

Library, Media, and Academic Computing Committee Minutes February 27, 2002

Present: Barry, Bauska, Beezer (visitor), Butcher (visitor), Greenfield, Houston (chair), Hong, Hooper, Imamshah, Nanfito, O'Neil, Reinitz, Scharrer, Ward

The meeting came to order at about 11:05 am.

The Minutes for the February 13 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

The new Instructional Technology Resources webpage can be found at <http://www.ups.edu/itr/> or through the University webpage (Academics/Faculty Resources).

The committee then began the process of evaluating courseware for possible purchase by the University. Nanfito gave an overview of the process to date, noting that some two-years of work by both faculty and OIS staff had already gone into the evaluation of various courseware issues and that LMAC was entering the process towards the end. OIS is seeking a recommendation of a courseware package from LMAC.

Houston distributed a sheet of evaluation criteria for courseware and noted that issues of cost or compatibility fell to the administration and not to LMAC. Ward asked whether our choice of courseware would have an impact on our ability to stream video and audio for our courses. Imamshah and others indicated that streaming video and audio could be accomplished with any courseware package through a link and that our particular choice of courseware was probably not critical to the effectiveness of such links. Bauska stressed the importance of choosing a courseware package that would be easy to use for the instructor who had fewer computer skills. Greenfield asked about copyright issues and Houston and Reinitz acknowledged that we would need to return to this issue.

Houston then provided an introduction to Blackboard courseware. She demonstrated a number of Blackboard functions, including student self-enrollment, adding documents to the course site, creating links, communication among students and between students and instructor, and the digital drop box. Reinitz noted that much of this could be accomplished with email and software that's already available. O'Neil agreed that the high-end users might choose not to adopt courseware, but that the ease of use of courseware could save time for many faculty who didn't want to develop their own webpage or adapt their email to a "drop-box" function. Butcher and Houston also commented that email attachments also carry viruses and that the digital drop box avoided such risks.

Butcher then briefly discussed her experience with Blackboard. She noted its ease of use but also commented on the difficulty of access she and other faculty had experienced at the beginning of the semester. Barry asked whether problems of access had arisen from a software architecture problem or an overloaded-offsite server.

Bauska and Hooper asked about other courseware products such as Aspen and Click-to-Learn.

The meeting adjourned at about 12:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Barry