

CIT Advisory Board

28 November 2006

201 Tower Room – Perkins Library

In Attendance: Molly Tamarkin, Jean Ferguson, Lynne O'Brien, Patricia Pawlak, Nevin Fouts, Wayne Miller (substituting for Richard Danner), Joe Harris, Martin Brooke, Roger Loyd, Owen Astrachan
Absent: Lee Willard, Julian Lombardi, George Trey Turner, Jeff Dawson, Patrick Halpin, Len Spicer
The meeting began at 4:10pm.

REVIEW

Lynne began the meeting with a review of the discussion and minutes from the October meeting.

Wrap up of CIT Grants Discussion from Last Meeting:

The group discussed the variety of grants offered and was pleased with the number of different programs available to match interests and various skill sets. The group feels that faculty are interested but may feel "road weary" - they have tried a lot of new things in the last few years and may not take advantage of new opportunities right now. CIT is already utilizing numerous methods to push the information out to faculty. Lynne asked for suggestions for additional outreach and would like individuals to contact her if they have ideas beyond what CIT is already doing.

Academic Tools Review and Future Planning:

Lynne asked the group for feedback on which new technologies they felt were worth exploring. Nevin Fouts mentioned hosted software that is available anywhere (Web 2.0). He feels that social networking software would have to be hosted locally. Fuqua is experimenting with an appliance that sits outside their firewall and is easy to implement. Joe Harris discussed GoogleDocs and GoogleSpreadsheets but is concerned that they may not be around in the future. Lynne O'Brien mentioned that some individuals at Duke have concerns about university and course information being hosted outside the university. However, CIT is prepared to help instructors experiment with some of these new tools in the spring semester. Owen Astrachan discussed Moodle, Zythos and Plone in place of using GoogleDocs. Martin Brooke mentioned a Wiki that he uses and administers himself. Molly Tamarkin has been having conversations with faculty in Arts and Sciences. Right now, it seems that faculty don't see enough of the practical applications of emerging tools and thus are ambivalent about investing time in learning to use yet another new tool.

Course Management System – Blackboard:

Neal Caidin, CIT, Head of Applications Support reported there are currently 1500 active courses. Blackboard is used mostly for circulating documents. Lynne asked what has been useful about having a widely used course management system at Duke. One person commented that from a student perspective, the consistent interface across a course space and ability to access all course documents in one space are very attractive features. Other features faculty like about Blackboard are: prepopulated distribution systems and the ability to email students easily. Features that faculty do not like or would like improved include: a better search tool, an easier way to find documents in older courses, ability to work with equations and/or math problems. Martin Brooke mentioned that if a problem occurs while giving an exam, it is difficult for the student to start over. He'd be interested in something that is equivalent to ePrint in reverse – a student could use library or other public scanners to quickly scan a written exam and send it via email or a drop box to the professor. Joe Harris likes the tools available in Blackboard but feels Blackboard is limited. He does not like the way Blackboard forces you to limit course materials to students enrolled in the course (you can't make sections public in any easy way). Someone asked about ways to make online test taking secure. Lynne O'Brien mentioned a product called Software Secure that locks down the browser. Neal Caidin mentioned that CIT and OIT are looking at mobile messaging systems that would make it easier to send timely information from Blackboard to students, on the device of their choice. One possible product is ClearText, which works with and also independently of Blackboard. Students can decide whether they wish to be notified about new information faculty place on their course site. Faculty do not have to take extra steps on their side. The company does not place ads on the messaging and also

does not sell personal contact information. Joe Harris asked what the “true costs” of this software might be, including not only the licensing costs but the added work it might create for faculty, or the added pressure on faculty to use it. In terms of thinking about a switch from Blackboard to a different system, several people pointed out that it would take much discussion to decide what that new tool should be, what the overall costs would be of implementing and supporting a different system, and the effort required to transition faculty and students to a new system.

Emerging Academic Tools at Duke:

The group discussed new tools currently available such as DukeCast, DukeCapture, iTunesU, Elluminate, streaming media server and blog/wiki tools. Some faculty were aware of the new Duke-supported tools, but many were not. One person mentioned that there seems to be a proliferation of new tools which are not especially well integrated. Roger Loyd also mentioned MySpace, Facebook and instant messaging. He suggested an RSS feed from Blackboard to mobile phones would be a great feature. Lynne O’Brien mentioned that faculty do not currently use many features of existing tools, and suggested that the CIT needs to work on helping faculty understand all that is available to them. In many cases, instructors don’t need a new tool; they just need to understand how to use something already available in a pedagogically sound way. The group supported this suggestion. Jean Ferguson suggested conducting focus groups with students and the library to understand better what will promote or hinder use of these newly offered tools. She would also like the library to have a presence in Blackboard and to include library contact information on each course site. The group agreed. Neal and Jean will follow up on figuring out how to do this.

Meetings for Spring 2007 semester:

CIT Advisory Board Meetings will continue to be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 4pm – 5pm (excluding the month of December). Please mark your calendars for these upcoming meetings.:

January 23, 2007

February 27, 2007

March 27, 2007

April 24, 2007

The meeting was adjourned at 5pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Patricia Ann Pawlak