

**Ad Hoc Committee on Online Learning  
Minutes for Sept. 18, 2007**

In attendance: Ernie May, Matthew Mattingly, Fred Zinn, Pam Trafford, John McCarthy, Carol Bigelow, Dave Hart, Richard Rogers, Mei-Yau Shih, Martha Stassen, Marilyn Blausten, Victoria Dowlina, Jane Miller, Marilyn Billings, Sara McComb, Richard Yuretich, Megan Turner

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Marilyn Billings at 1:00 p.m.

Nominations for new co-chair

Jane Miller will replace Sara McComb as ACOL co-chair.

Approval of May 1, 2007 minutes

The minutes were approved.

Presentation and discussion of the ACOL 2006-2007 annual report

Martha Stassan reviewed the Report from the Comparative Outcomes Subcommittee. The study concluded that, on average, students preferred face-to-face (F2F) to online instruction; however, Stassan stressed that these results are preliminary and may not prove significant. She also stated that it was difficult to control for certain variables. For example, the population of students enrolled in online versus F2F courses differs substantially. The study results also show there is no difference between online and F2F test scores.

ACOL members asked several questions in response to the findings:

1. Is there a way to evaluate online versus F2F undergraduate courses, omitting non-traditional students?
2. Is there a difference between the instructors teaching F2F and those teaching online? Perhaps online instructors are new and simply need to perfect material?
3. How should we proceed from here?

Review of Joint Task Force on Online Learning final report

A copy of the final report can be found at: [http://www.umass.edu/senate/adhoc/Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/senate/adhoc/Final_Report.pdf). Please review and bring questions to Thursday's meeting.

Report on Faculty Senate Committee of the Whole panel on Online Learning Sept. 20. Panelists include Sara McComb (ACOL), Ted Daters (JFTOL), Richard Rogers (update on summer progress and testing center)

At Thursday's Faculty Senate meeting, Sara McComb will report on last year's significant accomplishments. Last year, the committee: developed Spire coding, conducted preliminary comparative assessments, drafted of talking points, and outlined support materials and services

for faculty. McComb said she will also discuss the future of ACOL. In the next few years the ad hoc committee will address relevant issues discussed in the Joint Task Force on Online Learning's report. They will also attempt to incorporate online learning and teaching into standing Faculty Senate committees and councils.

Richard Rogers also reported to the ACOL on the Provost's response to the JTOL report and this summer's progress. According to Rogers, Provost Seymour supports the JTOL findings, which report that online courses should be treated in the same manner as F2F ones. The Provost's Office is also in the process of hiring an instructional designer to work in the Center for Teaching. A teaching commons will be constructed on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor of the library and will be a facility staffed with OIT student and experts to answer instructors' information technology questions. Rogers is still looking for a location for a testing center. He hoped to build a center, which would have included 400 work stations, in the basement of the library; however, due to building constraints, the proposal was not approved.

ACOL members had several questions in response to Rogers's report:

1. Why does a testing center need to accommodate 400 students?
2. Are global testing centers still a possibility?
3. What about cheating on online tests?

Rogers stated that the testing center would be used for both F2F and online courses. A testing with a 400-student capacity would be able to accommodate an entire class at one time rather than forcing the instructor to monitor several sections of students at different times/locations. Rogers also stated that there is a global testing center in Springfield; however students must pay to use this facility.

Martha Stassen addressed the question regarding cheating, reiterating that study results concluded there was no difference between online and F2F courses.

### Brainstorm of year's agenda

Jane Miller suggested ACOL take a further look at online versus F2F assessments. In response, Martha Stassen discussed the difficulty in comparing online to F2F courses. According to Stassen, ACOL should address the success of online courses without comparing them to F2F ones.

The committee also suggested looking at workload issues and whether online courses will be included as part of instructors' workload. Members are interested in clarification on intellectual property rights, a presentation on revenue sharing models and outreach fees, and a demonstration of Wiki. Another member also suggested inviting students to attend meetings in order to learn more on their perspective.

### Future meetings

ACOL will meet:

October 16, Campus Center 905-09  
Nov. 13, Campus Center 804-08  
Dec. 11, Campus Center 804-08