandra Cleveland, Susanne Foster, Behnam Ghasemzadeh (Chair), Anne Pasero, Stephanie Quade, Michael Slattery, John Su, Norman Sullivan, Joan Whipp.

Guest: Anne Deahl, Accessible Technology Initiative, Academic Support Programs

Recorder: Behnam Ghasemzadeh

- The meeting started at 1:07 pm with a reflection by Sandra Cleveland.

- Anne Deahl, Accessible Technology Initiative, provided a report on Marquette plans to improve accessibility to information provided by the University and class material. The following points were discussed:
  - The initiative will be developed on campus incrementally.

  - The core of the initiative is to assess and enhance the accessibility of University's digital technology. This assessment will include websites, library services, class material (handout and D2L), checkmarq, online courses, video captioning among others.

  - It is very important to the mission of the University for its students, faculty, and staff to have equal and easy access to information.

  - There have been numerous complaints filed by students and national organizations (ex., American Foundation for the blind, National Federation of the Blind) with the Office of Compliance against universities (ex., MIT and Harvard) for inadequate access to information. Marquette goal is to be proactive in providing equal access to information for all students, faculty, and staff. For example, the available screen reading technology is not able to read some of the web pages or D2L information at Marquette. The pdf file format is not accessible to this technology and creates problems for students in need of additional help with these documents.

  - There are about 400 students that work with the office of disability services at Marquette. Many of these students can benefit from more accessible information. Therefore, more accessibility will benefit many more students than a few students who are completely blind or deaf.

  - There is a committee (chaired by Anne Deahl) to review Marquette’s compliance with equal accessibility to information. McKinsey & Company was hired by Marquette and using their Digital Quotient assessment program found that MU is only 29% compliant with the regulations. Other institutions that have been found to be deficient were given 6 -18 months to become 100% compliant. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA, www.w3.org) provide the standards for web accessibility and are used as guides by all compliant organizations. These standards also meet the requirements set forth by the section 508 of the Department of Education guidelines.

  - The committee is in the process of identifying all the areas that are not compliant and need adjustments. In addition, we need to have procedures in place to make all future digital information compliant. Who will be in charge of this task and how they are going to do it? Faculty need to be trained to prepare their documents properly. In addition, there are about
500 people across campus that are responsible for preparing and maintaining digital information and they need to be trained as well. MU also needs to manage her relationship with third party program and content providers (D2L, Microsoft, Oracle) in order to maintain compliance.

- The Office of Marketing and Communication has used the services of "Siteimprove" to scan the available MU websites to determine compliance. Respective university units receive monthly reports by OMC regarding these sites.

- The committee is close to completing a policy regarding digital media compliance, which will be shared with faculty and staff in Fall 2016.

Other comments by Anne Deahl and UBUS members:

Michael Slattery: screen reader technology still has major problems with mathematical symbols and equations. Some materials will not be readable by the available programs.

Anne Deahl: we are aware of these situations and office of disability services will provide help to faculty and student. In some of these cases, faculty will need to work with the student to overcome the limitations.

Stephanie Quade: knowing in advance that there will be a student with special needs in class will help the faculty to better prepare for the semester.

Anne Deahl: Office of disability services will notify faculty about a student enrolled in their class.

Norman Sullivan: Will there be help for faculty to review their web material for compliance?

Anne Deahl: There will be resources to help faculty. The Center for Teaching and Learning has guidelines for online courses and D2L material to allow accessibility.

Susanne Foster: Two points that need committee's attention: (1) There are faculty who are not tech savvy and will need more help with the digital compliance, (2) Faculty need to be aware of the timeline for compliance to be able to modify their online material in a timely manner.

Ms. Anne Deahl left the meeting at 1:50.

UBUS members discussed the selection of a new chair for the next academic year. The committee members were strongly encouraged to consider serving as the chair and the issue will be revisited at the next meeting on April 27.

UBUS meeting was adjourned at 1:57.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Behnam Ghasemzadeh.