SENATE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT)
November 3, 2015
Minutes of the Meeting

[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: UNIZIN Update; Academic Technologies fCoP Feedback]

PRESENT: Eric Watkins (chair), Rajkumar Vyas, Sean Conner, Madeline Doak, Nancy Carpenter, Tim Nichols, Michelle Driessen, Yoichi Watanebe, Bernie Schnabel, Brandon Vanderbush, John Butler, Geoffrey Ghose, Robert Rubinyi, Kate Martin, Santiago Fernandez-Gimenez, Kate McCready

ABSENT: Karen Monsen, Diane Willow

REGRETS: Carlos Soria, Bernard Gulachek

GUESTS: Donalee Attardo, manager, Academic Technologies; Kristi Jensen, associate librarian, University Libraries; Jeff Lindgren, assistant department director, Center for Academic Innovation; Claire Stewart, associate university librarian; University Libraries

1. Welcome: Professor Eric Watkins, chair, welcomed the committee and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. UNIZIN Update: Donalee Attardo, manager, Academic Technologies, provided a status report on the UNIZIN consortium, which is a consortium of "eleven like-minded institutions facilitating the transition toward collaborative digital education." The mission of the consortium, she said, is to improve the learning experience by providing an environment built on collaboration data standards and scale. Attardo added that the statement provided by UNIZIN's founding UMN members can be found at http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/elearning /unizin.

She said that, while the consortium started out rather amorphously, initiatives and ideas are now moving along. Salient features of the UNIZIN project include a common learning infrastructure, digital tools and services selected and integrated by UNIZIN, from which members can then select. She stated that the Canvas pilot is part of the University's agreement with UNIZIN.

Attardo provided the following areas of emphasis for the consortium:

- Platform/tools: While Canvas is the consortium platform, they recently purchased Courseload - now called UNIZIN Engaged –an improved product from the Courseload some University faculty or staff may recall. It's an e-text reader platform and the University may do another pilot of this new version.
- Analytics: They would like to provide real time analytics. This is an ambitious goal, she said, but not many products are providing this opportunity.
- Content: They are still trying to figure out how to design a shared content repository. They are addressing issues of intellectual property, FERPA, and privacy. The idea is to have a larger base of data from which to make decisions and to do research.

Jeff Lindgren, assistant department director, Center for Academic Innovation, then shared current conversations and areas of explorations that the consortium is engaged in.
- Teaching and Learning Advisory Group: This group helps UNIZIN understand the priorities that support teaching and learning. One of their ideas is solutions architecture – information institutions can share with each other about the design and evaluation of different tools. The advisory group, he said, is interested in learning what faculty members are doing so they can help build the tools they need. Canvas is the first product to be used as a result of these discussions, but other pilots will come up too. The advisory group also includes an early adapter program, said Lindgren, which involves a researcher or two coming to each UNIZIN university to observe faculty in an ethnographic way, to help make decisions moving forward.

  Professor Sean Connor stated that it sounds like if Canvas is successful, the University will shift to Canvas. Attardo said that they don't know the answer to whether the University will move or not. There is no plan at this time, but it's always necessary to look at new technology. The decision to move a campus this big to a new system will not be made lightly, she said, because it will be such a large project. Attardo added that she's been through three migrations at another institution and there are many reasons for why a university might migrate. Sometimes if there is no compelling reason to move, it's just best to wait until there is a tip in the balance to make the move.

  Watkins asked why UNIZIN is separate from CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation)? Claire Stewart, associate university librarian; University Libraries, said that each institution was given the opportunity to join UNIZIN and they did not have unanimity.

- UNIZIN Engage: John Butler said that UNIZIN Engage is the content portion of UNIZIN. It is an e-text and digital content platform that enables faculty to organize, deliver, and measure interactions with both open and licensed materials. Its features

include annotating, highlighting, and notes sharing. Engage is integrated into the UNIZIN learning management system (LMS) and analytics software services, but can be integrated with other systems as well, he said, such as Moodle. The intention for Engage is to be a place that either provides access to content in a repository, or to provide access to materials out on the web.

It is possible, Butler said, that the University would run a UNIZIN Engage pilot. The question will be what UNIZIN Engage should be able to do. The following will be points of investigation for a pilot:

- o Repository of shareable content + discovery tools: what is the value
- o Annotation tools and analytics: what is the value to faculty and students
- o Accessibility features and cost of conversion
- o Bulk licensed textbooks/course content: student and faculty choice, practices and principles
- o Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI)
- o Does Digital Course Pack work translate to what the University already does? Can Engage link heterogeneous content types such as licensed content, open content, streaming media, and royalties-based materials? Butler said that right now they are observing what faculty select for course packs and they want to ensure the University has the rights to the content. If the library has already licensed the material they'll provide links, and provide assembly, packaging, and integration. They want to make certain UNIZIN Engage would integrate well with the University's current Digital Course Pack system, which produces 400 packets a year.

He added that a big part of the UNIZIN Engage intention is to provide ready-made contracts with publishers and a framework in which all students enrolled in a course would be expected to purchase a book provided by a publisher at a deeply discounted rate.

Conner said that in his experience there are two challenges with a content sharing model: 1) What content faculty are willing to share with other faculty, and 2) What materials faculty are comfortable using in their courses. It's difficult, he said, for faculty to find the time to review new materials and decide to switch from past successful course materials to new materials.

Watkins asked what it would look like to faculty if the University adopted the UNIZIN Canvas model. Attardo said that UNIZIN just provides the tools and the University could choose if they wish to use those tools. Canvas is just one of those tools. But, added Stewart, UNIZIN makes the decision as a consortium on what to purchase, which would

presumably drive down the cost. The add-ons would be cheaper if the University decided to use them. And, added Attardo, because the contract would be quite large for an add-on, the consortium could have influence on the development of these products.   Santiago Fernandez-Gimenez asked if UNIZIN was looking at shared administrative systems, as well as at academic technologies. Butler replied that he did not know, but at this time the focus remains solely on academic technologies.

3. fCoP Feedback: Attardo and Kate Martin, assistant director, Center for Educational Innovation, started out by explaining why Academic Technologies was looking for feedback on the fCoP. Basically, said Martin, at the October 23rd Academic Technology kickoff meeting, they got input from as many members as possible, including faculty, staff, academic technologists, and administration, on what types of academic technology the University should pursue. Martin said they don't want academic technology to drive pedagogy but they do want to let faculty know what's out there that they may not be aware of. Of the 150 attendees at the kickoff meeting, only 15 were faculty, so, she said, they hoped the committee could provide additional input. As such, they asked the committee to respond to the following four questions**:**
- What kinds of support and services enable faculty and instructional staff to use academic technologies in the ways they find most useful?
- What are the best ways to engage faculty and instructional staff in exploring and using academic technologies that align with their teaching and learning goals?
- What should be included in a process to select new academic technologies to support teaching and learning, both those that are supported at the college level and those that are supported system-wide?
- How can the University's academic community contribute to the selection and testing of new or emerging technologies?

Martin stated that the [FCoP] groups that form would address the needs of all types of faculty and instructors along a continuum from infrequent/minimal users to those who are highly experimental and frequent users of academic technologies.   In viewing the questions, committee members made the following comments:
- Conner stated that each unit should identify their early adopters because peer-to-peer interaction is so important as faculty learn new technologies. Martin stated that teaching and learning, not technology should be the driver, but that also we seek a process for informing faculty of technologies they might try that they may not be aware of.
- Professor Nancy Carpenter added that she'd like to know what students need, and what sort of learning tools they are accustomed to, and how their learning styles are evolving.
- Watkins said that faculty do not know where to go with questions in academic technologies. He said that fragmentation is a problem. Tim Nichols added that there is a very large gap between the IT departments and faculty. There needs to be better

communication to bridge that chasm. Martin said that they've posted a new job for a director of the Center for Educational Innovation, and that should help with the fragmentation. She feels things are moving in the right direction.

- Professor Geoffrey Dwyer asked, if he were to use a platform-agnostic format, is it his responsibility to help students find the app that will help them work with the documents he requires? For example, students must have annotation ability for a pdf document he assigns. Is it his responsibility to figure out which annotation add-on each student's device would support?
- It was mentioned that the Technology Advisory Committee would be a great committee to revive. The committee wondered what role such a committee would play in relationship to SCIT.
- Professor Michelle Dreissen stated that technology use and experimentation need to be a factor in the tenure system. Faculty need to see the reward for trying various products and technologies.

Martin concluded by saying the academic technology fCoP leadership team would take all the input gathered and work with fCoP groups on developing processes for putting initiatives into place.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Straub
University Senate