

Instructional Enhancement Initiative Subcommittee Continuity Report 1997-98

Chancellor Young in his letters to Provost Copenhaver (dated June 26, 1997) and to Lynn Swartz, SFAC chair, (dated June 30, 1998) gave SFAC the charge to be part of the post-audit process which examined the implementation of the Instructional Enhancement Initiative (IEI). In his letter to Lynn Swartz, the Chancellor justified SFAC's inclusion in this process "so that you have confidence in the methodology used to assess performance and are able to report to your constituencies that the fee revenues are being spent appropriately and productively."

Assistant Vice Chancellor Glyn Davies of Academic Planning and Budget was given the responsibility of conducting the post-audit review. He incorporated SFAC into the post-audit process by giving the committee the task of examining a random sample of 10% of undergraduate courses which were to have web-site availability. The methodology he imposed upon SFAC followed very closely Chancellor Young's approval letters mentioned above. First, the committee was to check to ensure that the web-sites were on-line and in place. Second, the committee was to verify that the web-sites contained an interactive component.

The work which the subcommittee undertook included looking at a random selection of courses which were to have web-site availability from Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences. The subcommittee members individually searched the web to make sure the web-site for a class and the interactive component were in place. Inspection of these sites was complicated by the fact that there was no centralized access to the divisions' web pages. Furthermore, some web pages required passwords to access the page itself or the interactive component. The subcommittee members were provided with passwords to some sites but not all. The subcommittee members also checked to see if course number, course title, course description, instructor's name, course days, meeting times and location were present on the site. The subcommittee was very eager to find out the level of usage in this first quarter of implementation but met with considerable resistance from Academic Planning and Budget. In the end some usage numbers were included by APB in their report to the Chancellor.

SFAC next year needs to set up criteria for the comprehensive review of 1999-2000 which will determine if the course materials fee can be extended or increased. Part of the review should include analysis of the technological infrastructure and its ability to accommodate student needs and demand. A methodology needs to be established to track student usage, demand and wait time at computer labs and also to determine access to web-sites from remote locations. The subcommittee this year felt that it is necessary that the College further advertise and promote location and accessibility of computer labs on campus. There should also be a central and obvious way to access help or support for students with questions.

The review should determine the impact on TA workload and pedagogy. There should be quantifiable evidence available as to the number of hours TAs worked previous to IEI and subsequent. Were pedagogies changed to accommodate the changing TA environment?

The review should look at the role of language courses under the IEI. Languages which use a script other than Latin have special technological needs. How are these being addressed? Some committees on campus have looked at this issue. What were their recommendations?

This subcommittee faced numerous difficulties this year. SFAC, which has a strong working relationship with Academic Planning and Budget, faced considerable adversity in trying to find space to express itself in this review. SFAC needs to have strong leadership and set down clear expectations for the upcoming review as early as possible. Delay is the great destroyer.

-- Prepared June 1998