

Blackboard Advisory Group Minutes: 09-25-2002

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

Attending:

Amy Campbell, Pete Goldberg, Stacey McCorison, Lisa Huettel, Adrienne Moore, Neal Caidin, Susan Shaw, Steve Barrell (guest), Dan Graham, Linda Lee, Wayne Miller, Lynne O'Brien, Mike Baptiste, Stephen Sopp, Paula Meacombs (guest), Debbie DeYulia, Michael Montague-Smith, Van Hillard, Fred Westbrook, Pat Halpin

1. Introductions and orientation to new members

- Explained purpose of Group - to advise Blackboard administration, with input from members' own "constituencies" and to distribute relevant information from the Group to constituencies.
- Explained the working process of the group - issue or question (initiated by Group or by Blackboard administration) is brought to the Group, either in a face-to-face meeting or via the email list. The Group has a period of discussion time (usually 2 weeks) and then the discussion will be summarized and publicly posted to the Group by Amy Campbell. Decision or next steps will be posted, as well.
- Email list discussions and comments are a core part of the Group work, with monthly face-to-face meetings as a supplement.

2. Your suggestions for distributing important Blackboard information to faculty

Blackboard admin/support has a need to get important information to Blackboard users in a way(s) that ensures that they have an opportunity to see that information. What is/are the best ways to do this?

a. Possible solutions:

- automatically enroll faculty using Blackboard in Bb-related email list (unsubscribe possible, use to send monthly info postings, plus service outages). Those at the meeting didn't seem to disagree with this option, but will need to check how this fits with Duke's group email policy.
- publish on blackboard.duke.edu . Those at the meeting didn't comment much on this option, but did remark that requiring actions on the part of users (e.g., going to a website, rather than having the information come to them) will probably result in few seeing the info.
- publish on My Blackboard page (e.g., in the "Faculty News" and "Student News" modules). Currently these modules are optional and have to be configured to display. Pat Halpin asked whether these modules can be set as required. Technically they can be and we are working on a script to set roles of Blackboard users (necessary before we could do this). Several attendees mentioned that they ignore content on the My Blackboard page that they don't need.
- create a Blackboard training course in which all faculty using Blackboard are enrolled (Nursing uses a similar solution).
- put the content on the My Blackboard page (e.g., in the currently-required Blackboard Info Module), but reduce it to clickable links to full news stories (to save real estate).
- use color (e.g., red) in the links on the My Blackboard page to draw the eye.
- use something (e.g., a graphic) at the bottom of course homepage to announce outages.

b. Discussion

The discussion suggested that several information dissemination mechanisms are necessary. My plan is to investigate the option of enrolling all faculty in the bb-forum email list, to provide information on the My Blackboard page in a more convenient way, and to move forward on defining user roles within Blackboard so as to target information more specifically. **Please forward comments on this plan, or other suggestions, by Friday October 11, 2002.**

3. Your input on Blackboard policy issues

a. Problem: whether or not to continue current policy of adding students on the ACES waitlist to the course (as if they were taking the course), until the end of the add/drop period. At that point, the ACES waitlists are cleared and those not officially added to the class will be “dropped” (their Bb course record will be disabled). Based on group discussion, current plan should continue, but there is some concern about the handling of disabled/dropped student records in general (see below). **Please forward comments on this plan, or other suggestions, by Friday October 11, 2002.**

b. Recommendations for adding "observers" to course sites. Should Blackboard administration have a recommendation or best practice for whether/how instructors should proceed with adding non-course-related “observers”? What student privacy issues are involved? As an example: Bb admin could state as a policy “We recommend that before you add a non-enrolled person to your course site (peer observer, guest speaker, etc.) you first notify the students and obtain their permission to do so.” **Please forward comments, concerns or suggestions on this issue by Friday October 11, 2002.**

c. Deleting course sites, copying sites, removing users from sites. What policy should we have about things like: deleting a site from the server,, removing an instructor from a course site (which removes their access to the course materials), copying a course for someone who isn't the course's instructor. Duke's intellectual property policy is at <http://www.duke.edu/web/ost/invention/docs/IntelProp.pdf>. Blackboard admin has an *ad hoc* policy regarding copying courses: if the copy is for someone other than the course instructor we need permission from the course instructor to make the copy. **Please forward comments, concerns or suggestions on this issue by Friday October 11, 2002.**

4. Issues of importance to you at this point, regarding Blackboard (10 minutes)

These issues came up during the meeting:

- How to get student members on the Group. Amy explained that she has contacted DSG for replacement UG student members, as last years' members declined to continue. Lynne O'Brien concerned about getting enough student input to the process, and suggests having an official process for recruiting student members but also encouraging students from other areas to attend and contribute. Discussion about how to recruit members. **If you have any suggestions for how to officially nominate undergraduate and graduate/professional student member, please forward them to me. In addition, if you know of any “unofficial” students who would make good members, please forward me their names by Friday Oct. 11.**
- Discussion about the recurring issue of how to better organize the course display on the My Blackboard page. We are testing a second "solution" from Blackboard, Inc. to do this, and if this doesn't work we plan to locate or program one ourselves. **I will provide more information about this to the group as it becomes available.**
- How we should handle students who drop a course, in Blackboard. Currently, if a student is enrolled and drops, their student record in that course becomes “disabled,” meaning they can no longer access the course site, but their name still appears (grayed-out) in the course roster for the instructor. One possibility is that the disabled students could all be deleted, but this removes all their records from the course site (something that certain instructors may not want to do). Another possibility would be to have a customized process (individual instructors can request to have their disabled student records removed) but at the moment that would be a manual and labor intensive (slow) process. I welcome your input on this issue, but there is no particular action date associated with this issue at this time (in other words, we don't plan to make a policy change at this point, but would like to gather input).
- Mention of problem with slowness of drop box and difficulty handling large groups of students' papers submitted in that way. Pat Halpin mentioned that he has ended up not using the drop box for this reason. Van Hillard will plan to use it in Spring for a huge course, and needs a solution that's workable. **Blackboard admin will investigate options and report back to group.**