Annual Report- Senate Standing Committee on Distance Education


Committee Chair: Robin James (PS)

Voting members included: Jay Brower (A&S), Xiaomei Gong (At Large), Jess House (Academic Dean), Gary Skiba (A), Jennifer Zdziarski (admin faculty), Darby Cardonsky (VPA), Jeanette Lupinacci (At Large), Brian Stevens (L/C/C), Todd McInerney (IT&T rep)

Nonvoting members included: Brian Kennison (L/C/C), Colleen Cox (PS technology specialist), and Daniel Barrett (CELT director)

2013-2014 Goals

- Establish a systematic course evaluation delivery and data collection process for online courses-begin with a pilot in one department and then expand to other departments across WCSU
- Address student accessibility issues for online, hybrid and web-enhanced instruction, especially within the Blackboard CMS
- Develop an alternative training option to the 9-week, I-Teach course out of Charter Oak for faculty who want to teach online and hybrid courses
- Create a technology resource hub for faculty to offer resources for online instructional best practices, increase awareness of new software and hardware available to faculty and provide support and training (CELT peer mentoring and IT&I workshop notifications)
- Work more closely with CELT to offer faculty technology focused professional development
- Create a tutorial for students who are taking online courses to assure they understand how to navigate effectively within the Blackboard CMS and to assure they understand expectations of student participation
- Create a student survey to explore whether students want more online courses
- Explore ways to build capacity for snow days equipping faculty with virtual instructional platforms such as VIDYO, Web Ex, phone conferencing and screen casted lessons via Camtasia

2013-2014 Accomplishments

- In Spring 2014, a department wide electronic course evaluation delivery and data collection process was piloted for all courses- online, hybrid and face to face- in the Education and Educational Psychology department. Plans to roll out to other departments interested in participating will be on the agenda for Fall 2014. Lessons learned from pilot will be used to revise and improve process before roll out.
- Jay Brower and Colleen Cox worked with the WCSU Accessibility office staff to address student accessibility issues for online, hybrid and web-enhanced instruction, especially within the
Blackboard CMS; next academic year the committee will continue to look for active ways to support WCSU students with disabilities who take online courses.

- Started to explore the possibility of developing our own alternative training option to the 9-week, I-Teach course out of Charter Oak for faculty who want to teach online and hybrid courses; this will be on the top of our priority list next academic year

- Created a technology resource hub with the help of the Office of Information Technology and Innovation and CELT. It is housed within the WCSU website on the CELT webpage and will provide WCSU faculty with classroom locations of Smart Boards on both the midtown and west side campuses, as well as a list of currently supported software faculty may want to explore for teaching online, hybrid and web enhanced courses

- Invited the CELT director to become a non-voting member of the committee and will continue to work more closely with CELT to collaborate more effectively, avoiding repetition of effort and resources; the Chair of this committee is on the CELT advisory board as well to assure productive dovetailing and efficiency of human resources

- At the April and May meetings, we began a discussion about ways to build capacity for snow days equipping faculty with virtual instructional platforms such as VIDYO, Web Ex, phone conferencing and screen casted lessons via Camtasia