2018-2019 Distance Learning Committee Final Report
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The Distance Learning Committee met once a month during the fall and spring semesters of the 2018-2019 AY. Please find below a report including a synopsis of our work this year. Additional details from each our 4 core projects accomplished within subcommittees, as well as our other recommendations and findings are available upon request.

COOL Grants
COOL Course Development (CD) grant applications for proposals received for both online and hybrid courses in Cohort 8 were voted on and approved, where appropriate, through the DL Committee. Awards for Cohort 7 totaled $95,500 which includes $11,500 for implementation of Open Educational Resources (OERs) initiative, partially funded through the CCU SAFR grant program.

A total of 36 COOL grant applications from the following colleges were reviewed, voted on and approved:

- WCOB – 0
- COHFA – 12
- HONORS - 1
- COS – 20
- SCOE – 3

Of these 36 COOL grant classes, 24 were online and 12 were hybrid.

All proposals reviewed this round for the COOL Cohort 8 CFP were approved based on committee evaluation of impact, repeated offerings, availability of current funds, and other factors. Expanded descriptions and instructions on the COOL Grant website and in the CFP have aided faculty in applying more accurately for these grants with a higher likelihood of approval.
In an effort to continue to encourage faculty to update and maintain their online and hybrid online courses, the DL committee supported the development of the Course Enhancement Grant (CEG) as a summer only program for faculty. CEG will be entering its 3rd cohort this summer. Cohort 2 of CEG included the following grant applications and approvals:

25 course enhancement grants were approved - 20 were completed for a total of $42,700 (14 online/6 hybrid).

WCOB - 3
COHFA - 2
HONORS - 1
COS - 12
SCOE - 3

This was also the first time we offered an incentive for adding an OER component of which 11 faculty participated to date; the upcoming CEG 3 CFP currently has a total of 15 submissions, which will come under review during the SUM19 term. Many of these submitters will be developing their courses with OER focus.

DL Committee Initiatives
The committee voted on the top initiatives relating to enhancement of services and furthering the COOL/Online and Digital Learning initiatives for the year and that vote resulted in the following four initiatives: 1. Academic integrity/proctoring for OL and hybrid classes; 2. Open educational resources (OERs); 3. Faculty training requirements for online and hybrid learning; and 4. Contingency planning and preparedness. The committee as a whole also provided a review of recommendations for improvements for teaching and learning in the digital learning space, as noted below as initiative 5.

Initiative 1: Academic Integrity/Proctoring for OL and Hybrid Classes
This subcommittee of the DL Committee took the initiative to pick up an on-going project that the Coastal Office of Online Learning had begun relating to exploration of technologies available to support faculty in ensuring the academic integrity and student authentication methods within our courses that use Moodle, ranging from face-to-face, to hybrid, to fully online courses. The committee took time to evaluate currently in-place student authentication tools (TurnItIn, Respondus 4.0, LockDown Browser, and Monitor), and to run extensive tests for functionality on these tools. Additionally, this subcommittee along with other members of the DL Committee, served to evaluate potential new proctoring and student authentication software tools, including ProctorU, SmarterProctoring, and others. A student authentication and proctoring tool matrix was
developed to assist the committee in this review process, which will continue through the Summer 2019 semester. Additionally, proctoring and student authentication methodologies employed by other peer- and aspirant as well as related institutions were evaluated, alongside recommendations and expectations from SACSCOC DL Guidelines relating to student identity and authentication under distance learning. Recommendations from this subcommittee are being reviewed by COOL and other campus entities in order to strengthen the campus’ approach to student identity and authentication.

**Initiative 2: Open Educational Resources (OERs) for Use in Academic Classrooms**

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are materials that are free to use and share. They “reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or repurposing by others” (Forward 2017). Some benefits of OERs are that they fit within a contemporary model of education (i.e. shared resources, collaboration, flipped classrooms, etc.), they are free of monetary costs and they are widely available and accessible. A broader view of OERs also incorporates low- and reduced-cost course materials and texts.

The subcommittee assigned to explore OER and related initiatives investigated in depth the many available OERs including the MERLOT repository, MIT Open Courseware, Canvas Commons, OE Consortium, and others. They also began research to determine which OERs are currently used at peer and aspirant campuses, to determine potential applications at the Coastal campus and specifically within the OL and Hybrid online courses and programs. Moving forward, the DL committee recommends further discussion of this topic with faculty to determine what resources they currently use and what they would be interested in using in the future; this will be coordinated in conjunction with the multi-year SAFR grant that COOL is overseeing relating to OER course development in the hybrid and online learning space, which to date has positive impacted 33 CCU courses with the implementation of OER texts and content to decrease student monetary responsibilities for course materials. Specifically relating to developing our own OER repository at the Coastal campus, the DL sub-committee does not see a need for a campus-wide repository of OERs. The committee recommends educating the faculty at-large about OERs through COOL training sessions. The DL Committee will be working in conjunction with the OER initiative being facilitated through the COOL department, alongside the faculty and staff supporting this initiative from within the Kimbel Library.

DL Committee faculty were updated on the Barnes & Noble Open Education website, including the support for OpenStax within our classes, regardless of format. Faculty may now reserve courses via the Faculty Enlight System from B&N for adoption of OpenStax OER texts and materials, and students may locate and even request printed copies as needed from this site.
Initiative 3: Faculty Training Requirements
This year the faculty training subcommittee considered training requirements for faculty who teach online. Requiring training specifically for online faculty generates two primary questions:

1. How do we justify requiring online faculty to participate in training when we do not require it for faculty who are teaching on campus?
2. How do we handle faculty who are already experienced and successful online instructors?

These are questions that must be addressed before considering any training requirement.

After researching publications and recommendations from other institutions, the subcommittee developed a list of general best practices for professional development of online faculty based on faculty preferences:

- Training should be offered both online and face-to-face. Faculty prefer online training when managing busy schedules but they appreciate the face-to-face opportunities to share ideas with colleagues.
- Online class templates should be provided. Many faculty appreciate having templates for their online classes that reduce the amount of time they need to spend building courses.
- Exemplary online classes should be showcased. Faculty appreciate seeing examples of successful, well-designed online classes.
- Instructional design services should be available. Meeting with an instructional designer who can assist in developing a course design/plan helps faculty streamline the process of developing a quality course.
- Grant or funding opportunities should be provided.

Currently, COOL and CeTEAL provide all of these recommended services and a substantial number of faculty participate in them. If we determine that required training is
not a viable route, the DL Committee recommends consideration of other ways to encourage faculty to participate. These may include:

- Formally recognize faculty participation in online course reviews, based on CCU’s Quality Assurance Inventory, in promotion and/or tenure files. Building or improving an online and/or a hybrid course is a chance for a faculty member to document teaching improvement and/or effectiveness.

- Target adjunct faculty to encourage attendance at workshop sessions and instructional design consultations that help them build a class based on the COOL templates, which are built to standards of design including accessibility requirements.

- Target new faculty to make them aware of the CCU QAI. They may have taught successfully at a previous institution but they should be made aware of CCU standards and DL support services (instructional design, templates, DLI, student support services) available to them.

- Encourage department chairs to advise faculty to undergo course reviews based on CCU’s Quality Assurance Inventory, through educating administration at the chair level and above (as well as faculty) on the DFW and GPA differences that were demonstrated between COOL-certified courses and non-COOL certified courses.

References and Resources:

Clemson University, OER Resources <http://www.clemson.edu/online/oer/index.html>.


**Initiative 4: Contingency Planning and Preparedness**

COOL in conjunction with CeTEAL published an overview of contingency resources available on campus in the January/February (2019) issue of *CeTEAL News: Center for Teaching Excellence to Advance Learning*, “Digital Teaching Contingency.” Also in conjunction with CeTEAL, COOL is working on a letter and a checklist of recommended tasks that can be sent to faculty with information on what to do when an event is expected. This basic information will also be added to our existing contingency website when we update it early this summer: https://libguides.coastal.edu/contingency. (The email and checklist could potentially be sent out by the provost?)

Over the next academic year, CeTEAL will offer the following professional development opportunities:

- a one-day contingency workshop a couple of times each summer. Faculty will be able to learn best practices for contingency instruction and have hands-on workshop time to work on their classes.

- 90-minute contingency sessions offered 2-3 times at the beginning of fall and spring semesters. Sessions will cover the basic best practices and the checklist of recommended tasks.

References and Resources:


Coastal Carolina University, The Kimbel Library and Bryan Information Commons. Contingency Instruction <https://libguides.coastal.edu/contingency>

**Initiative 5: Improvements to Teaching & Learning Practices and Instructional Technology Tools**
One area of intensive research this AY with the DL Committee involved best practices for teaching and learning in the digital learning spaces, alongside recommended improvements and enhancement recommendations to our current tools available to the campus, such as to the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). As noted on COOL’s Moodle Timeline, the campus has successfully completed 6 Moodle upgrades since the Summer of 2016. However, based on feedback obtained from DL Committee members across the campus, as well as a review of a faculty survey of tools and functionality of the Moodle LMS, it was noted that a number of functions and tools were not yet available to our campus faculty and students. Additionally, it was noted that the current version of our Moodle LMS (3.2.9) is now at “end-of-life” and no longer has full compatibility with some 3rd party tools frequently used by faculty in their teaching needs (such as publisher’s plug-ins). With this in mind, the DL Committee representatives put forth the recommendation to upgrade the Moodle LMS to the latest stable version in full production, based on the evaluations completed by the Coastal Office of Online Learning. Errors documented with the current outdated version include, among others:

Cengage - An increased number of faculty members are using MindTap, powered by Cengage, and there is not gradebook integration. Gradebook integration starts with Moodle version 3.6

Respondus - We have experienced a host of issues with Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor and after several phone calls with our representatives, it was determined that more “fixes” were available for more up-to-date versions of Moodle. With our campus having a focus on academic integrity, tools like these have to work without the intermittent “unexplainable” issues. In addition, in the Wall College of Business, they are being required to use this tool, but there is push back as they have experienced a lot of the issues.

Plug-Ins - Previously, we have had to deny plug in requests due to being on an outdated version of our LMS.

Ally - Our campus-wide LMS digital accessibility tool, which is needed to strengthen our ability to serve all populations on our campus and was adopted during the 17-18 AY, is nearing end of life for support on our current version of Moodle. Moodle will need to be upgraded to allow Coastal faculty and students to utilize the enhanced functionality of this tool.
The recommended upgrade version should be at minimum Moodle LMS 3.5, though an upgraded release to Moodle LMS 3.6 is strongly recommended for upgrade during the Summer 2019 term. Improvements immediately available to campus faculty and students using this LMS include:

Enhancements to Moodle with Upgrade to LMS 3.6

- Improved quiz statistics
- Can export single quests from a question bank
- Can set course content to read only
- Download list of course participants
- Messaging UI update
- Grader report saves after edit with multiple tabs
- Improved course overview - sort, star, and hide courses
- New dashboard blocks
- Instructors have the ability to message groups in courses
- Add more specifics to badges (Open Badges v2.0)
- Improved assignment feedback options

Additional feature enhancements may be viewed here:
Moodle 3.6 Updates/Improvements

Moodle 3.6 New Features

Additional recommendations brought forward with support from the DL Committee include:

- Halting the spinning up of new instances for Moodle at the end of each calendar year (in process)
- Automatic assignment of faculty per WebAdvisor to Moodle course shells (in process)
- Consideration for cloud-hosting of the Moodle LMS (under further review)
A second focus area for the DL Committee on instructional technologies involved best practices for teaching math, science, and engineering online. There are many suggestions and subtopics in this area, but we believe the most useful area to focus on for our faculty is how to translate the idea of drawing on the whiteboard in class to the online environment. Research shows that the Khan Academy style learning videos, in which the instructor draws diagrams on the whiteboard as he/she talks, are the most engaging type of lecture video. They are organic, raw, and flowing, similar to the way a lecture would be in class (as opposed to talking through a prepared presentation). There are three components to be considered: the input device, screen capture software, and drawing software.

**Input Device**

The best type of input device is some type of stylus-based system, such as an iPad, a Surface tablet, or an external tablet such as Wacom Intuos. Considering the University’s investment in Microsoft based products and collaboration tools, the Surface might be a natural fit, but any tablet/stylus should work. Drawing on an external tablet has one significant drawback—the act of drawing is disconnected from the drawing itself (you’re making sketches on a tablet but you have to look at the screen to see the drawing. It is more intuitive (similar to writing on paper) to draw directly on a screen.

**Screen Capture Software**

The screen capture software is used to record the lectures, including the whiteboard drawing as it happens. Since the University already supports Echo360, this is a good screen capture program with which to start. There may be more robust features in Camtasia or other products, but Echo360 should meet most needs.

**Drawing Software**

The drawing software is the piece that simulates the physical whiteboard. At the most basic, it just provides a canvas on which to write or draw. From the simplest option, Microsoft Paint, to the more robust online collaborative whiteboard software, there are plenty of paid and free options here. We tried out several, including Paint, AWW (A Web Whiteboard) and OpenBoard. The online whiteboards typically tout some of the following features: synchronously interactive (multiple people can draw on them at the same time), cross platform, ability to embed multimedia objects, saving and exporting to other formats, and more. The one software that we really wish to explore but haven’t been able to is Microsoft Whiteboard, a newly released product (summer 2018) from Microsoft that provides all of the above features and seamlessly integrates with
Office365. This may be the best option, but we are waiting on ITS to get it set up to be able to try it out. We currently have an open ticket for this request.

We believe that further exploration into the whiteboard software, particularly Microsoft Whiteboard, subsequent development of a tutorial class (perhaps coordinated by CeTEAL), and a program to help faculty obtain a suitable input device, would greatly facilitate online course development for our faculty and provide a richer learning experience.

Another approach to developing course content for online use is the use of green screens/green rooms. This technology allows instructors to present information within the familiar and humanizing perspective of a televised presenter or narrator. This type of personalized narration can provide students with a greater sense of familiarity with the instructor and increase their engagement in the course. In the context of this institution there are two potential barriers for implementation.

First, green screen facilities are limited on campus. Second, the recording and editing process requires a variety of recording skills (sound board work and visual editing techniques) for which faculty have limited experience and training.

An alternative to green screen recording are individual recording systems that combine video recording and motion tracking. One such example is the SWIVL system which allows a single individual to record instruction in a variety of settings. IPADS are used to record visual information and the SWIVL base and tracking system allow the instructor to move throughout a particular setting. The SWIVL system similar mobile recording devices can create more dynamic and engaging presentations. The technology is relatively expensive but it does not require additional technology support, like green room recordings, during the recording phase.

Finally, online courses can become truly interactive by using synchronous video technologies that allow students and instructors to interact in real time. Some barriers to the implementation of such technologies include (a) limited knowledge of the software, (b) accessibility and cost of the software, (c) the number of concurrent users that can be supporting at one time, and (c) identifying and utilizing software that can be supported in university approved platforms.

Additional Committee Work
In addition to the projects identified above, the Distance Learning Committee worked on the following activities:
• Hybrid initiative: the definition of hybrid was finalized and approved through faculty senate vote. (the executive committee requested a revision to the percentages marker for hybrid learning from 50% to 51%). This revision was approved by the DL Committee by vote.

• Updates to the DL Policy: the DL Policy was tabled by executive committee in senate during April 2019. The DL Committee met in a special session to review the revisions suggested by the senate executive committee and voted on revisions. The results of that review and voting by the DL Committee will be discussed in a meeting with the senate executive committee over summer 2019 (before the new 19-20 AY).

• Review of COOL Grant specifications
  o Provision of feedback on the DL course evaluation instrument: The DL Committee are in agreement that we should add something on SETI here and point to the fact that individual units will have the chance to add/subtract their own questions. Some questions that are on the current SETI instrument are not applicable to Online/Hybrid classes and may be confusing to some students.

The Distance Learning Committee also periodically reviewed potential academic and instructional technology tools being evaluated by COOL for possible implementation at Coastal, as well as served as pilot faculty with many of these technologies, to provide feedback and recommendations on improvements and tool adoptions going forward.