

Meeting Notes
NSHE E-Learning Task Force
Wednesday, December 18, 2013

Attendees: Dan Klaich, Co-Chair; Mark Fink, Co-Chair; Erika Beck, Caroline (Carrie) Bruno, Cynthia Clark, Paul Davis, Darren Divine, Lisa Frazier, Christian Fritsen, Richard Kloes, Fred Lokken, Ed Nagelhout, Terry Norris, Alex Porter, Tony Scinta, Jeffrey Wong, Robert Wynegar

Other Attendees: Crystal Abba, Renee Davis

1. Review of Policy Proposal: Student Complaints and Appeals

Vice Chancellor Crystal Abba provided background on NSHE's upcoming pact with other states to join WICHE SARA. The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a voluntary agreement among its member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state. Nevada is one of four states ready to opt in to SARA during spring 2014. As part of the multi-state compact, NSHE must have in place a policy that establishes a process of addressing student complaints, including complaints related to distance education. The Task Force was provided with a copy of the draft policy, which will be recommended for action at the March 2014 Board of Regents meetings. After Nevada has formally opted-in to SARA, each NSHE campus will be able to join. By the end of 2014, the consortium hopes to have 8-9 states on board, with around 20 states expected by the end of year 2. In response to a question, Vice Chancellor Abba noted that if a particular state has not opted in to SARA, then Nevada will have to seek state authorization individually to offer courses in that state. Fred Lokken thanked Vice Chancellor Abba for her leadership to position Nevada to join SARA so quickly.

2. Update on Remedial Math and English Work Groups

Dr. Fred Lokken has agreed to assist with the initial coordination of the remedial work groups. He reported on the first meeting of the two groups, which were held December 16. Sheri Sanchez from GBC will lead the remedial math group and Elaine Bunker from UNLV will lead the remedial English group. Mark Fink and Nancy Flagg are working on specific assignments for both groups, which will meet again in early January and are tasked with completing their work by the end of March. The group leads will give reports at each Task Force meeting and will be charged with bringing back recommendations for consideration by the Task Force.

3. Report on Faculty Feedback

Task Force Co-Chair Mark Fink reported on feedback he has received from faculty and staff, including but not limited to his December visit to Reno and Carson City. Comments summarized by general area include the following:

Remedial Education: Is remedial education the proper focus given the list of recommendations; placement needs to be considered; will completion rates be considered?

e-Ncore: There should be guiding principles; it should be a support service not a dictatorial unit; some institutions don't have the means for production; offer modules rather than complete

courses that some feel could infringe on academic freedom; need to be aware of errors in vendor products and ensure that any deliverables are error-free prior to delivery regardless of source; consider modules across the state for a pre-course or “orientation to learning online” and student support modules like study strategies and time management; pilot some projects statewide as a first step; develop an online faculty leadership summer institute and/or a statewide faculty mentor program; provide incentives for faculty; don’t forget part-timers in the dialogue; develop system-wide standards for accessing online education (e.g., bandwidth, hardware); list locations in the state that provide minimum bandwidth required for students to learn online; provide operational definitions of terms (e.g., hybrid/blended, online, e-learning) for NSHE.

Other: We need to stop competing with ourselves and instead compete against non-NSHE entities; continue to frame higher learning via learning technology in the context of accessibility.

Mark will continue visiting other campuses in the coming months. Nancy Flagg will be scheduling CSN, NSC, and UNLV visits after the spring semester gets underway, and a visit to GBC is scheduled January 15-17. Campus visits include meetings with each Faculty Senate, and Mark and Nancy will also schedule a separate tele- or videoconference with NFA representatives.

4. Organization of E-nCore Work Group

The Task Force discussed guiding principles and membership of the work group that will assist the task force with the general education portion of its charge. The Task Force agreed that the membership should consist of each campus Distance Education director plus another person from each campus who is either on a distance education advisory group or who currently teaches online. The Task Force recommended that each Faculty Senate chair or executive committee be provided with an opportunity to review and endorse the second nominee. Nancy Flagg will contact the DE Directors to have them forward at least 2 names to their Senate chair. The work group will be formed in January, with final names hopefully available to be announced at the Task Force’s January 15 meeting. A group lead will be selected from among the work group members.

The Task Force then turned its attention to a draft list of guiding principles for the work groups. The need for such principles was suggested in the faculty feedback to Mark Fink, and the Task Force had been asked to provide feedback on draft principles prior to the meeting. Erika Beck and Tony Scinta recommended that the statements be more focused and specific, with measures added to them. Fred Lokken pointed out that the principles need to be broad enough to allow the work group to conduct their tasks with some degree of openness. Dan Klaich noted that 4-5 of the draft principles speak directly to development of a strong e-Ncore, while others are more general. The Task Force directed Mark Fink and Nancy Flagg to develop a smaller, more focused set of principles tied to a specific work assignment for each of the three work groups. The revised documents will be shared with all members via email.

5. New Business

Mark Fink introduced Ed Nagelhout, who has replaced Kendall Hartley as one of UNLV’s representatives on the Task Force.

Chancellor Klaich alerted the Task Force to a draft report that has been submitted to the Regents' ad hoc Committee on Institutional Service Areas, which addresses suggestions for shared college services among TMCC, WNC, and GBC. The report, prepared by consultant Dr. Geri Anderson, also discusses options for shared online education, but the chancellor wanted to assure the Task Force that its work will be the primary focus of any future initiatives in online education. Chancellor Klaich asked Nancy Flagg to make the report available to the Task Force.