

**Minutes
Online Learning Council
September 20, 2010**

Members Present: Dr. Paula Allen, Dr. James Britton, Dr. Kay Daigle, Dr. Steven Emge, Dr. Karl Frinkle, Dr. Gerrie Johnson, Dr. Brad Ludrick, Dr. Nick Nichols, Dr. Rich Pearlstein, Dr. Bob Stevens, Ms. Ellen Hendrix, Mr. Dan Moore, Dr. Bryon Clark, Dr. Linda Kallam

Members Absent: Dr. Aaron Adair, Dr. Hallie Stephens, Dr. John Topuz, Ms. Kate Plunkett, Dr. Doug McMillan.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

Minutes from April 28, 2010 were summarized by Dr. Linda Kallam and were approved.

Online Learning Council Best Practices handbooks were distributed to all committee members. Dr. Kallam related the attendance and content from the recent online learning certification session hosted by CIDT. The Online certification requirements and deadline for certification were discussed. The definition of exactly what constitutes a Blended Course was discussed. Dr. Kallam offered to assist interested faculty in properly classifying courses as either blended or online.

Three requests for Alternative Online Certification were then discussed. Dr. Kallam related the process that faculty should follow in order to apply for alternative online certification. Dr. Sheila Barnes' request for Alternative Online Certification was reviewed first. Dr. Barnes was present for the review of her request. Dr. Barnes related her previous experiences and capacities in various online learning environments. Members of the council questioned Dr. Barnes about various aspects of her previous online learning experience(s). Dr. Barnes was excused from the meeting by Dr. Linda Kallam. Various supporting materials submitted by Dr. Barnes for review of her request were then examined by the committee. The correct designation (either online or blended) for one of Dr. Barnes' previous courses was discussed. Dr. Kallam related that there were two aspects of Dr. Barnes' current application for Alternative Online Certification on which the committee was deciding:

- (1) Should the committee certify Dr. Barnes based on specific course materials she submitted with her application for review.
- (2) Should the committee certify Dr. Barnes based on her previous undocumented experience(s) teaching various online environments and capacities.

Dr. Kallam related that she was not allowed to vote in her position as Chair of the committee. Discussion followed regarding: the nature and content of Dr. Barnes submitted supporting coursework; whether or not the coursework met already existing SOSU Online Learning standards; whether or not it was valid for the committee to vote on a request of this type

(based on the materials submitted with the request); and whether or not the course was being evaluated by the committee based on (a) how many features of Blackboard were used by the course, and (b) if the course were being evaluated by the committee based on a specific teaching outcome.

A motion was made to approve Dr. Barnes based on specific course materials she submitted with her application for review. The motion was immediately seconded by another committee member. Following a vote in which members designated their responses by a "show of hands," the committee voted not to approve Dr. Barnes Alternative Request for Online Certification on this basis. Four members voted for the certification, and eight members did not. No members abstained.

A motion was made to approve Dr. Barnes based on her previous certification in online teaching (undocumented) from another university. The motion was immediately seconded by another committee member. Following a vote in which members designated their responses by a "show of hands," the committee voted to approve Dr. Barnes Alternative Request for Online Certification on this basis. One member voted for the certification, and eleven members did not. No members abstained.

Dr. Mohammed Betz' request for Alternative Online Certification was discussed next. Supporting documentation submitted by Dr. Betz (in the form of an email sent to SOSU from Walden University) was reviewed by the committee. Based on this documentation, a motion was made to approve Dr. Betz' Alternative Request for Online Certification. The motion was immediately seconded by another committee member. Discussion ensued regarding how Dr. Betz could submit additional materials in the future to support consideration of his request; if Dr. Betz would be afforded some type of appeal process should the committee reject his request; and the clarity of current SOSU instructions for applying for Alternative Online Certification. Following this discussion, a motion was made and seconded to deny Dr. Betz request for Alternative Certification based on the evidence provided to the committee. Following a vote in which members designated their responses by a "show of hands," the committee voted to deny Dr. Betz, Alternative Request for Online Certification. This vote was unanimous. No members abstained. The motion to approve (rather than to deny) Dr. Betz' Alternative Request for Online Certification was not discussed further by the committee.

Dr. Chunmei Yoe's request for Alternative Online Certification was discussed next. Various supporting course materials submitted by Dr. Yoe for review of her request were then examined by the committee. It was noted that the supporting materials that Dr. Yoe supplied illustrated that she did not incorporate student-to-student interaction into her course effectively. Furthermore, it was also noted that the rubrics and feedback illustrated in Dr. Yoe's supporting course materials were either nonexistent, did not effectively support the course, or did not meet SOSU Online Learning Requirements. Additionally, the delivery differences that exist between courses delivered in SOSU classrooms and via SOSU's Blackboard feature were also discussed. Finally, methods through which Dr. Yoe could achieve Online Certification were discussed. A motion was made to deny Dr. Yoe's request for Online Certification based on the

course materials that she submitted, that she will be notified that she can look at the modules designed for Online Learning Certification and add materials indicated as necessary by the committee, and then resubmit her request to the committee for Online Learning Certification. Seven committee members voted to approve the motion. One committee member was opposed. No committee members abstained from the vote.

Approval for the status of a new online course in Biology was discussed. The course was submitted for approval via the new Online/Blended course approval form by Dr. Dixon, and was reviewed by the committee. The course was to be moved from a face-to-face to an online-only format. A motion was made and seconded to approve Biology 1143-Medical Terminology as a new online, blended course. Seven members voted to approve this motion. No members voted to oppose, and no members abstained from the vote.

Policy changes for online learning at SOSU were discussed next. The first change dealt with how the Federal Government has changed the definition of distance education to include only online, IETV and correspondence courses. Dr. Kallam related that this change may ultimately affect the name of the OLC, and that certain university policies regarding distance education may also change in the future. The verification procedures for student identities were discussed next. Dr. Kallam related that there were several documents contained in the OLC handbooks which dealt specifically with this topic, and that they were there for informational purposes for all committee members.

Next, Ellen Hendrix from CIDT provided a report regarding that department. Mrs. Hendrix related that, due to the elimination of technical support provided by SOSU's Blackboard provider, an upgrade to the Enterprise edition of Blackboard would be necessary. This upgrade could be accomplished at the moment at a savings of approximately \$20,000 to SOSU, due to a special offer currently underway from SOSU's Blackboard provider. This offer required the university to enter into a three year contract with the Blackboard provider, however, Mrs. Hendrix related that this would not be a concern due to the fact that the Enterprise edition of the program was vastly superior to SOSU's current 7.33 version in a multitude of ways. For example, various aspects of functionality and accessibility for students and faculty alike are vastly improved, and extensive instructor training and security options (not available in SOSU's current 7.33 version of the Blackboard) are also provided. Mrs. Hendrix also related that a formal request for this upgrade is now making its way through the university approval process, and that this was necessary due to several additional costs associated with the aforementioned features of the Enterprise edition. She also indicated that she would be notifying all faculty on campus via email once the purchase process for Enterprise was complete. Mrs. Hendrix also indicated that it would be necessary for faculty to complete new training for working with Enterprise, due to the vast differences between Enterprise and our current Blackboard system. Mrs. Hendrix related that she estimates the Enterprise purchase to be approved sometime within the next year.

Mr. Dan Moore spoke next, and related an opportunity for presentations by faculty at a conference which he had recently attended. Mr. Moore also related how the state of

Oklahoma was recently awarded a 74 million dollar fiber-optic infrastructure upgrade, and that SOSU would be involved in this upgrade. Mr. Moore related that this would expand SOSU's current bandwidth capabilities, enabling our campus to host a variety of online events. Mr. Moore also discussed SOSU's recent application for a grant to upgrade our current IETV system. This grant is still involved in the approval process at the Federal level. The upgrade would enable SOSU's IETV system to utilize high definition television signals, as well as multiple additional capabilities.

Dr. Kallam then related a concern brought to the council by a student (via OLC member Aaron Adair). The concern related to a lack of wi-fi capability in the student dorms. Mr. Moore related to the council that this situation existed because SOSU did not want to encourage wi-fi usage among students for the purpose of taking Blackboard courses, due to the inherent insecurity of the wi-fi format. Furthermore, Mr. Moore related that Ethernet, gigabit connections have been provided in every student dorm room, and that this is a far more secure connection for student to utilize both in general, and for Blackboard courses.

Dr. Kallam then related a concern brought to her by a faculty member. The faculty member was concerned that some students may be enrolling in Blackboard courses lacking necessary computer skills. Furthermore, the faculty member would like to know if any members of the council were experiencing similar problems. Several members of the council stated that they have, indeed experienced this type of problem. Additionally, many members related various methodologies they had utilized in order to (a) inform students about the skills necessary to take Blackboard courses and/or (b) advised students on where they could obtain these necessary skills (on campus). Mrs. Hendrix also related how faculty could assist students in making their Microsoft Word documents compatible with newer versions of that program.

The meeting was then adjourned.

ADDENDUM:

Both the certifications of Dr. Betz and Dr. Yoe were subsequently approved by the OLC via a Discussion Board set up in Blackboard specifically for that purpose. Both Dr. Betz and Dr. Yoe submitted additional supporting materials toward that end via said format. Dr. Betz' certification became effective on September 29, 2010. Dr. Yoe's certification became effective on October 2, 2010. These proceedings are available for review in the Blackboard course set up specifically for use by the OLC.