



**ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE
DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE AGENDA
April 28, 2009
3:30 p.m. – Room BE 248**

To conform to the open meeting act, the public may attend open sessions

- 1) CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
- 2) COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS**
- 3) OPENING COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**
- 4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a) Distance Education Committee meeting – March 24, 2009
- 5) ACTION ITEMS**
 - a) None
- 6) DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - a) Blackboard Performance – M. Wilmes
 - b) iTunes Contract – S. Thatch
 - c) Second Life – C. Forté-Parnell
 - d) Accessibility – R. Balogh
 - e) Portal and Email Service – C. Moise
 - f) Faculty Support Center – C. Moise
- 7) REPORTS**
 - a) CMS Evaluation Workgroup
 - b) Podcasting workgroup
 - c) Orientation workgroup
 - d) Accessibility workgroup
- 8) OTHER**
 - a) iTunes Presentation
- 9) ADJOURNMENT**

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ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE

DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

April 28, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT		MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS
Rick Balogh	Dr. Forte-Parnell	Dr. Mark McGovern (proxy for Dr. Ezzeddine)	Greg Krynen
Dr. Nancy Bednar	Dr. Tom O'Neil	Tom Hutchinson	
Beverly Beyer	John Vento		
Dr. Ed Beyer	Luis Echeverria		
Bonnie Curry			
Shirlene Thatch			
Connie Moise			
Mike Wilmes			

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Dr. Ed Beyer, Distance Education Committee Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

- Dr. Forte-Parnell, Committee Co-Chair, read from an E Learning Tool Box.com newsletter. It relates that according to a survey of colleges by the Instruction Technology Council that distance education has set a record pace of increasing 18% from the fall of 2007. It also stated that 70% of respondents stated that there is need for additional offerings over what is being provided now. With the increase in community colleges and the offerings for online courses and recorded classrooms, it has become more of a necessity than an option to provide what is needed. If community colleges are to advance these elements, they must implement faculty training programs, increase funding for distance learning and adopt a written assessment to guide students through the process. She states that we are doing such or closely to it.

3. OPEN COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

- None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made (Beverly Beyer) and seconded (Dr. O'Neil) to approve the March 10, 2009 Distance Education Committee meeting minutes. Corrections received from Ms. Moise were incorporated into the minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved and motion carried.

5. ACTION ITEMS

- None

6. DISCUSSION

- a. **Blackboard Performance (Wilmes)** – This will be divided into two parts: performance in regard to what they are required to provide to the college and the second is the issues that have arisen from this performance. Mr. Wilmes feels that we are not receiving the level of support from Blackboard in relation to the money we are expending for it. We have received 13 trouble calls in the last 90 days and it takes a 30 day turnaround to get a resolution. We also had five of our course shells that were unusable two weeks before the semester started and were now just resolved two weeks ago. This issue was elevated to their Tier 2 support, who after much time and effort, determined that it involved the way they had their server configured which kept our faculty from using the shells for their courses. This degree of support is unacceptable, especially when students and faculty alike are not able to utilize this tool. We had a number of shells that have become unusable, plus a faculty who could not pull up a report which had been done multiple times in the past. We could not get a reasonable resolution let alone an explanation from them as to what was happening. Mr. Wilmes can sometimes correct some of the problems, but when it is out of his hands and we are being held captive by their slow or non-response at the cost of many dollars, he feels that this is not to our best interest. Also, it has come to his attention that we do not have a well publicized procedure for students as well as faculty to request help when they encounter a problem.

Mr. Wilmes handed out to members a draft of the procedure to follow when problems occur with Blackboard. He also mentioned that students and faculty can contact Blackboard directly and do not need to go through Mike. The statement was made that you cannot contact them directly; you must use our contact at Presidium, Jorge. We have been given the impression that their support is 24/7 but they are far from it. Additionally, no faculty should contact Blackboard directly; only two people on campus have that authority. Also, if we have faculty who need assistance or training with Blackboard, they need to contact our technical trainer (Greg Krynen). Mr. Krynen knows the program inside and out so he is best equipped to show faculty what they wish to do with Blackboard.

In addition, Mike is the Blackboard administrator and as such provides the access to the resources. If there are any resources that a faculty member would like to use, they would contact him so they may be set aside. Ms. Moise interjected that if any faculty should require a resource or has a problem, they should contact the help desk where it will be assigned to the appropriate person. This will allow us to track what issues are coming into IT and allow them to determine how it is impacting the workload. This could then lead into justification for more resources, whether it be for more staff or finances. Mike did mention that the help desk is only open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. so if it is after hours, they would then refer to the contact number listed for Blackboard. If there is a student working after hours on their course work and are having a problem, there is the help link with Blackboard but right now it has Dr. Beyer's e-mail address listed. Mike has tried to solve this but so far with no luck. Mike has arranged for a dummy e-mail account to be set up that would forward the e-mail to Mike and also help@avc.edu so we can keep track. But secondly, it sends a message back to the sender telling them that Blackboard has 24/7 support and how to get access to that. If the student can wait for Mike or the Help Desk to respond, they can do so but if not, they would have the ability

to contact Blackboard support on their own. Ms. Moise suggests that the general acronym given to this e-mail address should be online@avc.edu. This would hopefully cover all aspects of trouble that a student may encounter. Mike requests that anyone who contacts the Blackboard 24/7 support directly, that they relay this information to their teacher if a student or to himself if faculty so the tracking of problems can be accurately monitored. He has had episodes of being out of the loop of some problems and only came into the situation after there was no resolution.

Dr. Beyer requested that Mike redo his paper including the comments received today. Also, if someone contacts the Help Desk and it is Blackboard related, to direct them to the online page where you find Blackboard Help. We could increase that page of questions and answers which may help students without needing an actual person. If we can get them to that page, we have many more options of directing them to where they need to go. Mike would also like to link the help page with the login page for Blackboard. Dr. O'Neil gave a final suggestion that faculty could place this information on their syllabus that students could refer back to.

NOTE – WELCOME TO JOHN VENTO WHO WILL BE OUR REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE UNION.

- b. **iTUNES U Contract– (Thatch)** – Ms. Thatch had the application that needs to be filled out in regards to creating a contract. She queried the members in regard to answering the questions on the form and who would be the signer (Deb Wallace). Once she has all the information filled out and Ms. Moise has a chance to look it over, it will be sent in.
- c. **Second Life (Forte-Parnell)**– Dr. Forte-Parnell met with a lady from Ventura College who took her name back to a Ms. Louanne Stronberg from the South Central Regional Consortium for the Institute of Community and Professional Development. They were looking for a contact person here at AVC who would be willing to be involved in discussions in building an 8 college south central region when using Second Life. Dr. Forte-Parnell obtained information in regard to Second Life which involves 3d virtual world or community. This will not involve any expense on the part of the college but if we would like to, we could do this at a later date. Ms. Moise mentioned that she has also attended a conference on the subject matter. There was a small college there with about one fourth the number of students we have but they gave a great presentation on their Second Life. But this college had an IT budget of \$50M which far outpaces us. Ms. Moise is very interested in the consortium in that it would allow us to buy in at a much smaller amount. Also, it would give us the opportunity to participate in someone's implementation that is already established. She feels that it would be very time intensive for faculty and it may run into some expense for us. This would be most attractive to people who are gamers and Dr. Forte-Parnell was just speechless at some of the things that she observed at the recent TechEd.
- d. **Accessibility (Balogh)** – some of the issues that Mr. Balogh and Mr. Sawicki will be working with are platforms that are not user friendly to the people with disabilities. Ken was not even able to read the *accessibility statement on Blackboard*. Ken has some people (Angel and Desire2Learn) out there who are looking into this and sending the information back to us to analyze. Ken still relates that this is still just one piece of the

puzzle so we cannot make judgments just on this factor alone. Angel does have the benefit of having JAWS as opposed to others where when you want to save something, you just click the accessibility button and it will use what they like. Dr. Beyer brought up the issue in regard to YouTube and utilizing it. What was found were many difficulties to overcome so we need to think this through before we make a decision to become involved in the process. Rick mentioned that YouTube has just now come out with their closed caption feature. Dr. Bednar and Ms. Curry mentioned that there has been difficulty in a number of different locations around campus in trying to show videos on YouTube; so much so that it will freeze up the computer. It was questioned if this issue had been relayed to the IT Help Desk and it had, but so far there has been no resolution. This is not an issue of being blocked but it was suggested that maybe the video was too memory intensive, especially since many of our computers are out-of-date. It was requested that if you have these problems, please report them to the IT Help Desk. If we do not have any idea about problems out there, there is no way we can correct them.

- e. **Portal and Email Service (Moise)** – Ms. Moise has had discussions with the other two managers in ITS in regard to some very significant strategic technology challenges at this institution. One of them is our portal and e-mail service that we offer to students as well as employees. She mentioned that over spring break they had planned to upgrade the portal service that would give us the new e-mail client and additional services but they did encounter some problems. That situation and several other things has prompted the IT Department to take a hard and close look at what they are offering the institution, as well as what options might lie before us right now. She received an audience with the President's Executive Council to describe the challenges so that she could make them aware and then her next stop was to be the DEC Committee. She relayed that we are at a decision point with Luminis which is our back-end portal product.

When we purchased the right from Sungard in 2005 to run Luminis, it came packaged with e-mail and calendar tools. It was coincidence that it was the same package that we had just standardized, which was the SUN One tool set. Right now, the ITS department is trying to update the program version from 3.3.3 to 4.2. At 4.3, Sungard will no longer distribute e-mail and calendar tools in the package. Sungard feels that at this point, schools are going with other programs for these services and felt that it was not necessary to include them. The ITS department feels that once they make it to 4.2, they can stay there for quite some time. But this still means that we are coming to the end of a product that has reached end of life as we know it. We would need to make some strategic decisions when we reach this point. Ms. Moise questioned why we should do this work which will result in a dead end product. She requested from the members of the committee what their feelings are in this regard. Dr. Beyer asked why would we do all this work to go from 3.3.3 to 4.2 if it is decided to change products. Ms. Moise also pointed out that the maintenance agreement is due soon and why should it be renewed. Dr. Beyer mentioned that it seems the decision should come from the IT Committee, but Ms. Moise stated that they did not have quorum at their last meeting so that is why she came to the DEC Committee. Dr. Beyer stated that due to the fact of no quorum for the IT Committee, the DEC Committee will take on this matter. He questioned what would our options be. Should we continue to run Luminis with no maintenance and encounter many more problems than we have now or explore what may be out there? Ms. Moise stated that she has zeroed in on four possibilities that have been explored from their

technical prospect, but she would like more people to take a look at these, people from this committee as well as students. Dr. Beyer requested that Ms. Moise come to the next meeting with a list of these choices and their pros and cons.

One choice that she is looking at most closely and had four years ago, is a Portal Grant from CampusEAI. As far as her opinion, it is looking a lot better than it did 4 years ago. It was questioned when the maintenance agreement ends and that is at year end. Also when is the upgrade from 3.3.3 to 4.2 going to happen? That is calendared for the weekend of June 27 and 28.

One other issue that she wished to speak about was remotely hosted services as opposed to in-house services. Ms. Moise is in favor of having the institution go in the direction of remotely hosted services because that is what their main core competency is. This would allow the department to support the institution's primary objective – to educate students. The department should not have to become experts in all of the aspects of providing services. If you can procure all of the services that the institution should require, you can then better utilize the resources it has for more important issues.

- f. Faculty Support Center (Moise)** – as a follow-up to the discussion about STRATA from the previous meeting, Dr. O'Neil indicated that he had established such a center at a former institution. Ms. Moise is very interested in the model that he described which uses faculty peer mentors. Since we have a small training center where our technical trainer, Greg Krynen, does training, she would like to offer it as a faculty support center. They could change out some of the equipment to give more variety. Greg would take on the role of scheduling the room as well as taking care of the facility. The piece that is missing is faculty peer mentors. Faculty peer mentors are not something under her control but she is offering the center and staff. Dr. O'Neil suggested that he and Dr. Forte-Parnell take this to the Dean's Council to inquire if this is something they would like done and if they can encourage their faculty to become these mentors to others. Dr. Bednar suggested that since we may be in the process of changing our CMS, it could be put into the package to provide training for a number of faculty who could then become peer mentors. It was suggested that to have someone in the center that could just provide the basics or the one thing that would enable a teacher to accomplish what they would like to do for their class would be a great idea. Dr. O'Neil will report back at the next meeting.

7. REPORTS –None due to lack of time

8. OTHER

- The next meeting will be May 12.
- Dr. Forte-Parnell would like to create a calendar with any technical or any other type events that may be of interest to the members. Just e-mail her with the information and she will investigate if they have any training opportunities, etc. so this will keep everyone up-to-date on what is out there.

- Mr. Balogh gave a computer demonstration on Course Management Systems. He utilized an astronomy course that was exported into Blackboard and then imported into Angel. He then took this same course and imported it into Desire to Learn. This pretty much gave the same results. He was very impressed with how you can move it around. You won't lose any data, particularly with your quizzes. The representative from Angel stated that their product is a help uploaded, you see it, you do it. She recommended that we ask the other CMS providers if this is the case with their product or they have to provide someone to do it for you. We still have four more CMSs to preview. They are: E College, Blackboard, R Smart and Pearson. These will occur during the first week of May. Dr. Beyer gave his opinion that he feels Angel is best so far.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Distance Education Committee meeting at 4:39 p.m. Motion carried.

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