

Minutes of the CAS Online Faculty Discussion Group  
February 28, 2008  
3:00 PM

Attendees:

Katie Barwick-Snell, Eric Blazek, Jane Bowerman, Patrice Brink, Karen Cozart, Betsy Martens (via video-conferencing from Tulsa), Rhonda Taylor, Amanda York.

I. *Introductions.*

Attendees introduced themselves. Karen Cozart hosted the meeting.

II. *Announcements.*

Mid-term surveys will be running the week of March 3- March 10 (closes at 8:00 am). These surveys are for instructor use only – no information is sent to the departments – and can be found at learn.ou.edu under the Online Orientation course listing. Please encourage your students to complete them.

CAS Online Program will be hosting a webinar from Academic Impressions on Thursday, March 20 from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm called “Exploring Second Life Basics for Educators” in our Cross Center D Smith House conference room. Any CAS faculty member interested in learning more about Second Life and its potential uses in education is welcome to attend.

III. *Agenda.*

**Orienting Online Students**

Completion of the CAS Online Orientation is required for all online students. Cozart is looking for feedback as to its usefulness and suggestions for improvement of the orientation from online instructors. Its main purpose is to alleviate the burden on faculty members to provide technical support for students in the use of D2L and allow them to focus on course information instead. She said the orientation is purposely modeled in D2L to simulate an online course and to provide new online students with practice using the mechanics of D2L. Cozart strongly suggests that online faculty members build completion of the Online Orientation into the first week’s activities of their courses as an easy method of assuring more technologically-prepared students. Both Rhonda Taylor and Betsy Martens commented on the difficulty of judging the efficacy of the orientation because students come into online education with such varying degrees of experience and technological expertise. However, they agreed with Cozart who commented that it has been her experience that students who later experience frustration with D2L and subsequently drop online classes are often those who failed to complete the orientation.

Taylor noted that a common problem seems to be inability to find the orientation, usually requiring the clicking of the “+” sign next to Online Orientation in “My University of Oklahoma Courses” in D2L. Patrice Brink suggested that IT might be able to change the default settings in D2L to the open or “-“ sign which would allow all the semester’s

courses, including the Online Orientation, to show up rather than be hidden (“+”) by default. This would alleviate a main barrier for new students accessing the orientation.

### **Online Course Security**

In response to the allegations of cheating in online courses among athletes at Florida State (<http://sports.espn.go.com/ncaa/news/story?id=3038041>), OU’s athletic department has instituted the following policy restructuring athletes’ participation in online courses:

1. Future enrollment in online OU courses is limited to upper-classmen who have established a 3.0 or higher grade point average.
2. Student-athletes choosing to enroll in online courses will have no tutorial support or learning specialist support assigned for that course. Student-athletes with above a 3.0 and who have documented ADA accommodations may receive tutorial assistance and learning specialist support in the course under the currently strictly monitored conditions and not while online.

Cozart asked for examples and opinions from online instructors about online course security. Jane Bowerman replied that she has worked with athletes since 1986 both face-to-face and online and there are always times when an instructor is not sure who is doing the work. She remarked that the online format for delivery does not seem to be any worse than face-to-face. Those who choose to cheat will try to do so regardless of the delivery method of the course, and those with integrity will not. Instructors cannot become the “police” with regard to athletes and academic integrity.

Cozart mentioned that instructors can structure assignments so as to minimize the likelihood that anyone will cheat by making journals, discussion board participation, projects, essay-tests and papers a significant portion of the semester grade, rather than relying exclusively on multiple-choice quizzes and tests. When including quizzes and tests, there are also ways to make them more secure. These include using tools in D2L to randomize questions, restricting the length of time a quiz or test can be open once begun, limiting the time period of availability for a quiz or test, blocking “right mouse click” to avoid easy copying and pasting of questions and answers, having mandatory proctored exams, and including a signed honor code as part of the course.

### **Response Rates for Online Evaluations**

The College of Arts and Sciences Online Program participates in student evaluation of online courses and instructors each semester. Initially the evaluation was done using Blackboard because all courses were administered through Blackboard. When the CMS was changed to Desire2Learn, the survey was administered through D2L as well. In summer 2007, CAS IT designed a new evaluation tool which is administered directly through Associate Dean Kelly Damphousse’s office. Whereas the Spring 2007 evaluations done using D2L had a 34% response rate, the Summer 2007 evaluations administered directly from CAS IT had a 46% response rate. A review of relevant literature shows that there is a correlation between frequency and location of reminders to complete the evaluations and higher response rates. The highest response rates for online course evaluations came when instructors posted notices to complete the evaluations on course discussion board and added completion of evaluations as an assignment during the

last week of semester activities. Cozart requested that CAS Online instructors consider implementing one or both of these measures as a way to boost our own completion rate.

Eric Blazek commented that the College of Liberal Studies has a 50% response rate for its evaluations and that they are run by Erin Jones using Survey Monkey.

IV. *Next Meeting.*

The next CAS Online Discussion Group Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2008, at 3:00 pm.

V. *Adjournment.*

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.