

Ohio Learning Network
Academic Outreach Meeting, Spring 2004
April 28 and 29, 2004

Minutes

Attending:

Academic Outreach Committee: Tom Sink - Chair, Tim Mott, Melody Clark, Mary Jane Palmer, Andaz Ahmad, Thomas Skill, Tom Erney for Michael Snyder, Melanie Hoffman, Karen Rhoda.

OLN Staff: Kate Carey, George Steele, Gail Peters, Nancy Ragias, Rich Bowers, and Cable Green

Topics:

Smarthinking Update

Gail provided an update of institutions' use of Smarthinking from 1-01-04 through 3-31-04.

Tom Erney expressed interest in working with other institutions in using the Smarthinking's technical infrastructure with institutions' own tutors to provide collective tutoring services to students with participating institutions. Please contact Tom if interested.

Action: Tom Sink requested OLN to set up guidelines to help interested institutions pursue this course of action.

OLN Outreach Activities

Nancy provided an update on OLN Outreach Activities. The committee was requested to suggest other contacts OLN staff should meet.

Action: Suggestions for additional outreach included - Admissions Offices, offices economic development, municipal governments, admission events on campuses aimed to reach adult learners with some college experience, military and National Guard units. It was also suggested that OLN create incentives for maintaining current campus contacts. This idea needs further development.

Catalog Report

George reviewed the catalog report. He highlighted degrees in OhioLearns! and showed the new career field search function.

Action: Suggestion was made that OLN add liberal studies to the career field.

Collaborative Degrees

Committee was informed on efforts from around the state with development of collaborative degrees. Discussion followed with conversations about opportunities and barriers to such efforts.

Action: OLN should continue to help institutions understand the market for collaborative efforts and suggest partners when possible collaboration seems beneficial.

Quality Seal Implementation

George reviewed the draft model for the Quality Seal, as developed by the Quality Seal sub-committee, in response to the OLN Quality Report recommendation. General committee reactions were unfavorable with concerns expressed that the process was too complex; that institutions already are meeting quality standards through accreditations; and that there was an inherent problem with confusion over instructors teaching sections they developed vs those that are departmental courses.

Action: Recommendation that Quality Seal be dropped, but OLN should distribute the quality principles and check lists. A sub-committee was formed with Karen Rhoda and Andaz Ahmed representing the AO Committee for future discussions regarding the Quality Seal.

HEI/OLN Statewide Report

George reviewed the development of the OLN/HEI collaboration and the reasons behind the projected AU-2004 statewide report on distance learning. Melissa Sponseller from HEI demonstrated the new OLN query functions developed by HEI so institutions can inquiry more deeply into data analysis of their distance learning programs.

The AU-2004 report will not be a comprehensive statewide report. Only public institutions can be highlight for deeper levels of analysis because private institutes do not report their enrollment data to HEI. Of the public institution, only those that have submitted AU-2003 data, can be highlighted in the report.

Action: George will work with Melissa and other HEI staff to create a FAQ Web page outlining the steps institutions need to take to ensure their AU-2003 data submissions are accurate. Institutions will have the opportunity to check their AU-2003 data submissions through spring and summer 2004. OLN and HEI will assist as needed. It was suggested that the report use a case study method, by highlighting several diverse institutions. Institutions selected need to have submitted AU-2003 data and have fairly well developed distance-learning programs. Use of case studies is to show the depth and breadth of analysis that is possible for institutions that participate. Melody Clarke and Mary Jane Palmer from the AO committee will assist with the development of the report.

IT Clearinghouse

Rich provided an overview of the new Ohio IT Clearinghouse, a joint OBR/OLN effort. The goal of the OITC is to provide a single site for IT information to enhance the state's workforce and to help make OH more competitive in the global market place. Rich pointed out two main audiences for OITC.

- People who use IT to do their work
- IT professionals

Rich showed a demo version of the OITC Web site.

George stated that as a new effort, a new OLN committee will be created to provide advice to the OITC development and direction. This committee will be comprised of representatives from higher education, business, OBR and OLN. Since many of the OITC efforts parallel those of Academic Outreach, it is important that these two committees remain in close contact with one to coordinate better their activities.

Action: Andaz Ahmed will be AO representative on this new OLN OITC committee that will meet in mid-June.

E-Adviser Network

Kate informed the committee of the concept of the E-Adviser Network. OLN is co-hosting a meeting with OCAN to discuss sharing resources to support potential learners from their initial point of interest in additional education to their entry into an institution of their choice. Individuals who complete E 4 ME course will be assigned an E-Adviser for assistance.

The meeting will be on May 25rd. Items to be discussed at this meeting are: to have tracking database for students and to develop strategies for the first target market - adults with some or no college.

Action: OLN will keep AO informed of this project.

Marketing

In small group work, the AO committee addressed three topics.

- What markets should OLN target?
- What market strategies should OLN use?
- What OLN measure?

The groups discussed their assigned topics and suggested goals and strategies to achieve them.

Suggestion included, to attract more attention to OhioLearns! OLN should consider using banner ads through ISPs, billboards, airport advertising, success stories, direct mailing, collaborating with an entity like realtors of Ohio, co-marketing in regional area with OLN and schools, and direct appeal to employers for joint ad with OLN.

Kate believes OLN is doing as well as we can with marketing, but not as well as we should be. She also mentioned that many of the comments made by the committee, paralleled OLN efforts. Kate welcomes comment and suggestions from AO for improving our marketing. She mentioned that Ohio University reported that from a survey they conducted with new distance learning students, that 14% said they found out about OU's program through OLN.

Tom Skill asked if OLN needed a RFP for marketing. Discussion ensued about the pro and cons of an RFP. Concern was expressed that OLN cannot be a stand alone brand – might conflict with individual institutions' initiatives. Andaz recommended that OLN have a Web site where one can print off marketing materials. Tom Sink suggested we might also collect the best marketing practices from other institutions for sharing. Tom Skill reiterated his point that OLN is to first support Ohioans. Kate mentioned that there is an edgier space for marketing higher education that has not been exploited – the University Phoenix has – direct mail, pop ups, etc. Committee agreed this should be explored.

Action: Kate stated that OLN will participate at the state fair and college and job fairs, etc. She asked for volunteers for the AO committee to assist with these efforts. There will be a combined sub-committee to advise OLN on **E 4 ME** and marketing. Pete Ross and Tim Mott volunteered their assistance.

Course Management Systems

Cable Green provided AO with an update of OLN activities to coordinate the purchase of WebCT and Black Board as statewide buys. By mid-May final institutional commitments need to be made.

Action: Cable request that if AO members have institutions interested in participating in one of the statewide CMS buys, that they contact him if they have any questions.

Futures Report

Tom Erney presented a draft of the Futures Report to the committee. He reviewed the goals of the report.

- Provide data on future trends to assist administrators of distance learning programs in Ohio;
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of current Ohio college and university distance learning programs;
- Create a training initiative for Ohio college and university distance learning administrators; and
- Identify key barriers to distance learning programs and assign these to appropriate OLN committees for future consideration.

Tom reviewed the recommendations and best practices.

Action: Committee suggested using matching urls to link to best practices and to include a glossary.

Database for online adjunct instructors

George reviewed the *On-Line Teaching* database from the Florida Distance Learning Consortium <http://www.fldlc.org/teach/index.htm>. Andaz brought this Web site and resource to the committee's attention. The committee reviewed the site and made recommendations.

Action: OLN should proceed to create a job bank requiring less information than FL site as a prototype. OLN should explore going through Ohio Link for verification so site can be password protected.

Emerging Needs

Kate reviewed the proposal for Emerging Needs, 2005. Alan would like to target geographic regions for work force grants. Kate mentioned that OLN walked from loan concept due to the state's financial situation.

Action: Alan Escovitz and Tom Skill will assist Kate and George with the writing of the next draft.