

# **Distance Learning Committee**

Recollections  
October 4, 2019

## **I. Opening**

### **A. Call to Order**

- B. **Quorum established** – Suzanne Davenport, Cyndie Birdsong, Autumn Cahoon, Tina Sixt, Jeanne Guerin, Jay Hester, Lynette Vrooman, Jennifer Molina-Stidger, Sayda Postiglione, Jay Kesler, Sabrina Pape, Anne Diamond, Tom Benton, Rob Lapkass, Aimee Colvin

## **II. Approval of Recollections: September 4, 2019 Recollections approved**

## **III. Visitor Presentation: None**

## **IV. Action Items: None**

## **V. Discussion Items:**

- A. **Accreditation** – discussion moved to later in the meeting

### **B. Online Tutoring Update** – Jeanne

- There was an increase in sessions, from 606 to 1051, in September
- A similar increase in usage is expected for October
- While Statistics is traditionally the subject that receives the most usage, in September, the greatest usage was in Chemistry, followed by Physics. This might be explained by recent changes in the Math Center and students may be going there for help.
- There has been a request for a year's worth of comparison data for Tutor.com.
- As of September 745 hours out of 2000 hours have been used – More hours may have be purchased before the contract expires at the end of the year.

### **C. Online Library Update** – Tina

- Faculty has been notified about the upcoming switch to the new system in the library.
- Tina has been encouraging instructors to check Films-on-Demand before recommending Kanopy. They do have some of the same films.

- The library has been receiving a lot of reference questions from our dual-enrollment students. A discussion was had about the issues that those students have been dealing with, including technical difficulties with viewing Films-on-Demand on Chromebooks.
- Suzanne stated that the dual-enrollment program will be on the agenda for the next DLIT meeting.

#### **D. Workshops and Instructional Design – Autumn**

- Autumn shared the upcoming workshop schedule for October.
- The online accessibility trainings are up and running, both the moderated and self-paced versions.
- Sierra College will no longer be paying for the @One trainings, since the new online trainings are the same content, along with additional content that applies specifically to Sierra College.
- The first round of the new course reviews have been completed and only one has passed the accessibility review. Autumn believes that increased education for the faculty, on issues of accessibility, needs to be made available.
- Suzanne stated that those in the current review process have been given an extra week for revisions.
- The most common problems include color contrast, headings, and auto-captions.
- The Blackboard Ally team did run a complete report of all Sierra College online courses, which showed the most common accessibility issues.
- Autumn shared some of the limitations of Blackboard Ally with the group. She then gave an impromptu demo of the features, using one of her own courses.
- The first training for Blackboard Ally will be October 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm.
- Suzanne said that there are currently talks with ProDev to create additional trainings and a possible certification program regarding accessibility.

#### **E. Canvas Announcements**

- The ASSC recently asked Cyndie if they could post an announcement about the upcoming student body elections. There was concern whether this would dilute the effectiveness of a notification system that has been primary been used for information about Canvas technical issues. The committee was asked to discuss their opinions, since Cyndie did not feel it was appropriate to make that decision herself.
- The group expressed their concerns. The suggestion was made that perhaps this was a task better suited to the Marketing Department.
- Suzanne agreed and said that she would contact Juan Blanco and let him know of the committee's decision.

### **Accreditation (resumed from A)**

- Thirty-four courses (ten percent) were randomly selected from the Spring 2019 Distance Learning program to be viewed by the accreditors. Their primary focus is on substantive and effective interaction.
- There were instructors who had spent few hours in their courses. Which brings up the question, how will Sierra ensure that regular and effective interaction is maintained in online courses?
- The group discussed the compliance criteria, the possible steps that could be taken to ensure consistent quality in all courses, and the possibility of including Department Chairs and Deans in this discussion.
- Many in the committee expressed a desire to see the rubric used by the accreditors, if there is one, which was used to evaluate these courses. There was a general unease about the possible subjectivity involved in the process.
- Suzanne stated that if there is such a rubric, it has not been shared with her.
- Jay H. stated that if instructors don't show up to their on ground classes, actions can be taken.
- Autumn expressed a desire to create a handbook for online instructors that clearly states the expectations and specific language from the contract. The language of this handbook could be designed by the committee.
- Sabrina said that having the online program's flaws pointed out by the accreditation team could be a good thing. It would spark a conversation on campus about what exactly is expected in our online courses.
- Suzanne stated that Rebecca Bocchicchio has set creating a plan for Distance Learning as one of her priorities.
- A discussion was had of sharing exceptional courses with the online instructor community to make the expectations more tangible. The group could work together to increase the quality of their own course content, to serve as better examples.
- Aimee then suggested that the committee members volunteer for the coming round of accessibility reviews. Blackboard Ally could be installed in their courses.
- The group discussed what is involved in the accessibility review process and how/when the stipends are paid.
- Suzanne encouraged the group to be thinking of ways to improve the program over the coming month.

### **F. Other**

- Suzanne asked for members to apply for the course reviewer positions for the coming year, to be submitted in November.

The meeting was dismissed at 1:35pm.