

Minutes of the CAS Online Faculty Discussion Group
September 27, 2007
3:00PM

Attendees:

Karen Cozart, Sandra Dickinson, Suliman Hawamdeh, Kathy Latrobe, June Lester, Betsy Martens (*via videoconferencing from Tulsa*), Lee Morris, Tammara Williams-Dias, Amanda York.

1. Introductions. Karen Cozart mentioned to attendees that the CAS Online Program staff (Cozart, Williams-Dias, and York) will be visiting the OU Tulsa campus on Tuesday, October 2, 2007. She also mentioned office staff changes, and introduced the new CAS Online Program staff assistant, Jennifer Roberts. Williams-Dias hosted the meeting.
2. Issues and Concerns with the upgrade to D2L 8.1 –
 - a. Betsy Martens noted that she misses the D2L pager tool and has been bombarded with emails from students since removal of the pager tool now makes instant messaging difficult. She was encouraged to investigate and use “MeBo” as a replacement by a member of the CAS Computing Team; Martens is concerned that her students can no longer access her as easily without the D2L pager. D2L’s “Live Room” option is not available to Martens and she expected the upgrade to 8.1 to make the CMS easier to use.
 - b. Several members of the group had encountered slowness of D2L in recent weeks. It was recommended that periods of slowness in D2L should be posted on the main D2L page so students do not bombard professors with questions about the slowness of the system. It was asked if IT could do such a notification. Cozart mentioned that IT plans to implement a second upgrade (to 8.2) next summer.
 - c. Martens mentioned that she has been unable to move her students’ discussion board posts from one forum to another, and asked that group if there was a way for this to be accomplished more simplistically.
 - d. Hawamdeh mentioned he would like to be able to set up the Gradebook from the Dropbox., specifically adjusting the grading scheme. In response, Cozart and Williams-Dias suggested that the gradebook settings be checked, since D2L does allow editing of the grading scheme.
 - e. Martens stated that she works on a Mac, and has encountered difficulty repeatedly when content she has formatted disappears completely. She is currently receiving some assistance with that problem from the OU Tulsa technology support person, Trey Bauhaus.
 - f. Cozart mentioned she had encountered problems with downloading D2L Dropbox files; Williams-Dias had also experienced a similar problem with downloading files from the D2L Dropbox.
 - g. Morris mentioned inactivity of the “Spell check” function; he was able to use it easily in D2L 8.0, but has found the function does not seem to work in 8.1. Cozart recommended that whenever faculty encounter system problems with D2L (slow response, inactive tools, etc.) they should immediately notify <https://learn.ou.edu>.

- h. Dickinson mentioned the D2L system autoedits “ou” in her some of her course documents to read “OU”.
 - i. Hawamdeh suggested that a separate course just for online faculty be created in D2L so online faculty can interact with one another and with the CAS Online Program staff regarding feedback on course and D2L issues.
 - j. Lester suggested some effort be made to have better access to the Chicago Manual of Style Online. She suggested that the OU Libraries consider obtaining a license/online subscription. Additional discussion noted that the OU Graduate College now accepts the Chicago Manual as a secondary standard.
3. Student Privacy and Copyright Issues –
- a. Williams-Dias led a brief discussion of concerns about violations of student privacy via use of unsecure external email to communicate private student information (i.e., course grades). Faculty were encouraged to use the D2L Gradebook to communicate assignment/text grades. Additional discussion included very general standards for use of online materials. Faculty were encouraged to link directly to materials accessible to students on the web, rather than cutting and pasting the (potentially) copyright-protected content directly from websites and/or pages. Additional discussion covered use of media in fully online courses, and ways in which the Teach Act generally supports the use of some types/forms of media. Hawamdeh suggested a “best practices” document be written and distributed to online faculty so they can abide by what are considered ‘appropriate standards.’ Cozart suggested faculty consider asking the OU Libraries to have or keep materials on reserve, as an alternative to the risk of misusing copyright-protected materials.
4. Discussion of Innovative Practices in Online Teaching –
- a. Latrobe discussed obtaining support for use of podcasting and “Captive” in online courses. She also mentioned there is increasing interest in virtual environments like SecondLife. Cozart mentioned that the CAS Online Program cannot provide support for all technology that online faculty may be interested in using, but there is a concerted effort to make sure we are aware of innovative practices (like the use of “islands” for educational purposes in SecondLife).
 - b. Lester and Latrobe mentioned that a member of the CAS faculty has been appointed to help CA&S faculty with the use of technological tools (like survey programs). Lester also suggested there be more collaboration and coordination between the different campus offices devoted to assisting faculty (i.e., Center for Instructional Innovation and the CA&S Online Program).
5. A second round of introductions was made after Williams-Dias asked faculty for suggested topics for future meetings. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30PM.