Meeting of the Provost’s Open SUNY Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 08, 2013
Multiple Locations by Video
Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, NYC

Attendees:


I. The meeting began with a request to forward any changes to the 12/3 minutes prior to the next meeting in January.

II. The group discussed news that SUNY Delhi was recognized as one of the top online Bachelor’s programs in the country. The January announcement of Open SUNY was discussed with the group and they were given a preview of what would be said at the State of the University. Members were notified that the nomination process for roles in the faculty center is now live. The faculty center has a form of membership available for faculty at all levels of experience in online learning—including none. The group was invited to a preview of the Open SUNY website ahead of the January introduction.
The group was asked to provide feedback on the series of faculty webinars that System Administration staff have been hosting on Open SUNY. One member heard from a colleague that they had questions that weren’t answered and suggested that questions from these sessions should be added to the FAQ on the website. The group asked about the use of Open SUNY+ in some materials they have seen lately, and it was explained that online education at large at SUNY will be featured in Open SUNY, but select programs will be identified as being powered by Open SUNY+. This distinction applies to programs with the services and supports the group has been speaking of for some time now.

III. Updates from the Working Groups
   a. Quality Assurance: Candace Vancko, Cyril Oberlander, Tremayne Price, Ed Warzala, Jason Lane – Group members have reviewed some institutional readiness materials, a large QA rubric, and hope to start winnowing down these materials very soon. A conference call for this group is scheduled for 01/09/14. They hope to have something completed for the September launch by February. One possible output is a selection process that is less comprehensive than Sloan that is then followed with a more thorough evaluation using the Sloan process.
   b. Multi Campus Programs: Ann Marie Murray, Tina Good, and Lenore Horowitz, Fred Hildebrand – The group had conversations and have developed a draft of a report that outlines what has taken place already and identifies programs we may be able to learn from. It also identifies some obstacles that we may be able to avoid based on lessons learned from existing multi-campus programs. The group hopes to develop a glossary. Once these two
items are complete, the group believes we will have a good framework for developing a successful multi-campus program.

Once a draft of the report is complete, it will be distributed to the group and will be the focus of a future meeting with recommendations forwarded to the Provost’s office. Costs related to Open SUNY and other business plan pieces are a concern and the group hopes this will be addressed soon. An update from the SUNY team outlined that a group will be put together this month to work toward developing and refining a business plan. Cross registration policies will be handled by a separate group, but will be working with the Open SUNY team as appropriate. One member said that they believed a business model should be in place by mid-February to ensure campuses looking for inclusion in Open SUNY for September will have all the information they need to make decisions.

c. **MOOCs**: Christy Fogal, Kathleen Gradel, James Pitarresi and Martie Dixon, and Lisa Stephens – The group met last week with the Stony Brook faculty for their Introduction to Computational Arts course. They have compiled a document based on their notes and chat logs and will send a link out to the group. A few big takeaways the group had included that the course used a smart delivery format; SBU students took the course for credit; and the MOOC served as the online component of the blended model. They met once/week f2f. Although - in general - it seems that Coursera talks about the potential desirability of a low instructor touch point, that did not seem to be true of this course. The SBU instructor and campus engaged in smart leveraging of local resources. For example, Teaching Assistants and the instructor used the
departmental media lab to produce all of the videos. The instructor was well under way with these videos, as she had planned to offer the course in a blended format before the MOOC became a possibility. Relatively high levels of participation were reported. The course is being re-offered in a similar but modified format, beginning in January. Specific modifications are being made, to honor the feedback from the MOOC-only students.

One member of the group said that the “limited touch” factor was interesting—students taking course for credit vs. those taking for a badge/no credit. Enrollment in the course being down (40ish vs the usual 70ish) is also something that struck the group as interesting. It was unclear as to how many graduate students were assisting with the course. One member seemed to remember hearing that ~4 graduate students were helping assist the professor with the course. Costs to develop a MOOC don’t always seem to factor in the time required to develop and get it live; this may mean that we are strongly underestimating the cost of developing and implementing MOOCs. It was noted that the quality of the video in the MOOC at Stony Brook was very high. There are some existing peer assessment models for large numbers of students that could be explored and potentially rolled into this effort. One member is going to look at other systems and compare what they are doing. One member suggested targeting some of the IITG grants to meet the needs of Open SUNY. Peer assessment was mentioned as a possible area to award a grant for exploration.

d. **PLA**: Deb Amory, Sue Deer, Chuck Powell, and Anita Schmidt – The group has been collecting lots of data on PLA and competency based education. A definition of PLA, the number of
campuses that accept it, number of credits, plus thinking on the application to Open SUNY will be a product of this group. Competency Based Education (CBE) is a current issue in higher ed. and the group will look into a definition, financial aid implications, existing models across the nation, and how they could be used to inform Open SUNY. There is another sub-committee looking at CBE, so that could help inform the direction of this group as well. Tuition is a key issue related to CBE as it tends to make tuition a little more reasonable for students; one model even includes students paying by the month. The group will be getting together again soon by telephone to further discuss their work. Ensuring that the academic integrity of the course is maintained is maybe one of the biggest challenges of CBE. One member thought that CBE could be a major and powerful recruitment tool for SUNY.

IV. The meeting concluded and the Chair will be in touch with the sub-groups to help continue their work. The next meeting of the full group will be on 01/30/14 from 1-3pm.