Distance Learning Committee
Sierra College
Recollections
April 5, 2019

I. **Opening**

    A. Call to Order

    B. Establish Quorum: **Suzanne Davenport, Cyndie Birdsong, Autumn Cahoon, Jeanne Guerin, Jay Hester, Sonia Klenner, Rob Lapkass, Michelle Macfarlane, Mithia Mukutmoni, Chris Poling, Sayda Postiglione, Lynette Vrooman, Aimee Colvin**

II. **Approval of the Recollections: Minutes from March 2019 were approved**

III. **Visitor Presentations: None**

IV. **Action Items: None**

V. **Discussion Items**

    A. Online Tutoring Update - Jeanne
- The data for the past month was passed around to the group – with special note made of the remarkably positive comments from students in the survey results.
- There were 790 tutoring sessions used this March – 498 of those were for math.
- Last March, there were 361 sessions – 169 of those were math.
- While awareness of the service amongst students is growing, there is still the issue of 67% of those sessions are during non-traditional hours. The Tutor Center is looking into ways to address this need.
- Suzanne asked if there was any data showing the impact this usage is having on success rates in the math department. Jeanne said that data doesn't currently exist, but that it can be looked into. She said that it's already been established that students who have used any type of tutoring have persisted at higher rates.
- Peer tutoring training is continuing, but some tutors are having difficulty attending the currently sessions.

- Jeanne handed out charts showing the subjects that currently have trained tutors available, both courses that are taught online as well as courses that are on ground.
- The group discussed the use of Zoom for online tutoring, and the possibility of getting peer accounts for tutors.

B. Online Library Update – No Update

C. Workshop and Instructional Designer
- Suzanne told the group about the tremendous turn-out for Keely Carroll's Cidi Labs Design Tools workshop.
- The group discussed the possibility of future, similar workshops for Design Tools.
- Suzanne asked the committee members to think of possible workshops they would like to lead in the future.

D. Cidi Labs – Design Tools
- Suzanne asked the attendees what they thought of the workshop.
- Those who attended expressed excitement and appreciation.
- Autumn suggested that future workshops be scheduled with class schedules in mind. It would be more convenient if they took place during one class period, instead of overlapping two.
- Suzanne said that she would discuss this with Amber.

E. Accessibility – Blackboard Ally
- Blackboard Ally will be purchased. Suzanne and Cyndie will be traveling to American River College on April 9th to see how they have integrated the service into Canvas.
- The group discussed Blackboard Ally, how it is used, and how it will assist in creating greater accessibility in online courses.
- The possibility of having a student run the Ally accessibility check was discussed, but there were concerns about giving access to courses to a student (FERPA).
- Blackboard Ally will likely be ready to use as soon as April 9th, after the board meeting.

F. Accessibility – Review Process
- Suzanne gave an update on how the review process is moving forward, now that Corinne Rowland was no longer at Sierra College. Corinne's template for accessibility checks is still in place, but the feedback is being delivered in a more personable manner.

G. Instructional Design Position
- The position has gone to the senate. The week after Spring Break, Sabrina will have the first meeting to start the hiring process. There will

be interviews in July and it will go to the board for final approval in August.

H. AP 4105
- Suzanne handed out copies of AP 4105 to members of the committee. The wording clearly states that online and hybrid courses must have regular and effective contact.
- During accreditation, online courses will be randomly chosen, and the accreditors will be looking for interaction, instructor presence, and meaningful feedback.
- If there is no obvious interaction in the course, the accreditors will likely ask for access to emails, in Outlook. This can only be done with the instructor present.
- The group discussed concerns about issues that could arise from having Outlook examined, including violations of FERPA as well as accreditors having access to private conversations.
- The group had questions about online courses versus hybrid and how they will be evaluated during accreditation.
- Pat James reminded the committee that there is no current, official definition of the term "hybrid." She personally prefers the term "partially-online," because it better describes how the course is conducted.
- Mitihia asked if the current dual enrollment courses would be evaluated by the accreditation committee. Suzanne said they would, since they are offered for college credit.

I. Standardized Academic Policy Page
- Suzanne explained that Cyndie has been constructing a page for resources that can be linked to Canvas, which contains the items that are often included in syllabuses.
- The committee was asked what they would like to see included on that page.
    - Netiquette
    - Students Rights and Responsibilities (Cyndie stated that it may not be possible to include all of that handbook on the page)
    - Title IX
    - Student Services
    - Tutoring
    - Counseling
    - Food Pantry
    - Academic Integrity
    - DSPS
- Pat James suggested using a global resource/navigation page for all the tools that students would need in the course.

- Autumn asked if an email could be sent out to the members, in case those present had ideas to add to the list.
- Suzanne said that Aimee would send out an email and give the faculty a week to respond.
- Cyndie will contact the marketing department about getting space for a website.
- Pat suggested instead, that a Canvas shell be constructed to hold the information.

J. Faculty Forum Recap
- Chris Poling made a video of the event and Aimee took notes that will be made available.
- Pat thought the forum was great, and that similar events need to be held more often.
- Suzanne said there was a possibility of holding a quarterly planning and assessment forum – and she has briefly discussed this with Vernon Martin.
- Pat said that one of the outcomes of the forum was a constructive dialog with DSPS.
- The group discussed the issue of accessibility versus accommodation, and what the definition of "reasonable" is.
- Jay brought up issues with primary documents/source material, and how some instructors may shy away from using content that is difficult to transform into an accessible format.
- Pat explained that situations like that demand that DSPS provide accommodation for distance education.
- Autumn suggested that materials that have already been made accessible should be made available to all faculty members, so that they do not need to be converted again. Currently, the Anthropology department shares these resources (articles, PDFs, etc.).
- Pat stated that at the school where she previously taught, they would often include disclaimers in online classes, saying that (for example) the course was rich in visual content, and that students with visual impairments may need the assistance of DSPS to be successful in the course. She encouraged the committee to look into the language of the law to see if this would be possible currently.

K. Distance Learning Consultant Findings – Update
- The report is not yet completed – There are a few meetings left to go.
- Pat said, in her opinion, Sierra College is in good shape, and she'd be surprised if we didn't receive a commendation. She appreciates our open and progressive culture.
- The committee was asked what they felt needs to be added to make the Distance Learning program even more successful.

- Making more workshops available as well as implementing hiring priorities that emphasize the importance of online teaching skills were discussed.
- Mithia stated that the success of the program was due to Suzanne's hard work over the years. Jeanne added the Distance Learning staff as well made that success possible. The group agreed and applauded.
- Pat reminded the committee that 22% of the courses at Sierra are online, and 2% are hybrid. She said that this must be repeated often. She will be including those numbers in her final report.
- Jay said that he didn't want to be a "Debbie Downer," but one of the things he hears from faculty is that "change fatigue" is setting in, from all of the initiatives and programs that are being rolled out (ex. Interest Areas). To get greater participation from faculty, there will need to be incentives. There needs to be a creative way to incentivize people who want to do the work, but are already overwhelmed and lack the time to take on new projects.
- Mithia asked what Pat would suggest when it comes to talking to leadership about the budget.
- Pat said that the 24% of enrollment must be emphasized. What does it cost to run and effective online program? How long can such a program be maintained if there isn't an appropriate budget or support? When Sierra loses students, what does that cost the college? There needs to be an investment in quality. Online courses need to be seen as part of the college, not separated out and treated like a novelty. Online is mainstream.
- Chris asked if there are other, comparable colleges, with similar online enrollment percentages.
- Pat said that where she previous taught, there was similar online enrollment, but they had a more sizable budget and staffing.
- Chris asked if Sierra's hybrid enrollment wasn't soon expanding considerably with the addition of the English 1A hybrids and wouldn't this change how we need to define hybrid courses.
- Pat said it is and that change will be "game-changing." Additionally, there are talks at the state level of making all courses online, in the case of a disaster. There will be discussion of that at the upcoming Online Teaching Conference in June.
- Pat encouraged the members not to think in terms of scarcity. She encouraged them to simply put their ideas out there, and to not worry about the lack of funding.
- The group discussed the possibility of a campus wide effort to focus on online courses and the limitations in regards to Classified staff and training.

- Pat encouraged the faculty to include the opportunity for students to give regular, anonymous feedback in their courses. If that information is meant just for the instructor, and not submitted for evaluation, then it is not an issue for the union.

L. May Meeting
- Suzanne will be gone in May.
- Autumn expressed concern about the date, since the members of the committee that are part of the People and Cultures interest area have a meeting scheduled for the same time.
- The group decided that there will be a May meeting and that it will be led by Sabrina Pape.

M. Other
- Mike wanted to touch base regarding the installation of Camtasia/Snagit. Unfortunately, according to the language of the contract, installation on privately owned computers is forbidden. He recognizes the difficulty this will cause adjunct faculty. In is however available to full-time faculty and will be installed on the laptops in LRC 124.
- Jeanne asked if Zoom could be included in that installation.
- Mike said it could.

The group had a casual discussion about universal design, investing in our students, and our communities.

The meeting was dismissed at 2:05pm.