Committee on Distance Education  
Minutes of December 2017

Present: Aura Lippincott, Rebecca Diot, Leslie Lindenauer, Marcy May, Brian Kennison, Colleen Cox, Cathy Vanaria, Monica Sousa, Stephanie Kuhn, Tom Schmiedel

The meeting was called to order by Aura Lippincott at 9:04 a.m. The minutes of October 2017 were approved.

Aura welcomed new members Stephanie Kuhn and Tom Schmiedel to the committee.

The committee reviewed work completed last year to determine if anything further needs to be done on:

1. Recommended best practices for online course design
2. Online readiness assessment for students
3. Resources for faculty teaching online courses (through CELT)

Aura noted the need to publicize what is available to faculty, and said that the OSCQR rubric would be completed this spring.

Colleen raised the question of whether the online readiness assessment could be promoted through advisement. After discussion of how best to promote the online readiness assessment, the committee concluded that the assessment should be recommended for the First Year Program. Becky suggested that First Year students might be enrolled in a shared course, and Leslie noted that students will be doing shared reading online next fall.

The committee concluded that (1) all Blackboard courses should, if possible, link to the readiness assessment online, and (2) faculty teaching online courses should be sent information about available resources.

The subcommittee on peer evaluation for online courses recommended that online courses be evaluated by departments, and noted that departments could be provided with a “toolkit” of methods and models of evaluation.

Stephanie commented on the problem of potential bias against online courses and online teaching which might play a role in evaluations. Discussion followed, and Tom indicated that he had posted resources online to the DL Sharepoint on the peer review process.

The subcommittee on online office hours continues to explore this issue. Brian noted the difference between synchronous and asynchronous hours, and whether students would accept online hours as a routine practice. Cathy suggested there might be greater success with online hours by creating small discussion groups. After more discussion, the committee concluded that tackling the contractual mandate of five office hours per week was beyond the committee’s charge.
The subcommittee to examine student evaluations of online courses reported that they had considered Enterprise Survey as a possible vehicle for evaluation, as it is compatible with Blackboard. Aura will see if a demonstration of the product can be arranged for the subcommittee to view.

New business: The question was raised as to whether the university prohibits online courses from holding in-class examinations. Aura shared the CUNY definitions of the distinctions between online and traditional courses.

The next meeting of the committee will be on February 2, 2018. The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy May