

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Commission on the Future of Instructional Delivery

November 11, 2005
3:00-5:00
G11 Boone Hall

Attendees: D. Barton, D. deLaski-Smith, R. Fulkert, K. Kustron, P. Leighton, D. Loppnow, R. Lucas, C. McAnuff, S. Nelson, L. Nybell, D. Pearson, W. Shell, D. Silverman, J. Tracy, K. Victor-Burke,

Absent: J. DeCamp, J. Fallon, D. Gaymer, B. Lahidji, B. Leopard, D. Mielke, J. Palladino, L. Rocklage, T. Venner, H. Eiss, E. Hoffman, A. Hogan, S. Menzel

Guest(s): D. Gaymer

Agenda Items:

- I. Review of Minutes:
 - a. September 30, 2005 - approved
- II. Additional Agenda Items:
 - a. None
- III. Meeting Schedules
 - a. Commission on the Future of Instructional Delivery meetings fall 2005 - review of meeting dates.
 - September 30, 2005; 10:00-12:00; G11 Boone
 - November 11, 2005; 3:00-5:00; G11 Boone
 - December 16, 2005; 3:00-5:00; G11 Boone
- IV. Review of Materials Distributed:
 - a. Agenda Topics
 - b. Minutes for the September 30, 2005 meeting
- V. Topics of Discussion:

With reference to the recommendations document, there is some overlap in the issues identified. The Provost asked the Commission to reflect on the possibility if conversely there are any issues that have not been brought up at all.

The discussion focus was on main points for the final report brought forth by the various subcommittees.

- a. The following points were brought up during the discussion: "On-Campus Subcommittee Highlights:"
 - The Subcommittee remarked that a better analysis of data would allow for better decision-making. They stated that they were not able to observe

scheduling patterns for classes (MWF versus TTh, evening versus daytime, etc.), due to lack of sufficient data. The Provost responded that these data should be easier to read now as they have been refined.

- They also wanted to declare the next academic year (2006-2007) to be a year for coming together as faculty to look at new trends in education and instructional delivery. This would be a theme for the whole year, bringing together faculty from different disciplines.
- The Subcommittee determined that they needed to have further examinations of the relationship between on-campus delivery, and distance learning off-campus. This information needs to be communicated to more of the on-campus faculty, so they don't perceive the off-campus structure as a threat to what they do, but just as an alternative. The more correct information that can be presented, the more misconceptions can be cleared up.
- The Subcommittee would have liked to have had more student input into the process.
- The Subcommittee was asked if they considered the issue of greater support for weekend and evening courses, such as making food available to students during those times. It was remarked that if there were a full cohort of students at those times, then it would be possible to extend these services to them.
 - The Subcommittee recommended supporting students in as many ways as possible in these alternate time schedules. Later hours for opening food services in the building was one suggestion. Another was to help demystify courses offered through CE with better information, like having more information booths and doing a better job of explaining to students what it means to take courses off-campus. Offering transportation to the Eagle Crest was also suggested.
- It was suggested that this Subcommittee's recommendation on this topic could be submitted by the Commission as a whole. For example, using Fridays and Saturdays for block scheduling so non-traditional students can have greater flexibility, and offering services to students during these times. Whether this scheduling configuration falls under CE or not, the important thing is to provide this flexibility. However, the support for these students is very important.
- It was suggested that Continuing Education change its name as a means of helping students understand how it fits in with non-CE courses. It was suggested that "continuing education" has the connotation of courses that are outside of academia, like basket weaving or CEUs. Changing the name would help demystify it for students and faculty; "lifelong learning" was a suggested alternative. This course of action had been suggested in another venue in the context of splitting credit and non-credit offerings through CE. It's not necessary to split them, but if changing the name helps how things are presented, doing so would be beneficial and not detrimental to the non-credit programs.
- Many EMU facilities are not being used to capacity, and non-credit courses could be offered there.
- The recommendation that students need to have communicated to them that courses are available on and off campus, and that they can all contribute towards degree completion should be taken to the CE Advisory Committee.

- b. The following points were brought up during the discussion: “Online and Distance Education Subcommittee Highlights:”
- Develop standards and definitions for the different sorts of online and enhanced courses, applying the e-learning standards.
 - Keep EMU at the forefront and ahead of other universities.
 - The Subcommittee felt very strongly about the issue of compensation; the university should not go in the direction of forcing people to teach on line.
 - Maintain and improve the current support system.
 - Indicate in the report that the majority of the Subcommittee was in favor of supporting eCollege as the delivery system of choice on campus.
 - Look at Department Evaluation Documents (DEDs) and Department Input Documents (DIDs) for information on departmental course delivery.
 - Though the Subcommittee was focused on faculty in their conversations about compensation, it was pointed out that offering greater compensation might involve altering what students are charged for those courses.
 - It was mentioned that the Board of Regents has allowed online courses to be charged in-state tuition, plus a fee. Students place greater importance on convenience than cost, though if they were charged out-of-state tuition, there would definitely be repercussions. This is a question that should resurface for future consideration.
 - Benchmarking regarding the costs of online courses should be done periodically – in fact, that is how the costs are arrived at now. The cost of eCollege is factored in, along with what other universities are charging.
 - It was observed that EMU was on the leading edge of online education, with a purely voluntary model. More departments are willing to incorporate online courses as part of a regular faculty load, though we would potentially lose a lot of instructors if it were taken out of overload.
 - Standards for sound pedagogy for an online course can be set; for example, the University of Maryland has created a good rubric for evaluating the quality of its online courses. The rubric has to be somewhat flexible to accommodate the variety of programs that can be offered. We need to consider the tradeoffs between quantity and quality, and if we offer compensation, we need to hold people accountable for a certain quality.
 - There should be some methodology of quality, but not so that it creates two classes of faculty on campus. This sort of qualitative scrutiny is not done in all areas of instruction.
 - The Subcommittee agrees with the spirit of evaluating quality, but nobody is currently in a position to evaluate DEDs across campus. It is first necessary to understand the real difference across departments. A recommendation in an educational mode might be more constructive, in terms of evaluation and how it fits in different departments.
 - The minimum load for a full-time lecturer is 5 courses. There are full-time lecturers who need other employment out side of EMU to make ends meet. We shouldn’t penalize instructors who volunteer to take on teaching online and all the extra work that entails; they do this with high standards in mind.
 - When faculty do fall short, how can they be helped to come up to standards? The e-learning standards do not deal with quality of pedagogy. Also, who does the evaluation? People who do not teach on line courses are expected to evaluate on-line instructors fairly. A recommendation to establish a

mechanism by which people improve their courses, not establish rigid standards, was suggested

- This sounds like something that should be worked out by curriculum committees. You can't have a campus-wide delivery of anything. The current system is not structured, though there are standards that can be applied to globally to any course.
 - The Commission is leery of any recommendations that prescribe a specific vendor or name brand application. A company can go out of business, or a next iteration of a product can be a significant improvement, etc.
 - However, eliminating eCollege would jeopardize our online courses program. It has become the vehicle of choice on campus because of its ease of use and success as a course management and delivery system.
 - Though the majority of the Subcommittee felt that eCollege should be the system of choice at the beginning of the investigation, as well as at the end, the bigger issue is that there are eight different support systems on campus. It would be advisable to develop a balanced way of looking at this to determine which mix of products will best fit the strategy of the university, also bearing in mind that whichever package is chosen for course delivery, EMU will need to provide support for both students and faculty. All our entirely online courses use the same delivery system, which is very advantageous.
 - The Budget and Operations Subcommittee had a concern about the cost of having all these different systems, and was in favor of consolidation.
 - The Provost suggested reframing this recommendation to say that the university should examine this array of products with an eye to having sufficient support for faculty and students, and the highest quality. The Provost observed in the spirit of openness that he intends to bring in some neutral experts to advise on this issue.
 - With reference to standards and definitions, the Subcommittee noted that teaching has been changed by the necessity of being tied to the computer. Some people have considered using instant messaging for office hours, when dealing with a remotely located body of students, for example. This also brings up the idea of office hours at off-campus sites, and how to handle that.
 - This discussion diverted to the subject of advising. Though fully automated advising can be done, student persistence is related to having a direct relationship with an advisor or faculty member, and has huge repercussions for long-distance instruction.
 - A new method of communication that is cheaper and more attractive to students is voice-over-IP mobile phone.
 - The recommendation is that the campus needs to consider new ways of communicating.
 - This report can issue some things that are contractual and would help with negotiations down the road.
- c. The following points were brought up during the discussion: "Innovations Subcommittee Highlights:"
- This Subcommittee revised their position from May due to some changes on campus in the interim, namely the creation of the Center for Innovative Pedagogy. This would offer a think tank opportunity for faculty who could be assigned release time or fellowships to look at innovative ways of delivering instruction. There needs to be some sort of formal mechanism on

- campus in which faculty can do innovative things for instructional delivery, placed in the CIP but in collaboration with the Faculty Development Center.
- Graduate students with teaching responsibilities can also be included in any workshops that arise out of this arrangement.
- d. The following points were brought up during the discussion: “Organization and Budget Models Subcommittee Highlights:”
- This Subcommittee’s first recommendation has to do with overall organization. Members came to the conclusion that the programs and products need to be decentralized and generated from the departments, and be truly embedded in the operations of Academic Affairs, and that delivery be done from a decentralized place. We have the type of infrastructure that can support CE from the colleges and departments, so let’s continue to function as we have in the past from that regard.
 - The Subcommittee felt strongly that CE needs to remain part of Academic Affairs, both for budgeting and revenue-generating purposes.
 - The third point brought up is that moving a program off campus as we do is not economically feasible, even though the department would benefit greatly from that. Academic Affairs as a whole has some provision for accommodating these sorts of things; it can be run though CE without them being penalized if it is not successful. There are some circumstances under which things that are good for CE are not good for the rest of the university, and vice versa.
 - An example is the study abroad program. It’s not cost-effective, but we want these experiences to be available for our students. It’s mission-driven, not revenue-driven. The Detroit center will not be self-sufficient, but that’s also mission-driven.
 - It was mentioned that at the moment, CE must operate within an accounting format that covers direct but not opportunity costs, and has to react rigidly to those accounting norms. Permitting more flexibility would be good; revenue is generated that CE doesn’t get, so even if the program is viable, it is potentially not viable for them.
 - Even though the off-campus sites should not necessarily be held to these rigid accounting formats, planning for the sites needs to be better articulated and measured.
 - It’s important to keep CE’s entrepreneurial, responsive nature. From a faculty perspective, it can be the only way to try something new. However, we are displaying some conflicting values that should be addressed, i.e. faculty pay in CE is low.
 - Revenue sharing was one of this Subcommittee’s recommendations that has already been put into effect. It is a step in the right direction, though it is hoped that amounts will increase. The Subcommittee’s distribution of resources was different than that which was actually done; they came up with the percentages through debate, taking actual monetary amounts into consideration along with how to keep incentives in place while still generating CE revenue.
 - Another recommendation is that decisions about changes in courses & programs need to come from faculty. This should be done consistently in each department, as much as possible given the institutional structure.
 - Another recommendation referred to the “windshield time”; a more equitable and consistent formula for compensating faculty should be arrived at.

- e. The following points were brought up during the discussion: “Concluding Thoughts About the Final Report:”
- The Off-Campus Subcommittee is still completing their work, but their report is forthcoming.
 - The Commission was asked to consider the array of recommendations in the report, and whether anything that ought to be considered is being left out. The Subcommittees did an excellent job focusing on their respective topics, but are there areas not covered by any of them that are being missed? The Provost requested that if anyone can identify an area that has not been brought up by the Subcommittees, to please let him know for distribution to the group for consideration. Any critique of observations, language, etc. can be sent to him for forwarding to the Writing Subcommittee.
 - One issue mentioned was not to lose the concept that we have the same services off-campus as on. As students start doing more and more fully online courses, they will need online support. This support might take the form of a virtual service desk.
 - Another consideration is to arrive at a description of who the students at EMU are. The student body is shifting, and perhaps the report needs to recommend further study of whom the real EMU student is. Things to consider include: what is the non-traditional base, and what do those students need? We also don't have a grip on what the technology needs on campus are. We need two huge university surveys to collect these data.
 - We should be able to retrieve these data from Banner.
 - We need a rolling questionnaire specific to the semester (i.e. spring/summer versus fall/winter) which forces students to answer questions before they can complete their online registration. This could gather data on students' preferences for scheduling, understanding of CE, etc. However, we need to understand who the student at EMU is going to be as well. We don't want to make recommendations for the student of the future based on who the student is now.
 - This would tie in with the Return to Learn initiative and would be a selling point for the university in Lansing.

VI. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Akosua Slough
Recording Secretary