

## **Faculty Senate Information Technology Committee**

### **March 05, 2010**

Attendance:

Members: Nigel Ward, Chair, Darla Smith, Kris Robinson, Brian Giza, Bryan Usevitch, Robert Wren, Ricardo Bernal, Richard Medina.

Ex-Officio: Mary Duffy.

Guests: Jaime Mendez; Mike Pitcher; Dorothy Ward

1. Minutes. The minutes from the last meeting were approved.
2. Introduction. There are three new faculty members joining the committee and several guests.
3. Literacy at UTEP.
  - a. Following up on the committee's wish that its ideas on fostering student tech literacy by improving syllabi be examined with respect to other campus initiatives, Nigel noted that John Wiebe had referred him to Harry Meuwesen on this. Nigel reported that Harry, via Cetel, has promulgated a (so far unofficial) "Syllabus Framework and Checklist", which includes two items relevant to our concerns. First, it suggests that every syllabus state "What is the role of technology in this course?" and provide "a brief summary of effective learning strategies". Nigel opined that these are in the spirit of what Bob Wren proposed to the committee, and expressed the hope that this will lead faculty in the direction of increased explicitness, in turn encouraging, requiring, or helping students to brush up their skills. There was a consensus that, given this direction, there was no need for the committee to work further on this aspect.
  - b. A revised version of the document "Technology Literacy: Checkup and Roadmap for UTEP students" was presented.
    - i. Discussion initially focused on the flaws with this document: Some of the wording was not at a novice level. The idea of giving students a piece of paper was felt to be anachronistic; if instead it could be online then it would be possible to harvest the data. The document referred to various UTEP resources, but vaguely, and none of the existing resources actually really addressed the specific skillset mentioned, thus the document could raise false expectations among student. The idea that a student, after performing such a self-assessment, would then take charge of their own education and pro-actively improve their skills in their areas of weakness was felt to be idealistic and not likely to work for most UTEP students. The document is idealistic also in expressing goals for students, and for the university, that may not be realistic in the short term.
    - ii. As a digression, it was noted that beyond student literacy there is also the problem of faculty who lack the technology literacy that we expect our students to have. It was suggested that literacy be emphasized during the new faculty orientation. Mike Pitcher noted that surveys reveal a student perception that one of the sources of their trouble with technology is faculty weak in this area, although, interestingly most faculty think that they are do use technology effectively. Another digression raised the problem of educating students about the ethical issues of using resources, i.e. copyright, plagiarism, etc.
    - iii. Mike Pitcher volunteered to take some of the checkbox items and put them into the SurveyWeek student survey, so that in future the committee and the IT training providers will have a better picture on what knowledge and skills students lack.

iv. Mike Pitcher volunteered to work on creating a version of the checkup document to be available on the web and include links to available training.

v. The committee felt that dissemination of documents may change student expectations, and that the IT folk should be alerted. Nigel agreed to discuss the checkup document also with Frank Poblano.

vi. The committee felt that the committee's activities should be disseminated broadly to the faculty. Nigel agreed to ask to present to the faculty senate, and then to report back the results of discussion at the next committee meeting.

vii. Jaime Mendez noted that some technology issues are covered in orientation. He then volunteered to prepare some form of brochure about technology literacy, based on the checkup document, to include in the packet handed out to students during orientation, with the primary purpose being to get them thinking about what they know and don't know.

viii. In a final pass over the checkup and roadmap document, a few errors and infelicities were noted. Nigel agreed to create and disseminate a revised version.

#### 4. Next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on April 16<sup>th</sup>, at 11:10 AM. Nigel will let us know where. (Addendum: It will be room 221 in the Computer Science building)

#### 5. Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 AM.