

The Faculty Executive Committee has proposed a Committee of the Whole discussion on E-learning at the 12/7 Faculty Meeting. We wish to prompt that discussion in three ways. **First**, here are key questions for framing that discussion:

Where does Skidmore see itself within the E-learning landscape?

What are the potential benefits for our faculty and students?

What are the potential challenges?

Second, courtesy of Bill Duffy and Beth Dupont from IT, here is a definition of E-learning:

Some define E-learning solely in terms of online courses and training, while others use a broader definition that includes Web-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration. E-learning has been around for quite a long time and has existed in many different forms, starting with the computer based instruction of the 1960's to the current implementation of Open Online Courses. The Macmillan dictionary defines E-learning simply as:

methods of learning that involve the use of computers and the Internet.

For years, Skidmore faculty have been using a wide range of E-learning modalities to digitally enhance the traditional classroom and extend student experiences beyond campus. At Skidmore, E-learning often takes the form of providing course materials online via Blackboard, virtual lectures and speakers thru videoconferencing, discussion boards, audio discussion boards, blogs, wikis, ePortfolios, electronic submission of assignments, online tests, grade books, personal response systems and more.

Some of the hot E-learning topics in Higher Education focus on "flipping the classroom" and "massive online open courses (MOOCs)", all of which make use of the computer as a delivery vehicle for information. A "flipped classroom" is described as "a pedagogical model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed." (EDUCAUSE, 2012) It can take many forms, but often includes prerecorded lectures which are viewed on line prior to meeting face to face. A MOOC is an online course, open to virtually anyone, has no cost attached, participants receive no credit, and there is minimal direct feedback from the instructor. However, it provides the opportunity to interact on a subject with potentially thousands of participants.

And **third**, if you wish to read further, FEC recommends that you look at the second attachment under agenda item VII for an excellent overview; this brief but excellent article comes to us from Leo Porter, Department of Math and Computer Science. The third item is a report prepared by DOF/VPAA Beau Breslin presented at the October Board meeting.

See you Friday!