

# Blackboard Advisory Group Agenda: 11-20-2002

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

*Attending:*

Amy Campbell, Michael Montague-Smith, Sean Dollman, Wayne Miller, Dan Graham, Andy Keck, Neal Caidin, Pat Halpin, Ben Donnelly, Tom Wall, Lisa Huettel, Van Hillard, Stephen Sopp, Paula Meacombs

## 1. Announcements

- New members: Sean Dollman, Registrar's office. Graham McWhorter, undergraduate student and DSG representative
- We plan to do a comprehensive test of our failsafe/recovery plan between semesters, requiring two days of Blackboard outage. We are suggesting Dec 19 and 20, 2002. Attendees commented that this should be as close to the end of the term as possible, probably at the end of Fall better than at the beginning of Spring. Neal pointed out that technical staff required to do this testing not available between 12/23 and 1/1/2003. Best bet seems 12/19 and 12/20. We will announce this as soon as a decision is made. We will plan this unless we're told that programs are still using Blackboard for exams, etc. during that time (Medicine? CRTP?)  
**ACTION:** provide feedback on these proposed dates (will these be OK?) by Tuesday November 26, 2002.

## 2. Freshmen schedules in Blackboard

- Freshmen are not allowed to see their course schedules until they arrive on campus, either in Bb or through ACES. This means they can't be in a Bb course site that's available until 2 days before the start of fall term.
- Impact on this policy on faculty and other Blackboard users?
- Options are to disable freshmen student course enrollments (could login to Bb but wouldn't see their classes) or disable their entire record (can't login to Bb at all), or not to enroll any students of any kind in their course sites until Fall freshman orientation.
- Discussion followed but seemed to reach consensus fairly quickly:  
Let freshmen login (i.e., don't disable their whole Bb account, but just disable their course enrollments) to see incoming student info, demonstration course, etc. Use the available Blackboard roles to target information to them as incoming freshmen, which would display on the My Blackboard login page. Allow them to browse a demonstration course to see what Blackboard is all about, before orientation.
- **ACTION:** provide other comments on this solution, if any, by Friday Dec. 6, 2002.

## 3. Blackboard and e-reserves: how to integrate

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of the current two systems? What type of integration would be useful to faculty and student users?
- Tom Wall: one driver for closer integration is that the new TEACH Act [related to copyright in distance education] doesn't allow open reserves as we currently have here at Duke, but more important is the service aspect - get reserves to the point of need (Blackboard).
- Amy: there may be long term and short term scenarios for better integrating the two systems. Long term, could we provide links to scanned docs on e-reserves server from within Blackboard, and not accessible from the e-reserves server directly, or should we provide documents directly within Blackboard?
- Michael M-S: organic chem archive of old hour exams that he scans - can we make sure that the link is static from semester to semester with copied course?
- Van Hillard: uses e-reserves a lot. Wonders about fair use and copyright, and whether these issues will be addressed when moving these systems.
- Tom: TEACH act requires reserves to be password protected and only accessible to enrolled students course.

- Amy: is using documents semester to semester OK? what about having docs within multiple sites resulting in duplication of content?
- Pat: agrees that centralizing is efficient, but trend seems to be in opposite direction. Currently sites often are a mix and match of types of documents, most loaded by faculty into the site, inefficient but necessary because of the realities of time constraints of course materials preparation. How to make the service more efficient so just in time service possible? Or flexible to allow faculty to get different types of service depending on their needs?
- Two scenarios for a possible e-reserves pilot in Spring 2003: provide faculty with HTML doc containing a collection or links to their docs on the current e-reserves server, or provide a service to put documents right into Bb sites.
- Paula mentions problems with AOL users connecting to e-reserves now, and would this change? Now they have to come to campus to access and print. The group thought that if these users configure to use the Duke proxy server, they should be fine [Amy's note later: I didn't catch whether Paula said they are already doing that, or if that might indeed be the solution].
- Amy: seems that the option to put docs right into Bb is most popular
- Tom: would start with 5 or 10 people to pilot. Need to revise the current e-reserves form first, etc.
- Pat: would like to have putting the docs right into Bb be an option, but would also like to have the option to be provided with a list of links.
- Interested: Andy Keck, Van Hillard, Gregory Besharov (colleague of Dan Graham), Pat Halpin.
- **ACTION:** any other comments on this matter or possible pilot test to Amy and Tom Wall by Friday 12/6/2002. Tom will be proceeding with planning from the Library side of things, contacting potential piloters, communicating with other library branches to see how this works across the library, etc.

#### 4. Blackboard building blocks: your reactions?

- Of those listed in my email, or on the Blackboard site, which most caught your interest?
- Questions from the group:  
How many of these do we (or CIT) want to support? How would we test them?  
What is our process for testing these? How do we determine which ones to test (is it enough for just one faculty to request it)?
- Amy: I'm looking to the Advisory Group as one mechanism to provide feedback about what building blocks would be useful, based on their knowledge and based on bouncing it off a few colleagues. Then, with that information in hand, we (CIT and OIT) can make an informed decision about which building blocks to pilot test in a more formalized way (we're formalizing a process for this investigation right now, but this pilot testing would involve first identifying goals of a pilot, test period, outcomes and evaluation strategies, obtaining buy-in from other campus groups about the pilot, plan for the end of the pilot).
- What's our sense of how these would impact the system for those who don't want to use them? What is Blackboard's commitment to support these and make these Bb 6 compatible.
- Amy: the building blocks are provided by vendors, not by Blackboard, and for the most part they aren't supported by Blackboard but instead by the vendor providing them. These vendors would be the ones to update them for Bb 6 (which one assumes they would do to continue to profit from their investment in creating the building block to begin with). In terms of impacting the system for other users, the pilot test (conducted on our pilot server) would help us figure that out. Certainly we'd want to have the option for faculty NOT to use a building block if they so chose, to turn it off, etc.
- **ACTION:** Assignment for Group is to review building blocks site and building blocks catalog (<http://buildingblocks.blackboard.com>) and provide feedback about which ones they like, and why (what need they serve that's currently un-met). If you have time, poll a couple of colleagues about their pet peeves and see if any building blocks might answer those. This helps us move forward in Spring with determining what to test. Comments by Friday 12/6/2002, please.