2013 – 2014 Faculty Educational Technology Committee (FETC)
Annual Report
The 2013-2014 FETC consisted of the following members:
- Mark Hurd - Psychology, Committee Chair, Webmaster & Scheduling
- W. Garrett Mitchener - Mathematics, Committee Secretary
- Vijay Vulava - Geology and Environmental Geosciences
- David Parisi - Communication
- Margaret Cormack - Religious Studies
- Angela Flenner - Library
- Aspen Olmsted - Computer Science

The committee began by considering Old Business from the 2012-2013 committee. Reports from Bob Cape and Andrew Bergstrom outlined IT planning for the coming academic year. The IT Planning Committee of approximately 25 faculty and staff participated in this process. A total of 52 projects were identified and 17 were funded including classroom and WIFI upgrades.

There was also a discussion of the Tech Qual survey, consisting of 18 standard questions that would be administered in the fall by an outside company.

General issues identified and discussed during this academic year:
Campus communications / Listserv discussion. There is a long history of dissatisfaction with campus communications and this topic became an important element of the committee discussions for the remainder of the year.

Online Education & Online course evaluations. Course evaluations were also discussed in the fall and a committee report was presented to the Faculty Senate on 5-November by the committee chair, Mark Hurd. Student response rates remain low. One option discussed is that faculty would encourage students to submit responses during class using their computers and smart phones as they previously did with paper evaluations.

Classroom images and software configuration. Problems persist with Deep Freeze software that is used for general workstation configurations. It is not possible to save configuration changes on classroom computers with this software in place. Initial login establishes profile; subsequent logins require initialization of software, drivers, etc. Issues arise with specific software meaning that classes are disrupted and time is wasted. Faculty are frustrated and would like to seek workarounds.

Faculty Survey. An in house survey conducted last year was briefly discussed in the first meeting. Standard faculty computer options are insufficient for GIS and other specialized applications. Lack of communication, general waste of time, money and effort seem to be the primary issues. The Tech Qual survey was used from this point forward to assess information technology related issues on campus.

Emergency preparedness. As the institution has become increasingly dependent on information systems, the administration, faculty and staff may wish to engage in a continued discussion concerning preparedness for natural disasters that make impact information technology. At the moment there is a general complacency concerning the impact of a natural disaster on the college.

The committee chair recommended breaking into subcommittees to address these ongoing issues for the 2013-2014 academic year. Details of these discussions are outlined in the committee meeting minutes available on the FETC website and the SharePoint server.
Recommendations for the 2014-2015 committee:
The Listserv discussion is ongoing and solutions have been identified that may address some of the needs of the campus community. Andrew Bergstrom is a point of contact within Information Technology for these solutions. Ashleigh Parr chaired the 2013-2014 Staff Advisory Committee concerning a similar discussion. The 2014-2015 committee will need to contact Ashleigh and work with the Staff Advisory Committee concerning details of her committee’s work. There is a strong interest in returning some Listserv discussion forums to the campus community. Despite past abuses, this communication approach is thought to be an effective means of discussion by some groups on campus.

Online course evaluations are another ongoing discussion that the 2014-2015 committee will need to address in concert with Academic Affairs. Low response rates are a continued issue that will not be resolved by one committee in one year. Deanna Caveny-Noecker, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs chaired an ad hoc committee dedicated to a discussion and improvement of online course evaluations and the associated information technology. Faculty Welfare has had similar discussions. Online courses and intellectual property may or may not be the purview of this committee given that a Director of eLearning was hired in early 2014. The 2014-2015 committee will need to evaluate their roll in that conversation.

Classroom images and software configuration will also continue to be ongoing discussions. The institution will carry on using Deep Freeze to manage computers on campus in the near term. The 2014-2015 committee will need to work with Information Technology to communicate needs for working around existing issues and examining software that may allow more flexibility for faculty needs in this environment.

The TechQual survey will continue to be administered to evaluate effectiveness of information technology on campus.

Emergency preparedness will continue to be a concern for the entire campus community given the location of the campus in an active earthquake and hurricane zone. There does not appear to be a strong interest in revisiting this topic by the campus community, but it is a concern that will not go away. A general reactive approach appears to be the norm at many institutions; the 2014-2015 committee may wish to assess interest in this topic for ongoing discussion.

Finally, a general issue that needs to be addressed is to determine specific charges for the committee to work on. Information technology is by its very nature a shifting landscape. The incoming committee may wish to identify where it may have purview (e.g. campus communications) and where other parties on campus may be engaged in discussions (e.g. intellectual property, online course offerings, online course evaluations, etc.). Numerous parties from information technology also populate this committee. Those parties are very helpful for some discussions of the technical aspects of information technology. However, this is a faculty committee engaged in an ongoing discussion of the implementation of information technology for the purposes of education. Ultimately, the implementation of technology must serve that mission. Current information technology options, practices and procedures should not drive how it is engaged on campus; instead a larger vision of educational needs should steer the implementation of information technology and continue to be the focus of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark W. Hurd, Ph.D., 2013-2014 Committee Chair