eTAC Minutes
June 27, 2007, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
West Club Room

e-Learning and Technology Advisory Committee (eTAC)
June 2007 – Meeting Minutes

Present – Tom Braziunas, Art Woodbury, Jane Lister Reis, David Gronbeck, Rachael Mendonsa, Tom Griffith, Sharon Simes, Terre O’Malley

Introductions
Welcome

Announcements
- The Distance Learning Office has changed its name to “North’s e-Learning Support Center” (NeLSC) to reflect its broader role in training and supporting faculty, staff and students using e-learning technologies in on-campus as well as distance and blended (hybrid) courses.
- The migration of websites to the new FrontPage server is on schedule. Microsoft has introduced Expression Web and Sharepoint Designer as eventual replacements for FrontPage. IT Services and NeLSC are investigating these new web designer options.

Discussion of future directions in e-learning at North
Tom B. distributed “a 2-year plan for e-learning at North” which presents actions that the e-Learning Office (NeLSC) may be able to accomplish over the next couple years through its budget planning. This thought document was used as a stepping off point for further discussion.

The committee discussed what a broader campus-wide e-learning plan should entail. It must incorporate information literacy and teaching/learning outcomes. We should decide what we need to achieve and work backwards from there. The NeLSC document has some steps toward finding those answers through plans to better survey students and faculty on their e-learning needs.

One future goal is a more formalized process to prepare faculty pedagogically for teaching with e-learning technologies. Washington Online requires instructors to take an online class that prepares them for teaching online. North’s process is more open with recommended workshops and one-on-one guidance and assistance. We need to set benchmarks to assure that faculty are qualified, prepared and supported as needed. These steps could be rolled into an outcome statement for the college.

Faculty need to understand the tools, not simply walk in and begin teaching online. Perhaps a required class would be attractive and desirable to instructors. A stipend for instructors who take such a class would give incentive and responsibility in the process. We need to make sure that it’s a well rounded training.

Innovation is one part of the college’s mission statement. Where do we want to be in 5 years? What will the classrooms look like in 5 years? We can look at national models and best practices from other schools and then come back here to see how they can be applied. The college needs to stay flexible technologically. Things are constantly
changing and being outmoded.

We can also learn from our students. La Guardia CC staff train students who then work with faculty on technology issues. The UW has what they call Catalyst, where students help students.

Art W. mentioned that his approach to new technology is to find out what he needs to know and then find a person who can teach him. One-on-one mentoring works well for this – it’s less intimidating.

**Technology and the condition of classrooms at North**

Technologically speaking most of our classrooms may be fine, but they are unattractive physically. Projectors are more important technologies than “Smart Boards” at this time. Having one classroom that could be high-tech would be a good idea.

What if a certain number of classrooms were earmarked for physical improvements each year? We could perhaps organize fundraising for this.

We can’t spend a lot of money on technology that only a couple faculty would use. Training will need to be done. The Media Center supports classroom equipment – the need for additional support staff is a consideration. Faculty need to be prepared to adopt new technologies. What is the faculty vision on this?

**New technologies and support**

Tom B. handed out the Table of Contents from Educause’s 2007 “Horizon Report” on educational technologies being adopted by colleges now or anticipated for mass adoption in the next couple years. Pioneering faculty at North are already implementing some of the items in the “adoption in one-year or less” category in this report: User-created content and social networking tools like blogs, podcasts and wikis incorporated into the learning environment. Pat Bouker and Bob Atkins are already recording their lectures and posting the audio files on their websites the following day for students to review.

The Horizon Report anticipates that mobile phone technologies will play key roles in education in the next 2 – 3 years. Cell phones with Internet connectivity will take the place of “book bags.” Students who can’t afford a computer will still have mobile phones. They will be bringing their own learning technologies into the classroom.

Jane LR stressed the importance of making learning visible as it morphs with new learning tools. How do the recorded lectures enhance student learning? Assessment is a critical factor in determining how we are helping students with specific technologies. We also need to compile and share student feedback from a broader group of students than so far: “What kind of technology would you like to see on campus to help you learn?” Could all of this tie into a student voices project for next year? Students have a lot to say, and this could link together several efforts nicely.

Part of the e-Learning Office’s 2-year plan for e-learning is to devote stipends to experienced faculty mentoring other faculty on technologies that they are already
successfully using in their own onsite and online classrooms. Instead of waiting for folks to come to the TLC, we will help to send folks out to the offices in which faculty are working every day.

Is there money for student mentors? Students could be great teachers of new technologies to our faculty. On the other hand, many students may need help with new technologies themselves.

**Student Media Center in the Library**
Sharon S. described some of the features and functions of the student media center being opened in the library. Students can come to this center for help when a class requires a media/visual project. It will be running in fall quarter, though some students used it already this spring.

The need for the student media center is a great one. Faculty have the TLC but students have nowhere to go to learn new things. The librarians are helping students. Something better is needed, not just a computer lab, but somewhere students can go for tutoring and mentoring. Students are given assignments to create PowerPoint presentations, but often instructors are not aware that their students need further instructions. Students may drop on-campus classes when the tech requirements are beyond their skill levels, especially if there is nothing in the class descriptions to let them know these things will be required. They sign up for English and they may not be prepared to use a computer. Returning students often don’t have tech experience if they’ve been in a career where computers weren’t used.

We have tutoring for everything else, why not computer use? The computer lab could perhaps have part time hourly tutors available during certain hours of the day. The library is also hoping to get a dedicated IT person in the library to help with student questions.

**The eTAC group makes a recommendation to Tom Griffith to look into options for tutoring within the computer labs.**

A self paced online tutorial could help students learn computer basics, some keyboarding basics and the Office suite. Such an optional resource could also incorporate computer terminology. Student Services folks would benefit from tutorials. Jean Kent has created many effective technology tutorials – perhaps she could be contacted about creating some specific ones for faculty, students and staff.

Would this be a topic that would be good for the faculty retreat? Tom B. will ask the VP.

The Virtual College (e-Learning Office) has logistical and technological tutorials available online for students and faculty. JC Clapp, Carol Howe and Joanne Fall have developed specific tutorials to introduce *potential* online learners to the challenges of e-learning and also to prepare *enrolled* online learners for what to expect. These tutorials cover e-learning specifics such as computer set-up, discussion room practicalities, study
skills, etc. But these tutorials do not cover the basics of many common software programs such as Word, PowerPoint, video production and so forth.

Faculty have devised their own approaches toward tutoring new e-learners. For example, Art W. mentioned how his website is set up with a “treasure hunt” to familiarize students with the whole thing.

Online modules must address specific student needs in order to be useful. They must be designed so as to make the students want to look at them. Students need to be able to choose what they need. We must do better at finding out what student, faculty and staff need to know to be successful.

**Technology Fair (e-Fair)**
How can such an “e-Fair” be made successful? We could produce fun demos for different technologies and tools. We could have tables, and vendors, and make it a very interactive event. We need to keep in mind that we must be prepared to support these technologies if they are incorporated into instruction. There are some great ones, but they can be very expensive.

This e-Fair should also present technologies that will appeal to staff. The prevalence of text messaging, even during class, is mentioned. Ideally, faculty, staff, and students will each have the opportunity to try out new devices.

**Outcomes**
This committee could play a pivotal role in building college-wide outcomes statements for technological competencies as well as information and literacy competencies. We think that the college should strive for technological flexibility. An important outcome is making sure the students have the knowledge to be successful in the classroom. Another important goal would be building avenues for sharing the strengths that others possess, getting the word out to the community and to one another.

This committee is taking North a step towards “system thinking” in learning, teaching, tutoring. As a school we need to be integrated, global, in the center of student learning. We need a “21st century culture of learning.”

**www folder**
Tom B gave a brief demo on using the www folder.

**Adjournment**
The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

*Minutes by Terre O’Malley with additions by Tom Braziunas*