

Faculty Senate Technology Council Report, AY 2014

The Technology Council spent AY 2014 working on the WPUNJ Online Course Policy. We received our charges from Senate Vice-Chair Susan Dinan at our September 17, 2013 meeting and from thence forward dedicated our efforts to creating a policy proposal for consideration by the full Faculty Senate. What follows is a brief narrative to document this work.

Kudos to the Technology Council members, who gave generously of their time and talent to make this year's work a great success:

- Arts & Communication: Leslie Nobler
- Education: Cynthia Northington-Purdie
- Business: Bela Florental
- Humanities & Social Sciences: Michael Gordon
- Science & Health: Elizabeth Van Dyk
- Adjunct Faculty: Doreen Corsetto
- Professional Staff: Robert Harris
- Administration Liaison: Sandie Miller

The Council began with two documents – the existing [2005 Online Course Policy](#), and a [2013 proposal](#) from the Dean's Council that was referred to the Technology Council for revision.

We examined Quality Matters 2011-2013 Rubric Standards for online courses. We examined a number of other institutions' online course policies. We drafted a revision of the 2013 proposal that addressed the concerns voiced on the floor of the Senate. This was presented at the [December 10, 2013](#) meeting of the Faculty Senate. The discussion was lively. Concerns continued over the definitions of online and hybrid courses and how online versions of existing traditional courses would be approved. The Council was asked to continue its work.

Throughout the Fall 2013/Spring 2014 academic year, the Technology Council worked on the online course policy in consultation with the Senate Academic Standards Council and the Senate Graduate Policy Council. Thanks go to the members of these councils and, in particular, chairs Neici Zeller and Bruce Diamond. This collaboration between Senate Councils was most useful. The perspectives of this large and diverse group of stakeholders, I am certain, greatly improved the quality of the work we did.

The revised proposal again was presented at the [March 11, 2014](#) with the [following changes](#). Significant debate centered on whether hybrid courses should or shouldn't be required to have in-person meetings listed at time of course registration. An amendment to add the requirement for this listing was proposed and discussed at length. In the end, this amendment was added, but with the caveat that "faculty reserve the right to modify the schedule due to extenuating circumstances." An additional amendment, to make sure that students know that online and hybrid courses contain deadlines for assignments, was also approved. A final vote resulted in a unanimous approval of the proposed policy.

Only one other topic surfaced this year. In October 2013 Maureen Martin, Director of the WPUNJ Writing Center, wrote to the Technology Council to express her concern that WPUNJ would implement tutor.com, an online tool that she felt unsuitable to improving student writing here. The Technology Council met with Professor Martin and forwarded her concerns to the Senate leadership. Shortly thereafter we were notified that the trial of tutor.com was ending and that this software was not going to be implemented.

Though our work this year was consumed entirely with shepherding our proposal through to Senate approval, we are still interested in the following outline of concerns regarding online learning:

1. Readiness/Training

- a. Faculty
 - i. What are the tools that faculty need to teach online?
 - ii. How can those tools be acquired in a cost- and labor-effective fashion?
 - iii. Should faculty receive remuneration for the necessary training?
- b. Students – because online classes require concentration and motivation
 - i. Should students be screened?
 - ii. Is it desirable to mandate academic and/or technology-oriented prerequisites?
 - iii. Would it be helpful to construct a rubric that would produce a measurement or value that would indicate the student’s readiness to take online courses?

2. Resources

- a. Instructional technology
 - i. What resources would faculty like to see form the Center for Teaching and Learning with Technology? (or, conversely, what can CTLT offer?)
- b. Library
 - i. How can the Library best support online learning?

3. Academic Integrity

- a. How can faculty ensure that students are doing their own work?

4. Intellectual Property

- a. By what means can faculty safeguard their work?
- b. What tools are available to teach students the importance of intellectual property?

5. Quality Control

In addition, we would like to be charged in AY 2015 with becoming a part of the evaluation, configuration, and testing of **Ellucian Degree Works**. We strongly believe that the Technology Council has an important role, through its diverse membership, in providing unique perspectives and constructive assistance in making sure that the implementation of this student degree audit system is successful.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Robert Harris, former chair of the Technology Council, under whose leadership we began our work on the Online Course Policy. Robert has stepped down from the Council and was replaced by Rob Meyer, of IRT. Also, Leslie Nobler has stepped down and was replaced by John Link from Music.

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt W. Wagner
David and Lorraine Cheng Library