CEPP Meeting

September 11th, 2019  
Minutes

In Attendance: Andrew Bozio, Peter Von Allmen, Feryaz Ocakli (scribe), Jina Mao, Steve Ives, Riley Filister, Michael Orr, Pat Hilleren

In attendance for part of the meeting: Beth DuPont, Aaron Kendall, Dwayne Sterling

Meeting Began at 2:31 pm.

1. Presentation about Blackboard and its alternatives by LEDS representatives

Beth DuPont explained the background of why LEDS is thinking about moving away from Blackboard to a new LMS (learning management system). We briefly discussed what some of the faculty complaints are about Blackboard. Canvass, Brightspace, and Moodle are potential alternatives to Blackboard.

* 1. Blackboard is the oldest company and quite rigid. Not likely to improve.
  2. Canvass has limited customization, doesn’t allow users to drag and drop files, and has limited support for mobile browsers. Canvass also argues that they own the aggregated data that is produced from all the information entered into their system. This is problematic.
  3. LEDS representatives strongly endorse Brightspace. Brightspace has a clean design, is accessible through tablets and phones, allows drag and drop, and students get to keep their ePortfolios after graduation.

LEDS has already held demonstrations and discussions with a group of interested faculty and staff in February 2019. Currently we have a number of faculty testing Brightspace in 14 different classes. LEDS will take their input into account. LEDS has a fairly aggressive schedule to collect input from faculty and potentially transition out of Blackboard. If the final decision is made, the transition to a new LMS will be in summer 2020. It will be possible for early adopters to make the transition in Spring 2020.

CEPP members asked further questions about Brightspace’s capabilities, such as instant polling through clickers, drag and drop capabilities etc.

We discussed whether the transition to a new LMS requires a faculty vote. CEPP’s opinion is that this does not require a faculty vote. We appreciated the detailed process LEDS has planned to present the new software to the Skidmore community, and to receive feedback, before a final decision is made. CEPP supports LEDS’ effort to transition to a better software through extensive consultation with the faculty at large, as well as with the appropriate college-wide committees.

1. We discussed and approved the minutes from 09.04.2019 with minor amendments.
2. We discussed and approved the CEPP Operating Code.
3. We are waiting for updates regarding religious holidays from Parker Diggory. We will work on revising our policies on academic calendars and religious holiday observance.
4. We had a brief conversation on whether it is conceivable that Skidmore stops using student evaluations altogether. Alternatively, could Skidmore significantly change the way we collect and use student evaluations (or feedback)? This is a longer conversation that we will return to in the coming weeks.

We ended the meeting at 3:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Feryaz Ocakli