



Blackboard Advisory Group Minutes: 03-14-2002

Perkins Library, Carpenter Board Room, 2-3 p.m.

Attending:

Amy Campbell, Stephen Sopp, Mike Gustafson, Samantha Earp, Ben Donnelly, Linda Lee, Marcie Ellis (Med. Registrar), Steven Wilson (Med. Registrar), Pat Halpin, Wayne Miller, Adrienne Moore, Mike Baptiste, Gary Gereffi

Agenda:

1. Administrative/logistical issues: note change in meeting location 4/19 to Perkins 119.
2. Clarification of “integration” in the Blackboard project meaning data integration, not currently site integration (in the sense of making Blackboard be a portal to everything at Duke). Pat Halpin mentioned that now is a good time for one or more Blackboard users to become involved in discussions of what the Duke portal will be.
3. Discussion of two previously-posted scenarios:
 - a. *Making course sites unavailable when created*
 - Everyone seems to like the idea in general.
 - Gary Gereffi suggested holding course requests and batch processing them (and tell people when they will be processed, e.g., two or three weeks before the start of any term).
 - Stephen Sopp suggests having checkbox on request form for available/unavailable.
Action: based on the general feedback from the group, the Blackboard course creators will begin creating course sites as unavailable as soon as it’s technically feasible to implement that change, and will add a note to the auto-generated email that goes out to faculty that the sites are unavailable. We will investigate the possibility of adding a check box to the course request form for “available/unavailable.”
 - b. *Making course sites unavailable after end of term*
 - Amy explained that there are two ways to make course sites unavailable to students: making the sites unavailable (which the instructors can also toggle on/off themselves) and disabling the students in the course sites (as dropped students are currently disabled). The latter option might create the problem of later differentiating students disabled because they dropped the course from those disabled at the end of the term.
 - Mike Gustafson: Suggests leaving process as-is, but educate users/faculty to make clear to them that their course is still available. Let faculty control the on/off toggle.
 - Patrick suggests just using the disable student method; Wayne pointed out that faculty would know which students who had dropped (by using the course roster, for example) and so having those dropped-disabled mixed with the disabled students from the end of the course wouldn’t be a problem.
 - Question about handling incompletes, which is more easily done by disabling students in the course site and then re-enabling those few individuals who need access later.
 - Alternatively, if we go with having courses accessible through the end of the FOLLOWING term, we could use the make-course-unavailable route because all incompletes would have to be done by then, anyway.

Action: Amy will investigate whether leaving course sites available through end of FOLLOWING semester would be sufficient for school incomplete policies.

4. *New discussion items:*

- a. Use of bb-forum email list for discussion and disseminating information
 - Didn't discuss.
- b. Ways to organize course in the My Blackboard page: new My Courses module
 - Amy distributed a document describing Blackboard's modified "My Courses" module, which allows the Blackboard administrators to set up sorting rules for courses in the My Blackboard window, creating groupings most often by semester.
 - Samantha asked about courses that aren't semester based? In this case, as administrators we'd have to determine sorting rules that are appropriate and would allow those courses to sort out in a reasonable way.
 - What about making My Courses like favorites in Web browsers? Have expandable/collapsible list? The available substitute "My Courses" module doesn't seem to do this, although we have to test to be sure. Potentially, Blackboard's ability to incorporate newly-developed "Building Blocks" plug-ins will allow us to locate/create a different, more useful My Courses module that has the flexibility users want.

Action: in the lack of a Building Block or other more sophisticated option currently, the Blackboard Administrators are planning to begin testing the substitute My Courses module provided by Blackboard as soon as technically feasible (first on our test server). We will let you know progress of that testing.

5. *Matters arising*

- a. Stocking sites with students – when does this happen? When should it happen?
 - Amy: currently students are added to existing Blackboard sites about 2 weeks ahead. Students who are enrolled in the course according to the SISS/ACES get added to the site. If a student later is NOT listed as enrolled, Blackboard assumes they dropped and their student record is "disabled" in the course site (instructors can still see them listed with a red "x" by their name, but the student can't access the site, and shouldn't receive emails sent to whole class, etc.).
 - Adrienne: doesn't see any problem with adding students earlier (maybe even right after pre-registration) for students, assuming we begin to make course sites unavailable when created.
 - Pat: regarding the procedure for handling drops, etc. we need to create/publicize the standard operating procedure for students with status other than dropped (e.g., WP, etc.) What happens to those student records in ACES and, therefore, how are they treated in Blackboard?
 - If we populate the student rosters very early, what about students who register and then withdraw before beginning of term? Such students will be listed but disabled. Faculty may use the course email list in mid-August, for example, to send emails to currently enrolled students for Fall, without realizing that half the students aren't yet enrolled who will be, and some are that won't be by the beginning of the term.
 - An alternative to group emails might be to encourage faculty to post welcoming message in the course site. The problem is how to get students the information in a timely manner – we should create best practices and try hard to educate instructors about these issues.

Action: Blackboard administrators will investigate the handling of WP and other "odd" student statuses in courses in terms of what happens in Blackboard to those student records. The Blackboard project team will discuss any technical issues related to populating student records earlier than currently done, and I'll report to the group before the next meeting.

- b. Appropriate use policy and how to advertise it?
Didn't discuss.