



State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Learning Technology Advisory Council Meeting (LTAC)

Minutes for November 10, 2009

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

In attendance: Ralph Alberico, Inez Farrell, Jim Mazoue, Mike McPherson, Anne Moore, John Moore, Jeff Nugent (via Elluminate), Shannon Phillips, and Sharon Pitt

Welcome and Introductions

Thanks to James Madison University for hosting the meeting and to the Center for Instructional Technology staff for their support and preparation.

Sharon Pitt introduced Beverly Covington, who replaces Vernon Harper as the SCHEV representative to LTAC.

Open Source Learning Managements Systems:

James Madison University staff gave a presentation on the Moodle “sandbox.” Faculty and students at JMU had mixed reactions to the tool.

Virginia Tech gave a presentation on Scholar. As of Fall 2010, Scholar (Sakai as branded by Virginia Tech) will be the centrally supported LMS at Virginia Tech. Support, transition and operational costs, as well as communication plans were presented.

Advantages of open source LMS were discussed. Those include embracing OS LMS as a gateway/framework for Web 2.0 teaching and learning tools like blogs, wikis, content management systems and the like. Another significant advantage is control, such as who uses our systems (licensing) and cost (contracts). For VT, the deployment of Sakai, especially the provision of e-portfolios, allowed pedagogical focus as a part of their quality enhancement plan for reaffirmation of accreditation.

Challenges with a transition from commercial to OS LMS include cultural change and communication.

Resources of interest to the LTAC community regarding open source LMS include:

The Common Solutions Group: <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/csg.demo/home>

Managed Hosting and other OS services resources: Unicon, rSmart

Blackboard:

Christopher Newport and the Virginia Community College System are upgrading their Blackboard learning systems this summer and spring, respectively. For the next one to two years, it is likely that other institutions will remain on the version of Blackboard that they currently use, while assessing options. Institutions currently vested in Blackboard LMS will share experiences.

ITU/Library Collaboration:

The Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) steering committee is pursuing three key initiatives, one of which is to explore collaborative ventures between higher education IT and libraries across the state. Certain initiatives, such as federated identity, cross responsibilities of both areas. Attendees discussed options for encouraging active involvement in such collaboration. It was suggested that VIVA participate in the yearly ACCS conference in Charlottesville, VA. Best progress might be made by placing the topic on the agenda of the higher education CIOs of Virginia, who meet throughout the year, as well as in association with the ACCS conference.

Meeting adjourned at 3pm.

Next meeting February 15, at 10am, UVA/VT Richmond Center.

Topics for next meeting include institutional investments in public clouds, esp. outsourced email; fluency in information technology; and progress on the Virginia Virtual Computing Lab.