Senate Committee on Information Technology and Media Services Report

May 2021   Duo (Helen) Wei

Members:

Helen Wei	Chair (2020–2022)
Sujoy Chakraborty	Vice Chair (2020–2021)
Suya Yin	ARHU (2019–2021)
Sujoy Chakraborty	BUSN (2019–2021)
Ron Caro	EDUC (2019–2021)
Kimberly Furphy	HLTH (2019–2021) and Union representative
Lisa Youngblood	GENS (2019–2021)
David Lechner	Library (2019–2021)
Anna Pfeiffer-Herbert	NAMS (2019–2021)
Victoria Estrada-Reynolds	SOBL (2019–2021)

Ex Officio Members:

Joe Toth	Director of Library Services
Scott Huston	Chief Information Officer
Kathleen Klein	Interim Director of Center for Learning Design

2020-2021 Monthly Meeting

The Senate Information Technology and Medial Services (ITMS) committee met regularly during the AY 2020-2021. We have held the meetings in the following days: (every second Thursday of each month 2:30pm – 3:30pm)

September 17th , 2020
November 12th , 2020
December 10th , 2020
February 11th , 2021
March 11th, 2021
April 8th , 2021
May 20th, 2021

Communication Channel:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to meet virtually on Zoom as our primary communication channel. Thanks to the ITMS committee members' efforts, we were able to find a common time via Doodle poll and managed to meet regularly. Another communication channel is via email communication, which allows us to discuss varieties of topics. As our committee have to share documents for committee members to review, Dr. Suya has created and maintained an **ITMS Committee Discussion Board** where we stored our documents, including attendance, agenda, minutes, and etc.

2020-2021 Committee Activities (selected major topics):

1. **The committee discussed and reviewed the Dean's survey.** The committee members discussed about the surveys circulated by the deans to faculty members collected in Jan 2020 by CTLD. The following were the observations of the committee:
   - As per the survey (the survey was open for about a month or so), 40% of faculties felt to be prepared, 60% thought they needed some kind of assistance.
   - Mostly they were related to blackboard, zoom training and equipment needs.
   - ITS met the bulk of equipment requests (web cam, headsets, monitors, laptops etc.) from the faculty members and was also providing faculties technical help on zoom and blackboard.
   - The CTLD helped faculty members in setting up their courses on blackboard.
   - Some faculties required specialized software.
   - Some requests were about storage requirements for videos beyond the three months limit.
   - Some faculties requested student access for specific software (such as Adobe suite and some video editing software).
   - Some faculties asked if they could merge the online and in-class synchronous meetings.
   - Software needs were managed by ITS very effectively (licensed software were provided immediately, for some other needs site licensing was acquired, and license for very specific software were either purchased by ITS, or by the faculty members which were subsequently reimbursed by ITS.)
   - Some very specific equipment needs were met by ITS (for example, earbuds for the dance program).

2. **The committee discussed about Blackboard Ultra and how to prepare faculty/students to adapt to the change**.
   - An update was planned on the blackboard system during the Winter break, so there would be some small changes to blackboard in the Spring semester.
   - The plan would be not to switch to blackboard Ultra directly, but to updating the existing blackboard to a more recent version, which was called Blackboard Ultra-navigation, with a lot of additional benefits.
   - The major change would be that of moving from a Blackboard hosted platform to a SAS platform, which had a lot of backend benefits to it. Also, it was more cost effective.
   - This would also allow enabling blackboard ally, which made the uploaded content as accessible as possible, being compliant to the ADA.
   - The new system would ensure automatic enrollment to the corresponding blackboard course, as soon as students register for it. Also, a student would automatically be removed from blackboard once they dropped a class.
   - Faculties would be given access in advance to have a feel of it.
   - The system would also show potential issues (for example, some tools will be lost etc.) in converting a course fully to ultra. Faculties would have a choice of going ahead with the conversion or staying with the navigation version.

- o Sharing of content among faculties teaching the same course would also be possible in the updated version of blackboard.
- o As of now, the full ultra-version would be still under test and it could happen that the feature to converting fully to Ultra wouldn't be enabled in the Spring 2021 semester. If it was enabled, then the conversion needs to happen on a course-by-course basis. Also, faculties would have a choice based on their preferences.

3. **The committee discussed on the possible places where the IDEA deadlines for selection of modalities for student evaluation and the selection of objectives can be posted**. We have invited Dennis Fotia and Judith Vogel to our meeting to join the discussion.
   - o The committee members discussed that it could be posted on multiple places, but at least should be put at one central place, to begin with.
   - o Dennis and Judy pointed out that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) requires both of them to communicate directly to the faculty members about the dates and the procedures and they cannot override the MOA. Also, they pointed out that only a very limited number of emails related to IDEA per semester was sent out every semester. They acknowledged that having a centralized calendar would be an excellent idea and it would add tremendously to their ability to refer people to that document.
   - o The IDEA vital information sheet had been posted on Stockton Portal.

4. ***The committee made significant efforts on the Senate Exec's charge to the exploration of Learning Management System (LMS) alternative project.**
   - o The ITMS subcommittee had been charged by the Faculty Exec. to explore LMS alternatives in the Faculty Senate meeting on December 11th 2020.
   - o Suya, Sujoy (Vice Chair) and Helen formed a subcommittee to spearhead the research project and prepare for a report.
   - o The ITMS committee need more clarification about the motivation of the charge and the expected output or format of the report for this task.
   - o The ITMS committee invited a member from Faculty Senate Exec to join our meeting for clarification. Jack Lewis joined our meeting on behalf of Senate Exec. Jack mentioned that the Faculty Senate Exec. expect the committee to develop some kind of "satisfaction survey" to gather faculty's ideas about pros & cons of Blackboard Learn.
   - o The ITMS committee planned to conduct research to compare different LMS alternatives, such as Blackboard Ultra and Canvas. After that, the ITMS plans to develop a survey in collaboration with CTLD and ITS.

5. **The committee discussed miscellaneous topics such as**
   - o The committee discussed about the possibilities of preserving the recording of zoom videos beyond the three months period.
   - o The committee discussed about student access to commercial softwares such as MATLAB, SAS, etc

- o The committee discussed about merging of synchronous in-person and online meetings and about the availability of relevant resources from CTLD
- o Joe reported on Streaming Videos after NJEdge. We are moving off the NJVid (NJVid streaming platform is scheduled to be decommissioned by the vendor on June 30th, 2021)

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my appreciation for all members in the ITMS committee. Thank you so much for your time, efforts, and support during the past year. I also would like to especially thank Dr. Suya Yin who has volunteered to undertake a number of tasks in the committee, demonstrating her passion and creativity in her service to the committee. Finally, my special thanks go to Kathy from CTLD, and Scott / Pete from ITS who give profound insights and provide a lot of good resources to our committee.