SENATE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT)
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 8, 2015

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

[In these minutes: Charge review; Academic Technologies overview.]

PRESENT: Eric Watkins, chair, Santiago Fernandez-Gimenez, Kate McCready, Carlos Soria, John Butler, Kate Martin, Bernard Gulacheck, Robert Rubinyi, Nancy Carpenter, Sean Conner, Michelle Driessen, Geoffrey Ghose, Yoichi Watanabe, Madeline Doak

GUESTS: Drew LaChapelle, service director, Academic Tech. Tools; Mike Williams, service director, Video & Conferencing; Donalee Attardo, manager, Academic Technologies; Keith Brown, service director, Academic Technologies; Chris Ament, senior director, Academic Technologies and User Support; Chris Grantham, chief of staff, Office of the VP for IT

REGRETS: Karen Monson

ABSENT: Diane Willow, Benton Schnabel

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Professor Watkins called the meeting to order and had all committee members introduce themselves.

2. CHARGE REVIEW

Professor Watkins reviewed the charge with members and the minutes of the last meeting of the prior year, including mention of the desire of Academic Technologies as an area of focus for the upcoming year.

3. OVERVIEW FROM OIT

Bernard Gulachek, interim vice president and chief information officer, OIT, introduced the presentation by Academic Technology Support Services. He noted that the Academic Technology team felt it would be advantageous to give the committee an understanding of what

kinds of academic technology services are available at the institution (in coordination with many partners, such as the Libraries, the Center for Education Innovation etc.).

Mr. Gulachek proceeded to give a summary of the major strategic items OIT is pursuing this year. The first initiative is Unizin, which was formed in 2014 at the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), and provides universities with a way to reach their digital learning goals. Unizin is a consortium, a concept without a product at this point. Unizin includes the ability to digitize content, bring it in to a course management tool, and extract analytics to evaluate student progress. OIT has several upcoming meetings regarding Unizin, after which they will be able to provide more details to SCIT.

The second major initiative is Canvas, a learning management system, and a companion piece to the Unizin concept.

4. FORMAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (fCOP)

Donalee Attardo, manager, Academic Technology, began with an overview of the fCOP charge and leadership. Primarily, fCOP leadership hopes to pilot a process to review and receive input on emerging academic technologies. The office is excited about moving forward.

Technology eligible to be reviewed includes both those developed at the University and those that are external to the University. Any technology not currently in use at the University is open for review. The intent of the fCOP model is to provide a vetting process and an evaluative process to see what types of technology are worth the time of deeper evaluation. There is also an assessment group that could be pulled in for certain situations, such as gathering information on how technologies have worked for both students and faculty. She reiterated that fCOPs were developed to engage as many people as possible across the institution to work collaboratively - in this case on academic technologies.

Academic Technology representatives agreed that they generally have a hard time reaching people outside the IT space. The committee thought that this might be something that could be presented to the Faculty Senate, which could then spread the word through their respective units.

When asked how system campuses can engage, Ms. Attardo stated that Bruce Reeves from the Duluth campus is involved and she is also trying to contact other individuals to reach other campuses.
A member asked whether, under the purview of the charge, there are any key policy issues that fCoP can inform. Per Drew LaChapelle, while there is nothing right now on the list that is specific, the kickoff is one place that policy issues often come up for discussion.

5. CANVAS PILOT

The Canvas learning management system is something that many peer institutions are using. Right now, at the University, 24 courses representing 22 departments are taking part in the Canvas pilot. This includes 800-900 students this semester. Staff are currently working on doing some assessment to see what tools students like and don't like. They are also working with the Usability Lab to see what sort of data can be collected. The aim is for 3,000 students to be part of the pilot in spring of 2016.

Faculty will be called to participate in Canvas sandboxes. The Canvas website (http://it.umn.edu/canvas-pilot) will provide all updates and a place to request sandbox participation, should faculty wish to do so.

To be clear, Ms. Attardo said that the pilot is happening, not because there are any problems with Moodle, but rather that IT departments must always be looking ahead. Peer institutions love Canvas so it's the job of the IT department to look at it. She added that the Google classrooms app is already in a small pilot mode and the choice has been made to continue that pilot for another term. She further stated that considerations are made as to how well new technologies integrate with current systems.

In response to questions about using multiple systems, Ms. Attardo stated that she believes it is best to have just one learning technology system. Unizin does focus its energies on Canvas but they are not opposed to the use of other tools, such as Moodle. Right now, Moodle is the University's primary content delivery tool. Canvas is and continues to be a pilot.

6. OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES

Keith Brown, service director for Academic Technology Support Services, spoke about the resources, which are system-wide and free of charge, and made available through their office.

A. Support for Teaching with Technology
Academic Technology Support Services provides consultation with faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants throughout the year. Their efforts tend to focus on questions of pedagogy, and how to teach more effectively using technology. Several times a year the office offers workshops available to the University community, based on feedback from faculty. Their most popular series has been on flipping the classroom. They also held a session on using YouTube in a course; how to publish a course; how to share it; how to create slides; how to engage remotely; and usability, universal design, and accessibility.

B. Course and Media Production
Academic Technology Support Services creates a great deal of video, as flipping the classroom is so prevalent and popular. Therefore, the office has three videographers on staff, one with an animation background. Additionally, they assist with branching scenarios, which are especially popular in the medical units. Designers on staff can assist in building course sites, and tying class goals and learning objectives to a course. Student workers are also available to help with building courses. The question was asked as to whether they have a room in which to video, and if so, the cost. Does it compete with UNITE? Mr. Brown conveyed that the services are free but one must schedule the room. Onsite shoots are also available. He added that the course and media production services do not compete with UNITE because UNITE, an online learning service, is for very specific classes offered through the College of Science and Engineering.

C. Emerging Technologies Investigation
Academic Technology Support Services investigates multiple technologies, which they encounter either through faculty interest, peer use, or published articles. They can provide cursory reviews, piloting, and collaboration (working with other offices at the University to understand who is using what, and how.) On average, approximately two or three technologies are piloted each year. Coordination of services is a large part of what they do, and they work a lot with faculty instructors, support staff, the Center for Educational Innovation, the University Libraries, the Disability Resource Center, and other units as well.

Before moving on, Mr. Brown mentioned that a recent Moodle clinic was very well received and that 67 instructors took part.

7. VIDEO CONFERENCING

Mike Williams, service director of video conferencing, presented on the variety of services available, such as lecture capture, video and web conferencing, and video hosting and streaming. The life cycle of how their office works is: capture, manage, share, deliver, track. (In regard to tracking, not a lot of tracking data is shared today but the hope is that in the next few years, more information on how tools are used will be available and shared).

Mr. Williams provided data on various video technologies usage at the University:
Google Hangouts: 10,000-12,000 meetings per month.
WebEx: More than 2,500 WebEx meetings in the last three months. (WebEx primarily serves the medical and health departments. It was launched last January as a soft launch.)
More than 8,600 hours spent meeting online in the last three months.
More than 2,000 faculty and staff have logged in and hosted meetings.

Kaltura and Moodle: More than 1,000 videos played more than 200,000 times. Average view time is about nine minutes. Approximately 13,000 videos were uploaded by students and faculty.

An Academic Technology Support Services task force met over the summer and discussed media management. The University has great tools, but faculty and students don't know how to get to the tools. The office must communicate the tools and services in a way that faculty and students understand. They must also figure out how to archive all this information in an accessible way for the audiences that need to reach them.

Mr. Williams talked about the new web conferencing system, which provides greatly enhanced capacity and functionality. He also mentioned the one-button video studios in Walter Library. These are easy to use stations for lecturing / filming/ recording. Basically, a faculty person shows up with their laptop, plugs it in, and starts filming. These studios have limited staffing, but a push of the button is all that is required to do the filming. Open houses to demonstrate the new facilities are scheduled or upcoming in both Walter Library and Rarig Center. The Rarig Center open house will be held on September 15, 1:30 – 4:00, Rarig Studio C.

8. ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY TOOLS SERVICES

Drew LaChapelle presented on the Academic Technology Support Services tools, which offers assistance with the following course management systems: Moodle, Turnitin, VoiceThread, Kaltura, and Qualtrics. The University had 100,000 unique users in Moodle, which represents 82% of enrolled students.

Around 65% of academic classes - or about 15,000 courses - use Moodle at the University. This year the University hosted MoodleMoot, which is the national Moodle conference. The University's participation raised their profile with Moodle; as a result, the University has more influence on development of the product.

In the upcoming year, the office will work with Moodle to improve the Gradebook feature, improve integration with Google, and collaborate with peer institutions to complete one major project.

Professor Watkins concluded the presentation by requesting members to think about any topics they would like to discuss in more depth this year, and to email him. The meeting then moved to Walter Library and a tour of the new Academic Technology Support Services facilities.

9: TOUR OF NEW FACILITIES

Keith Brown led the tour of the new IT facilities on the second floor of Walter Library. Before the renovation, IT support services were in multiple locations. The renovation provided an opportunity for all support services to reside in one space, which means there is broad-ranging expertise always at hand. The facilities now allow for large project teams in one of the breakout rooms. There is also a drop-in space for faculty to work with support services and workstations with access to help, and a flexible use space in the center of the offices – a place to play with new technologies or collaborate with the various departments within support services. (This play space is not a drop-in space. Faculty should make an appointment to be assured experts are available to assist them.)

Room 216 in Walter Library is the new video studio. Eighty to ninety percent of requests are lecture capture requests. This studio provides state of the art lighting, a backdrop, and professional assistance. For simple lecture capture, the studio provides a one-button push operating option. There is an annotated display and a monitor with a teleprompter. In addition, Rarig Studio C has a sound stage, and is available for more complicated requests.

Patricia Straub
University Senate Office