

OLN Academic Outreach Meeting
January 10, 2002 -- 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
Ohio Link Conference Room
2455 North Star Road
Columbus, Ohio 43221

MEETING MINUTES

10:00 – Welcome

Attending:

- Committee: Tom Erney, Jim Pollicita, Peggy Falkenstein, Tom Shostack, Tom Sink, Ellen Klute, Anthony Hartman, Peter Ross, Tim Mott, and Connie DiMascio
- Governing Board: Linda Steele
- OLN: Kate Carey, George Steele, Sheryl Hansen, Nancy Ragias, Gail Peters, and Susan Brown.

Presiding Chair, Timothy E. Mott welcomed the group to the first meeting of 2002. Kate Carey recognized the leadership and work done by the previous Chair of the OLN Academic Outreach Committee, Tom Shostak. A gift of two books was presented to him, in appreciation of his work.

Governing Board Update

Kate updated the AO committee on the actions of the previous (12-18-01) Governing Board meeting.

- The Governing Board is changing the way it conducts business. The board is having chairs of each constituent committee (AO, PD, and OLN Conference) to meet concurrently with assigned board members during a work session prior to the business meeting. This approach makes the meetings more effective with specific board members being able to understand in greater depth what each committee is doing. Committee chairs then offer a report to the full Board during the business portion of the meeting.
- PD is developing a Summer Institute for faculty training with a focus on pedagogy and distance learning.
- There will be an assessment of OLN this year conducted by an outside group. At the December 17, 2001 meeting, a three-part Request for Proposal (RFP) was developed that addressed three areas:
 1. Has OLN met its goals?
 2. Has OLN been effective in Ohio?
 3. What shall OLN do in the future? A panel of national experts is being recruited. The assessment team and governing board will develop a strategic plan and this will aid in organizational effectiveness in the future.

- Governing Board members have been invited to attend OLN constituent committee meetings. Attendance is desirable but it is not mandatory. Linda Steele attended the meeting today. Linda is a member of the Governing Board who is interested in marketing.

Marketing

Over the past year, several marketing efforts have been made to promote OLN's message at the state level. The discussion today was to clarify and seek opinions about the marketing effort to date. A number of documents and reports were prepared and reviewed in light of the discussion.

- The Marketing Plan, approved in May of 2001, was reviewed.
- The 2002 Distance Learning in Ohio Survey, currently being conducted by the Institute for Policy Research, was reviewed. Data will be analyzed by mid-February. A new section has been added to the survey addressing blended courses (see pages 14 & 15 of Draft Handout dated 12/12/01). Use of a focus group is being considered (urban/rural).
- Student surveys (via e-mail) were conducted, the data analyzed, and the results were presented to the AO Committee for discussion.
- A number of questions were raised and suggestions offered regarding marketing. Kate reviewed why we are using radio advertising supplemented by printed materials. The data indicates that radio has been the most effective way to reach the targeted adult/some college population.
- Questions: Should OLN be advertising on other web sites and/or should OLN have links on other web sites to access OLN's web site? Should we create a sub-committee group (from the OLN Academic Outreach Committee) to aid in the facilitation of marketing efforts along with OLN Staff currently working on marketing efforts? What is the difference between our PR efforts and our marketing efforts? How can we measure accountability and when will we know when we are successful in this endeavor? What is marketing? What is it that we are marketing? Does OLN need a Business and Industry (B & I) Liaison to market OLN. How do we respond to inquires that ask: "What is OLN's impact with institutional distance learning enrollment numbers?"
- Suggestions: We need to educate our audience on how DL works - not just the general population, but counselors, advisors and others across the state of Ohio. We should be clear that OLN can help facilitate degree planning and distance learning opportunities. OLN can also facilitate Continuing Education Programs and Certification Programs. We need to market to Business and Industry as well. We are essentially marketing "greater access and awareness" to programs available in the State of Ohio. We need to take advantage of getting on other web sites, Peterson's, etc.
- **Action Item:** A sub-committee was appointed to assist OLN Internal Committee with these issues. Tom Shostak, Linda Steele, and Connie DiMascio will assist OLN's current marketing committee with issues related to: What are the services and products that we are marketing? Who is the audience for each one? What

resources do we allocate to each of these strategies? What data do we have to support this?

Content

- The Emerging Needs grant proposals are due on March 1, 2002. The AO committee will read and rank the proposals. The review process was discussed. Members of the committee will receive the proposals during the OLN conference on March 4 and 5 along with evaluation criteria. All proposals will be read and reviewed by March 18th. Selected proposals will be reviewed on April 3 (Engineering and IT) and 4 (Planning Grants) in Columbus. Awards will be reviewed and approved in May at the Governing Board Meeting.
- **Action Item:** Those wishing to be reviewers should contact Kate Carey, via e-mail, as soon as possible.
- **Content Development:** The MERLOT project has existed for four (4) years. Ohio University has approached OLN and inquired whether we are interested in collaborating on a MERLOT initiative with them to produce web-based interactive teaching and learning materials.
- **Action Item:** The Academic Outreach Committee will review the materials provided by OU and will discuss it further during the April 2002 meeting.

12:15 - 12:45 p.m Lunch

- Catalog updates were given by George Steele
- RC reports: Gail and Linda, and Nancy presented at Enterprise Ohio Conference (20 attendees) to increase the awareness of OLN. Susan spoke at OACRO conference to get the word out on OLN and attended the Asynchronous Learning conference in Orlando.
 - RC's greatest advances are in talking to institutions. Students are starting to take action based on RC recommendations. Campus contacts are more identifiable and the Chamber of Commerce has been very receptive to OLN information. The rural areas seem hungry for information.
 - There is a feeling that RC's and OLN Staff should interact more with institutions via video conferencing since the technology is available.
 - Outreach efforts and experiences in Central Ohio parallel that in other OLN regions.
- Student Services Report Update – David Barber had a meeting conflict and was not present, but will be on the next agenda.

Issues of Quality

The Committee reviewed and sought to better define OLN's role in regards to issues of quality:

- Sheryl Hansen provided an update on Professional Development's efforts.
 - TEACHU courses and activities are coming on-line quickly. Proposed Summer Institute topics that have been discussed are: quality, what constitutes a good course, pedagogy, and ADA issues.
 - TECHNOPOLI was discussed. Success will depend on Institutional participation and readiness in submitting their events. The information will be disseminated to the AO Committee.
 - Trying to fine-tune the proposed Summer Institute for Faculty Training. Addressing a number of issues related to on-line courses and supporting these activities.
- Issues related to OLN's Memo of Understanding and Principles of Good Practice were discussed in the context of quality. The issue of quality is being revisited, not because of problems that have been brought forward, but because we need to continually address the issue. The principles of good practices need to be revisited in light of this discussion. Discussion ensued regarding OLN's role in promoting high quality course design among Ohio's academic institutions. It was agreed that it was still not OLN's role to police quality, but to instead be creative in supporting institutional efforts to achieve the highest quality attainable, and to perhaps even encourage through incentives and best practice models those characteristics that high quality courses consistently possess.
- Discussion: The concern about student services and accessibility was raised. The OLN course approval process was reviewed and demonstrated. There was general discussion about the point that the quality and content of courses are usually NOT the problem for distance education courses – there is more concern about the services students' are/are not receiving.
- The suggestion of recognizing courses of quality in OhioLearns! through a "Best Practice" competition was discussed.
- **Action Item:** After the April meeting AO will revisit the issue of quality again.