Sen. Doc. No. 05-040

2004-2005

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ONLINE LEARNING

Presented at the
642nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
May 16, 2005

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Rick Adrion
Donna Baron
Carol Bigelow
Marilyn Billings, Co-Chair
Marilyn Blaustein
Wayne Burleson
Tony Butterfield
Ann Cary
John Cunningham
J. Michael Davis
Victoria Dowling
John Dubach
Sharon Fross
Tamatha Gaumnitz
Copper Giloth
David Hart
John Hird
M. Christine King
Laetitia LaFollette
Donna LeCourt
Matthew Mattingly
Ernest May
John McCarthy
Lori Mestre
Sara McComb, Co-Chair
Richard Rogers
Mei-Yau Shih
Martha Stassen
Pam Trafford
Peg Wherry
Richard Yuretich
Fred Zinn

2004-2005 Annual Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Online Learning
May 16, 2005

The Faculty Senate established an Ad Hoc Committee on Online Learning in September, 2004 with the charge to:

- Oversee academic standards and issues of quality assurance with respect to all UMA undergraduate and graduate courses taught online or in hybrid format.
- Research issues of comparative outcomes assessment with respect to traditional, hybrid, and online courses and programs.
- Recommend policy changes, as appropriate, to the Graduate Council and the Academic Matters Council.
- Advise the campus administration with respect to the optimal technological infrastructure appropriate to effective online and technologically assisted instruction, including the University Library.
- Advise the campus administration with respect to the provision of "how-to" materials and instructional design assistance for new online instructors.
- Advise the campus administration, the Graduate Council, the Academic Matters Council, the General Education Council, and the Undergraduate Education Council with respect to issues of online learning.

The Committee of the Whole has met six times during the 2004-2005 academic year:

- September 20, 2004: The Committee received the charge from Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate. Marilyn Billings and Sara McComb were elected Co-Chairs and Tamatha Gaumnitz was elected Secretary of the Committee at this meeting. The Committee also established four subcommittees based on their charge: Academic Standards and Security, Comparative Outcomes, Infrastructure and Library, and Instructional Design.
- October 18, 2004: Sharon Fross, Vice Provost Outreach and Director of Continuing Education, spoke to the Committee about her experiences with Penn State University's World Campus.
- November 16, 2004: David Gray, UMassOnline CEO, and his staff met with the Committee to present an overview of the UMassOnline organization, their strategic plan, and the ways in which they can work with the Committee in a manner that will be mutually beneficial.
- February 8, 2005: The Committee held a brainstorming session to establish expectations for the Committee as a Whole and the subcommittees.
- March 8, 2005: Andy Churchill, Assistant Director of the Center for Education Policy, presented the summary findings of his report on *Ensuring Quality in Online Higher Education.*
- April 12, 2005: Steven Tello, Associate Director of Distance Learning, University of Massachusetts Lowell, presented an overview of the way in which his organization supports distance learning.

In addition to the Committee-as-a-Whole meetings, the subcommittees have been working to complete a needs assessment and environmental scan relating to their respective charges. Their reports are included as attachments to this status report for review (Attachment I: Academic Standards and Security; Attachment II: Comparative Outcomes; Attachment III: Infrastructure and Library; Attachment IV: Instructional Design). Each report includes an overview of their needs assessment and environmental scans, their accomplishments to date, and their goals for next year.

Based on the Committee-as-a-Whole and subcommittee work that has transpired this academic year, the ACOL makes the following recommendations to the Faculty Senate:

- Develop and promote a consistent set of terms to more accurately describe the use of online technologies for teaching. "Online" has many different meanings; and traditional classroom instruction has many different names when compared to online instruction (e.g., "in-class," "face-to-face," "residential," "on-ground"). Further, terminology is needed to clearly describe the different ways that on-campus classes "blend" both techniques and reflects the extent to which each is used within the class (e.g., "100% online" or "entirely classroom"). By focusing on the proportion of online and classroom activities when describing classes, faculty will have a better sense of the range that is available. If faculty describe their classes by describing the proportions of online and classroom activities, students will then be able to select classes based on the type of classroom experience they prefer.
- Streamline and develop better consistency in reporting of various types of online courses, including:
    - Create descriptions of various levels of hybrid courses for SPIRE.
    - Clarify record-keeping/reporting issues that may be different for online courses as compared to traditional courses (e.g., issues of instructor of record).
    - Develop systematic reports of online course activity for institution-wide reporting purposes.
    - Consider changes to course proposal process for web-enhanced courses (to better understand how much and what type of technology is being used in courses); specifically, the course description paragraphs that go to the Registrar's office.
- Create a central source for faculty seeking information about teaching technologies. A simple, quick solution would be a Web site; but, in the long run, this source should incorporate print materials, online resources, and face-to-face events. An editorial structure and schedule should be in place that ties together content from the major support area (Center for Teaching, the Library, and OIT's Academic Computing) and provides for maintenance and updates.

ATTACHMENT I: ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND SECURITY ANNUAL REPORT

Subcommittee Members
Tony Butterfield (Management), Ann Cary-Chair (Nursing/Public Health and Health Sciences), John Hird (Public Policy), Donna LeCourt (English), John McCarthy (Linguistics), and Peg Wherry (Continuing Education)

Subcommittee Charge
Oversee academic standards and issues of quality assurance and security with respect to all UMA undergraduate and graduate courses and programs taught online or in hybrid form.

Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan Results
Documents from the UMA Center for Teaching as well as national documents on quality in distance education were reviewed. The committee examined the overarching question: Do online courses and programs yield a high quality learning experience, at least equal to the learning achieved in traditional face-to-face courses and programs?

Subcommittee Accomplishments to Date
From this environmental scan, the subcommittee agreed upon four clusters with priorities generated within each grouping:

Support for Faculty

- Orientation (not on campus since faculty may be off campus and distant), pedagogy training, instructional design, faculty "cafes" for conversation and sharing about experiences, support minimum requirements, and timelines for course installation prior to beginning of each semester.
- Clear agreements about Intellectual Property rights.
- Clear university recognition of workload credit and calculation for online courses, incorporation of online teaching in promotion and tenure reviews, and compensation policies for development and teaching of courses.
- Ongoing evaluation of curricular effectiveness through "continuous improvement" teams who disseminate information on "BEST PRACTICES" and demonstrate a supportive network for online faculty and committees reviewing the delivery mechanisms.
- Ensuring that online teaching is conducted mostly by UMA faculty and not adjuncts.

Support for Students

- Quality improvements in registration, financial aid, writing center support, and library services for students. The process should be seamless whether on campus or online.
- Processes to address the intellectual integrity of student work and to abate the occurrence of "cheating."
- Student orientation to online delivery and effective technical support for all processes involved - from application to graduation.

Support for Programs/Curriculum

- Clarify processes for instituting new online programs and sources of market analysis, financial, and advertising support for online programs.
- Clarify the standards to be used as metrics for determining quality in online education and programs.
- Articulate and compare systems for course evaluations.
- Clarify policy on credit ratios of online to on-campus courses for degree programs.
- Articulate how online courses meet the writing component of the general education requirement.
- Identify administrative needs of departments/schools with online programs.

Systems Accountability

- Clarify the developmental, financial, technical and marketing relationship between UMASSOnline (UMO) and campus programs.
- Clarify the accountability for operations and delivery of promises for courseware, learning management systems, registration, accounting and evaluation activities among UMO, UMADCE and the programs.
- Select and plan process for measuring online programs against specific external measures.
- Clarify the communication, governance, taxation, and advisory responsibilities among entities.

Subcommittee Goals for Next Year

After a discussion by full committee of which priorities fall within the purview of this subcommittee and which priorities are consistent with the assignments of the other three committees, the Academic Standards and Security subcommittee will work on the priorities relegated to them.

ATTACHMENT II: COMPARATIVE OUTCOMES ANNUAL REPORT

Subcommittee Members
Rick Adrion (Computer Science), Marilyn Blaustein (Institutional Research), Christine King (Nursing), Richard Rogers (Provost's Office), Mei-Yau Shih (Center for Teaching), and Martha Stassen (Academic Planning and Assessment)

Subcommittee Charge
Research issues of comparative outcomes assessment with respect to traditional, hybrid, and online courses and programs.

Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan Results
Proposed Role/Activities:

1. What is the context for online learning – who's teaching, who's taking the courses, what are enrollments like, what departments are most active, etc.?
2. What are the challenges to assessment of courses?
   a. What are the right categories of courses – define hybrid, enhances. (What about video courses?)
   b. How are courses identified on the UMA System, are there better ways to systematically identify these courses?
3. What does the literature recommend, what are the issues nationally? (e.g., appropriate benchmarks, optimal class size, etc.)
4. What is currently being done at UMA – both in terms of research and in terms of tools that could be used to assess online courses?

Subcommittee Accomplishments to Date
Our committee focused on items 1) and 2) above for this first year. We developed the set of definitions of online courses found in Table 1.

Subcommittee Goals for Next Year
We will focus on items 3) and 4) under proposed role/activities.

TABLE 1: Online Course Categories: Emerging Definitions

Course type	Online*	Hybrid*	Web-Enhanced	Video & Electronic Media
Definition	Entirely online: Students access a Website (anywhere and anytime) for course instructions, lectures, assignments, and to communicate with the instructor and with students.	Courses that use some level of online instruction in combination with face-to-face instructional activity. Different Hybrid levels (perhaps designated as Hybrid 1, Hybrid 2, etc.) exist, reflecting various balances between online and face-to-face instructional activity. The distinction between Hybrid and Web-Enhanced courses is that in Hybrid courses the amount of traditional classroom time is reduced.	Use of web as a part of a traditional course. Can include basic information about the course like syllabus, session outlines, etc. or may extend to using the web as an interactive instructional tool through enhanced communication, assignment distribution and collection, etc.	Courses taught via remote interactive video and audio from an origination site to one or more receiving sites or via streaming media technologies. A traditional course is taped and off-site students watch it as video Or, content is delivered via disks, CD, DVD, videocassettes to students. Includes both synchronous and asynchronous instruction
Challenges/ Issues	▪ Does one face-to-face orientation meeting at the beginning of the semester make a course a hybrid?	▪ See note at left – where does entirely online end and hybrid begin?	▪ In this category, the web is a pedagogical tool rather than the primary method of instruction	▪ When is streaming video constitute an online course? Does it have to do with how assignments are designed? Whether there are online interactive components or simply streaming video?
Identifiable on system?	▪ Yes	▪ Very limited	▪ No	▪ In some cases

*These are the two types of courses that appear to be most related to the Ad Hoc Committee's initial charge.

ATTACHMENT III: INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

Subcommittee Members
Donna Baron (Five Colleges), Mike Davis (Library), Copper Giloth (OIT and Art), Dave Hart (Computer Science), Pam Trafford (Management), and Peg Wherry (Continuing Education))

Subcommittee Charge
Advise the campus administration with respect to the optimal technological infrastructure appropriate to effective online and technologically-assisted instruction, including the University Library.

Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan Results
Our committee started meeting in March 2005 and we are still in the process of detailing our charge and gathering data. To date we have created the following list of the information we need to gather:

- access to resources
  - software
  - video
  - training
  - references
- faculty support
- video streaming and H.323
- single sign-on for users across systems
- LMS and SIS systems talking to each other (e.g., WebCT campus and Vista, OWL, SIS)
- help desk issues when there are multiple Help Desks
- how to share tech files
- UMass system level sharing up & down

Subcommittee Accomplishments to Date
During March and early April, we gathered detailed information about online teaching tools at UMA. Specifically, we collected detailed statistics about **WebCT CE** (used by residential UMA courses), **OWL** (used by residential UMA courses and others), **DUCK**, (used by residential UMA Biology courses), **eReserves** (from the Library) (used by residential UMA courses), **Prometheus** (used by UMA Online courses and others) and **WebCT Vista** (used by UMA Online courses and others). Table 2 includes a summary of the information collected to date.

Subcommittee Goals for Next Year and Recommendations to Faculty Senate
The primary goal of this subcommittee is to finish processing the data in the above chart. (There is a 52-page Excel spreadsheet behind this data with faculty names and courses; a sample or the full spreadsheet can be attained from the committee). In looking over this immense spreadsheet, it appears that most faculty and graduate students only use one of the five platforms.

TABLE 2: Online Tools in Use at UMA - Fall 2003 to Spring 2005

	Continuing Education*	DUCK	OWL*	WebCT*	eReserves
Spring 2005					
Departments	28	3	14 (est)	59	41
Courses	90	9	60 (est)	251	169
Course Sections	90	9	91 (est)	308	
Instructors	90	10	73 (est)	216	132
Seats	1,690	1,529	9,639 (est)	15,971	10,843
Students				10,870	
Docs / Views					2,515 / not avail
Winter 2005					
Departments	16				
Courses	37				
Course Sections	37				
Instructors	37				
Seats	833				
Students					
Fall 2004					
Departments	23	2	19	66	43
Courses	74	6	56 (est)	277	192
Course Sections	74	6	86 (est)	321	
Instructors	74	7	77 (est)	214	152
Seats	1,492	1,261	10,846	19,092	11,992
Students				12,514	
Docs / Views					2,883 / 149,874
Summer 2004					
Departments	25		3		
Courses	105		6		
Course Sections	105		7		
Instructors	105		5		
Seats	1949		226		
Students					
Spring 2004					
Departments	22	3	14	52	44
Courses	68	6	60	174	205
Course Sections	68	6	91	216	
Instructors	68	8	73	162	165
Seats	1,396	1,255	9,639	10,465	11,117
Students				8,129	
Docs / Views					2,503 / 149,874
Winter 2004					
Departments	13		2		
Courses	23		4		
Course Sections	23		4		
Instructors	23		3		
Seats	597		87		
Students					
Fall 2003					
Departments	16	1	18	41	35
Courses	59	9	56	110	136
Course Sections	71	9	86	131	
Instructors	59	9	77	103	105
Seats	1,231	2,256	10,087	6,632	7,757
Students					
Docs / Views					1,970 / 90,929

TABLE 2 NOTES

Notes on Categories:

- **Seats:** a "seat" is a student enrolled in a single class. A single student may have multiple "seats" if they are enrolled in more than one class using the tool.
- **Students:** individual students with access to the tool (eliminates duplicate "seats").
- **Docs/Views:** "Docs" refers to the number of documents available through the tool and "Views" refers to the number of times these documents have been accessed.

Notes on Tools:

Continuing Education:

- Numbers do not appear to distinguish UMassOnline courses from on-campus courses registered through Continuing Education.
- No details available about the CMS used (Prometheus, WebCT Vista, or other)
- Do not have instructor names; have assumed no duplicate instructors.
- Instructor numbers include both faculty and graduate student instructors.
- Data for non–credit Life Long Learning courses are not included in this chart.

OWL

- Fall 2004 data estimated by duplicating Fall 2003 data.
- Spring 2005 data estimated by duplicating Spring 2004 data.

WebCT Campus Edition:

- WebCT Spring 2005 data does not include courses using WebCT for SPIRE grading.
- Instructor count includes both faculty and graduate student instructors.

Data Provided By:

- OWL data provided by David Hart and Cindy Stein of CCBIT .
- Continuing Education data provided by Peg Wherry, Director of Academic Programs & Instruction, Continuing Education.
- DUCK data provided by Steven Brewer, Director of BCRC.
- WebCT Campus Edition data provided by Copper Giloth, Doris Peterson, Fred Zinn - Academic Computing/OIT.
- eReserve usage data provided by Emily Boss of the University Library - Research & Instructional Services.

Additional Online Course Activities for which we do not have data:

- Web Sites (including BCRC, OIT, Other)
- Publisher Sites
- Adequate measures of the 200+ proprietary database products that the library has licensed for campus-wide access. This year's library budget for the database collection is $1.6 million. This expenditure delivers 17,000 full-text online journals to the campus as well as electronic books, scholarly reports, conference proceedings and data collections. For example, the Isenberg School of Management has access to the entire library in electronic format. We need to quantify this in many ways but at present the Library's support of the academic infrastructure is not properly quantified.

ATTACHMENT IV: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN ANNUAL REPORT

Subcommittee Members
Victoria Dowling (UWW), Lori Mestre (Library), Richard Yuretich (Geosciences), Fred Zinn (OIT)

Subcommittee Charge
Advise the campus administration with respect to the provision of "how-to" materials and instructional design assistance for new online instructors.

Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan Results
Our committee started meeting in February, 2005. We began by constructing a set of topics for consideration, including:

- Developing mechanisms for sharing best practices
- Planning for improvements in communication about available resources
- Identifying resources needed to do instructional design
- Understanding faculty training and support needs
- Recommending faculty training and support programs

We are still in the process of conducting our needs assessment. To date, we discovered the following (a more complete assessment and report is in progress):

- Information for faculty about the tools and support for online teaching is distributed across campus in different offices. Without a central source for information, most faculty rely on word-of-mouth from students and colleagues to discover what is available and who to talk to about it.
- Compared to faculty at other institutions, UMA Faculty feel they must bear more responsibility for incorporating technologies into their teaching (purchasing equipment, learning the technology, building content, and troubleshooting problems.) For some, this is the primary barrier to using online technologies.
- Specific uses of technology seem to separate into distinct patterns depending on size of class, discipline, and educational goals (the most common being the use of online technology to help manage large classes). We are currently working to group these patterns so that support and training can be better targeted to meet specific faculty goals.

Subcommittee Accomplishments to Date

- Reviewed available resources for faculty listed on UMA Web sites. We are still compiling the complete list; however, the research process led us to our first recommendation: that UMA needs a centralized resource for faculty on this topic.
- Began "best practices" review of resources available at other institutions. So far we only have preliminary inspirational impressions.
- Held one discussion with faculty to discuss their goals and the status of support for instructors currently using online elements in their classes. We are seeing patterns already in what motivates faculty to adopt these technologies.

- Planned (then postponed) discussion with faculty on the status of support for instructors who have yet to use online elements in their classes. We have asked the larger committee for names of faculty who would be interested in participating in this discussion.
- Collaborated with the Infrastructure and Library Subcommittee on several surveys and requests for information from faculty and providers of online tools. Results are still coming in and the data is still being processed.

Subcommittee Goals for Next Year

- Compile list of resources describing best practices at UMA and other institutions.
- Complete faculty surveys and discussions. Compile results. Use results to categorize the different goals faculty have when adopting online technologies.
- Identify goal-oriented "packages" of training and support materials that would need to be developed for faculty who are new to UMA or new to using online technologies.
- Draft proposal for a central repository of information for faculty considering or currently using online components for their classes.