



## Academic Outreach

November 1, 2005

Meeting Minutes

**AO Members attending:** Dr. Melody Clark, **Chair**, Tom Sink, **Past-Chair**, Indra Canagaratna, Melanie L. Hoffman, Mary Jane Palmer, Dr. Karen I. Rhoda, and Dr. Thomas Skill

OLN staff: Dr. Kate Carey, Nancy Ragias, Gail Peters, Rich Bowers, and Dr. George Steele

AO Members attending on conference call: *Dr. Marilyn S. Jones*

Regrets: *Mary Beth Aust-Keefer, Andaz Ahmad, Dr. Mel May, and Gloria Powell*

### **Issue I: What should be OLN's future involvement with the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT):**

Background: NCAT has changed its business model and proposes to administer the next round of course redevelopment grants for the entire state. The scope of their work and cost of these services would be substantially greater than their involvement during this current round. OLN would 'outsource' the grants administration.

Discussion: George provided background of OLN's relationship with NCAT. He then reviewed the 2005 Emerging Needs Mid-point survey results completed by eight out of the nine PIs involved in the most recent course redevelopment grants. Some of the general points emphasized were:

- Most institutions assessed their progress toward full implementation to be on time.
- Institutions tended to use two of the five course redevelopment models proposed by NCAT – the fully online and the replacement models.
- PIs reported they would be happy to assist other OH institutions with course redevelopment issues based on their experiences to date.
- Less than half used NCAT consultation services to date. Those that did thought highly of their assistance.
- All PIs believed OLN should offer the grant again.

Tom Sink, the Past Chair of AO, added the point that if current trends continue, this current course redevelopment grant may well be considered one of our more successful OLN grants. Mary Jane raised the question whether institutions would continue course redesign after this grant. Tom Skill discussed the experience of the University of Dayton after their involvement with course redevelopment with NCAT five years ago. The University of Dayton redesigned their introductory Psychology course. Information obtained from this course redesign project was useful and guided future course redesign. It helped push innovation. Additional benefits for the University of Dayton have

been that course redesign has institutional commitment and UD is doing more hybrid courses. Tom Skill stated that he prefers this institutional-based approach to course redesign rather than the champion model where individual innovators lead course redesign efforts. He also stated that some University of Dayton participants did not feel they were getting sophisticated technical/instructional consulting expertise from NCAT during the project. To these people, NCAT focus appeared to be on procedures they created to measure and assess outcomes.

Responding to an inquiry about how NCAT is perceived in Ohio, Kate stated that NCAT has presented at both Regents Trustees' Conference and the CHEE Commission. So when the issue of course redesign is raised, there are leaders throughout the state who are familiar with NCAT. However, that should not be the driving concern as AO wrestles with this issue of balancing consultant fees, grant dollars and outcomes dollars for a possible new round of course redesign grants. AO should recommend: How can we do it?

Conversation followed on several topics. Regarding models of redesign, questions were raised if the future focus should be on one or two models or if more than five should be considered. The intended impact of the course redesign grant was discussed. Mostly this discussion centered on the issue of how the use of technology, as applied to learning, can be beneficial – and that a grant could encourage participation from institutions that have not been previously involved with OLN.

#### Action:

- Collect more information from those institutions who were recipients of the current OLN course redevelopment grant. Use the January meeting to clarify several key points:
  - Their use and effectiveness of the NCAT consulting services
  - Whether these institutions plan to continue to pursue course redevelopment with other courses
  - Their comfort level and availability of institutional course redevelopment team members to participate as consultants for other Ohio institutions
- OLN should begin conversations with NCAT to assess the possibility of a hybrid consultation model that would include a train-the-trainer approach using experienced Ohio faculty and staff.
- Results of these efforts should be reported back to AO during the spring retreat.

#### **Issue II: Proposed Regents Degree**

Kate provided an overview of the Regents Degree Concept paper. The intent is to build upon the rich distance learning content offerings from Ohio's higher education community and pursue a new strategy for serving highly literate and motivated adult learners who are seeking bachelor's degrees. A Regents Degree might capture a market that public and private non-profit institutions are not serving in the same numbers as the for-profit institutions. Currently, Ohio University, University of Toledo, Bowling Green, and University of Cincinnati have general studies/adult studies degrees directed toward the adult population that can be used as models. Major differences between these degrees and the proposed Regents Degree would be the residence requirement, greater ease with acceptance of transfer course work, and a multi-institutional statewide faculty and content to draw upon, and formal prior learning assessment.

Kate stated that the concept paper is to start the conversation. She has met with Community College CAOs and will meet with the IUC provosts in January.

Commenting on the proposal, the AO committee raised several key issues. Karen stated that often these types of degree programs are not viewed as academically rigorous. Kate agreed and said the Regents must help in addressing this issue. Kate also clarified a question by stating that she does not see every institution in OH participating in the proposed degree program because it does not fit the mission. Karen stated that getting key faculty involved is critical. She and other members of AO said they would be willing to assist in identifying those faculty members at their institutions. Tom Skill suggested an assessment of the proposal be reviewed against other states with similar programs. He also mentioned the importance of North Central Accreditation. Mary Jane raised the question of who would pay for the administrative costs.

Action:

- AO formally supports the Regents Degree proposal and recommends it to the OLN Governing Board.
- Kate requested volunteers who might be willing to participate as representatives from this group with future committee work. This request will be included in the post-meeting survey.
- Kate will continue discussions with a variety of interested parties throughout the state.

**Issue III: Emerging Needs Workforce Development Grant**

Kate provided an update of the proposals received and requested reviewers to assist evaluating them. The review process will include reading and evaluating the proposals by Nov. 28 and participating in a conference call on Nov. 30. The conference call will determine which proposals to send forward to the OLN Governing Board for approval.

Action:

- Karen volunteered as a possible reviewer, Melody Clark and Tom Sink volunteered to be reviewers.
- Melody will take recommendations forward to the Governing Board in December.

**Issue IV: Barriers to Distance Learning and Collaboration**

Darrell Glenn from Regents/HEI spoke over lunch. He based his comments on the responses solicited from distance learning directors to questions posed in a survey distributed to them in late spring 2005. The survey focused on perception of barriers to e-learning. Twenty-three participants answered six survey questions. Darrell focused on the open-ended response of question three, "OLN should work with the Ohio Board of Regents to."

Darrell identified several themes to the responses and made brief comments on some of them: transfer, funding, tuition policies, and method of funding.

#### General comments:

- Issue of transfer tied to recent efforts with TAGs. This has been major effort. Will need to assess impact on distance learning.
- Funding is tied to larger issue of flat or declining higher education budgets.
- For collaboration – current funding model does not have send and receive payments. This issue is not being discussed much in the subsidy discussion; he recommended Kate try to attend future meetings to see that collaboration appears on agenda.
- In regards to the statewide performance report, one way to enhance the visibility of distance learning is to look at it in terms of student success.
- Those involved in distance learning perhaps should be aware of conversations that are ongoing related to regional higher education alliances – i.e., possibly shared resources in NE Ohio.

In summary, Darrell stated we don't have complete data reporting on distance learning students from Ohio public institutions. So it is not possible to speak authoritatively about these students at this time. He identified this as one of the gaps in statewide reporting of data. In response to a question, he also said there is not an "official" Regents view on increasing use of distance learning. Instead, the focus is on access and successful outcomes. Distance learning is one of several means to achieve these goals. If distance learning can be a means, that would be positive.

Karen stated the need to emphasize that it would be good for the State of Ohio if students can graduate more quickly because of distance learning. Tom Sink raised some questions about responses to the survey. Kate said some responses were from new distance learning administrators unfamiliar with OLN and Regents.

Darrell next reviewed data showing enrollment patterns of adults 24 years of age and older attending Ohio higher educational institutions. Kate asked if we could get a better breakdown of age categories. Darrell stated we could.

#### Action:

- Have OLN work with HEI to get better age breakdowns of adult enrollment in Ohio higher educational institutions.
- Kate will contact Regents to see about participating at some level in discussing issues pertinent to subsidy. (Update: Rich Petrick invited Kate to the next "Out of the Box" meeting in December.)

#### **Issue V: Community Needs**

Kate requested the assistance of AO members in identifying community needs. As an example, Sheryl discussed the new OLN Webinars. These Webinars are not to be led by OLN staff, but by the larger community. OLN will promote and coordinate technology for these Webinars.

#### Action:

- OLN will distribute a list of Webinar topics and times.

- OLN will solicit more input about community needs from AO members.

### **Task force updates**

#### *Marketing Taskforce:*

- Nancy reported that OLN will again conduct the statewide Ohio Poll, asking adults, with some college, their perceptions of distance learning. This will be the third statewide poll on distance learning OLN has conducted. Karen and Marilyn assisted in reviewing preliminary survey questions.
- Columbus ABC/FOX News Center College Guide program was discussed. Nancy stated the program segments can be viewed on their Web site at: [http://www.wsyx6.com/sections/community/college\\_guide.shtml](http://www.wsyx6.com/sections/community/college_guide.shtml). The program included segments about OLN, Kent State University, University of Rio Grande, University of Toledo, and Hocking College.
- Nancy also discussed an *Ohio Magazine* ad about OLN and handed out copies.
- This taskforce has completed its task.

#### *Web site and Student Services Taskforce:*

- OLN is redesigning its Web site. There will be a corporate site, called OLN and a student service/catalog site called OhioLearns! George showed a first draft example of the design for the new OhioLearns! site: [http://newmedia.osu.edu/oln/ohio\\_learns/sketches/2.html](http://newmedia.osu.edu/oln/ohio_learns/sketches/2.html). The next stage of development will be to create a functional site. George asked that Indra, Gloria and Mary Beth continue on this taskforce to help in the review of the next stage.

#### *OLN/HEI Report Taskforce:*

- This taskforce, comprised of AO members Mary Jane, Tom Skill and Melody, did not meet this summer due to the slower than anticipated return of AU 2004 distance learning data from the institutions. This group will meet later this autumn to review a preliminary draft of the intended HEI/OLN report on distance learning.

#### *Modualization Taskforce:*

- This taskforce met once this summer. AO members that were part of this group included Mel and Andaz. George shared Mel's experience he had at a conference on this topic and encouraged members to contact Mel for more in-depth information. George also showed a model developed by Dr. Nancy Thibeault from Sinclair Community College that shows how an introductory course in CIS program design and logic was modualized into learning objects. This taskforce has completed its task.

#### *Student Service Taskforce:*

- George reviewed the 2000 Student Service Taskforce Report. He pointed out that it might be time to review some of the recommendations since five years have elapsed since it was completed and released. General discussion followed. George asked for some AO volunteers to serve on a taskforce to review the report and make recommendations to the larger committee during the spring meeting. Interested AO members can sign up for this new AO taskforce in the post-meeting survey.

**Other Updates:**

- George provided an update on the Faculty Adjunct Exchange. Currently we have 281 individuals who have registered. Unfortunately, we have not had any institutions post positions in the site: <http://www.olin.org/registry/main.php>. Discussion followed on the difficulty of adding job postings to the registry. George requested that a new taskforce be formed to advise him of the next steps OLN should take to modify the Web site or initiate new outreach efforts in order to increase job postings by institutions. One recommendation was to drop the postings and only link to institutions' HR pages. AO members can sign up for this new AO taskforce in the post-meeting survey.
- Gail provided an update on Smarthinking. Currently nine Ohio institutions are participating. The new feature of our current contract is that we will not be able to roll over hours that are not used at the end of the current contract. Therefore, Gail is cautiously monitoring hour usage and purchases.

**Meeting note:** Haixia Xu, a graduate student from University of Georgia, attended our session to observe our deliberations. Some members of AO stayed for a small focus group discussion led by Haixia about OLN and distance learning in Ohio. For those AO members who could not participate, OLN will host a teleconference call with Haixia in the near future and we encourage you to participate if you can.