



University of Massachusetts
Amherst

362 Whitmore Administration Building
University of Massachusetts
181 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01003-9313

Office of the Provost

Voice: 413.545.2554
Fax: 413.577.3980
www.umass.edu/provost

MEMORANDUM

TO: Task Force on Instructional Technologies on the Campus
FROM: Charlena Seymour, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor
DATE: November 10, 2003
SUBJECT: Charge and Charter

Background: The UMass Amherst campus is currently the beneficiary of a variety of applications of instructional technologies to the support instruction and student learning. These range from the use of the Internet to enhance on-campus courses by delivering content, grading homework, and enhancing communication among the students and with the instructor, to the use of wireless devices in lecture halls to engage students and to assess student comprehension.

These various applications of instructional technologies stem from an equally varied set of initial requirements, and have been developed by a variety of initiatives over the years. Many applications are already highly successful and offer considerable promise for still greater success with further development. Thus, many are continuing to use funds garnered from various sources, both external and on-campus, to perfect, enhance, and expand their use. In some cases these efforts have resulted in the development of intellectual property whose potential value is considerable.

It is undeniable that these activities are of considerable value to the campus, as many of them have affected increases in instructional quality and reductions in unit instructional cost. The recent budget exigencies, however, have focused attention on these activities. Questions have been raised about the coordination of the various instructional technologies used at the University--both for on-campus and off-campus courses--the appropriateness of their funding levels, as well as the appropriateness of the funding sources and the management lines to which they report.

The purpose of this task force is to address these questions and provide recommendations concerning the manner in which these activities should go forward on the campus.

Scope: The Task Force is to address all instructional technology support for improved teaching and enhanced learning on the campus. Specifically included are:

- Activities intended to effect improvements in quality and efficiency in delivery of course materials both in and out of the classroom.
- Activities intended to improve classroom communication between students and instructors.
- Activities intended to facilitate such non-classroom activities as homework acquisition and submission, and examination grading.
- Development and exploitation of intellectual property related to instructional technology used to support teachers and assist students.
- Campus-funded research aimed at developing and evaluating prototype instructional technology systems for improved teaching and enhanced learning.
- The implications of the on-campus use of instructional technology on the off-campus use of instructional technology.

CHARGE: The Task Force is thus charged with inquiring into the extent and nature of instructional technology on the campus, and with delivering a set of recommendations about:

- How to create a campus vision on the role of instructional technology.
- How these instructional technologies might be expanded, integrated, reorganized, downsized or discontinued.
- How technical synergy and interoperability can be promoted and harmful incompatibilities avoided.
- How such organizational aspects as funding and reporting structures might be altered to improve efficiency and quality of service.
- Providing faculty, students, and staff the assurance that successful instructional technologies will be maintained and supported.
- Handling the need for change in the current mix of instructional technologies.
- Pursuing strategies for investment and intellectual property development in instructional technology.

SCHEDULE: The Task Force is asked to submit a final report on its activities by 15 June 2004 and at least one interim report on or before 27 February 2004.