

Blackboard Advisory Group Minutes: 02-19-2003

Perkins Library, Carpenter Board Room, 4-5:00 p.m.

Attending:

Amy Campbell, Dan Graham, Adrienne Moore, Debbie DeYulia, Stephen Sopp, Wayne Miller, Paul Conway, Sean Dollman

1. Announcements

- Bb 6 upgrade: appears to be happening in mid-Summer, new version offers several important new features and allows greater flexibility in managing course construction, navigation and organization. More details at March meeting.

2. Status of e-reserves-Blackboard pilot, Brownstone EDU

- E-reserves: Library + CIT team recruited about 8 – 10 faculty participants; for those people we are putting a list of links to their reserves articles in their Blackboard course site. Will be gathering feedback from participants and their students about their experiences.

Question arose about whether there are problems accessing e-reserves through Bb off campus due to IP restrictions, as there are when accessing not through Bb. This needs to be tested.

- Brownstone EDU pilot: CIT demoed the EDU software (a flexible online homework and assessment tool) in late January. One faculty member is actively using it in a class this term, others may be interested pending resolution of some technical difficulties and answers to a few questions. The attraction with EDU is flexible assessment authoring, robust handling of formulae, and availability of question banks from publishers. EDU also purports to connect to Blackboard, although this aspect isn't being tested during the pilot.

3. Requirements for new My Courses module (your input requested on several possibilities)

- CIT would like to contact Blackboard, Inc. for creation of a custom module ("My Courses") in Blackboard to allow more versatile course display. Members of BbAG provided input to requirements for this module:
 - a. lists of courses grouped logically in some way (e.g., by term)
 - b. logical groups can expand and contract (like folder displays in Windows systems, for example) at the user control
 - c. most recent groups appear on top (e.g., current semester above previous semesters)
 - d. although logical groups can be created/defined by system administrator, having a "favorites" group that is user-created would make the module far more flexible.
 - e. Allowing users to edit the display of the logical groups, so that only certain groups are displayed (e.g., older semesters could be "turned off") would be nice, but if the groups expand/contract, this options isn't critical
 - f. Students do not see unavailable courses.
- Will keep BbAG informed of status of module development
- Another topic to be addressed (held over from January's cancelled meeting) is how to handle course sites within Blackboard – how long to keep them active on the server for faculty access, how long for faculty to leave them available to students. Faculty and student opinion (based on most recent user's survey) appears bi-polar: either several weeks to a month, or forever (as long as a student at Duke). Meeting attendees mentioned that the TEACH Act may have implications for this decision, particularly if Blackboard becomes the sole vehicle for accessing e-reserves. More discussion on this topic will be necessary in future.

4. Brainstorming training/communication needs for Blackboard 6 upgrade

- Questions: who needs training? best types of training to provide? types of communication to faculty? types of communication to community at-large? involvement of BbAG?
- The attendees mentioned that without seeing the new version, they aren't sure what level of training would be necessary.
- Suggestions from attendees: for existing users - what's new and what's changed sessions, for new users – standard “what is Blackboard” sessions.
- Law School – use course docs, email, announcements, discussion board, so if these don't change much, won't be as big a deal
- Teaser advertisements - targeting what users gripe about now and how it's improved in Bb 6, presentations at the Showcase, highlight nice new features (move and copy, assignments)
- Suggestions for hands-on sessions to include step-by-step tutorials, to be done there and worked on later.

5. Other items?

- Plan for migrating courses – all courses? Archive some? Discussion for future

6. Next meetings:

- **Thursday March 20, 4-5 pm**
- **Wednesday April 16, 4-5 pm**