

Deans' Retreat: Academic Technology Plan

March 21, 2011

Notes taken by Kristen Yarmey

Attendees:

Hal Baillie, Provost/VPAA

Tim Cannon, Faculty - Psychology, TAG

Brian Conniff, Dean CAS

Joe Dreisbach, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

Eugeniu Grigorescu, Interim Director CTLE, TAG

Steve Jones, Associate Provost for Civic Engagement

Charles Kratz, Dean of the Library and Information Fluency

Mike Mensah, Dean KSOM

Deb Pellegrino, Dean PCPS

Sandy Pesavento, Faculty - Education, TAG

Jeremy Sepinsky, Faculty - Physics, TAG

Helen Stager, Registrar

Anne Marie Stamford, Assistant Provost for Operations, TAG

Jeff Welsh, Dean CGCE

Kristen Yarmey, Faculty - Library, TAG

Background:

This meeting came out of discussions by the Deans' Group about academic technology and its uses on campus, which led to the idea of forming an academic technology plan for the next five years. Members of the Technology Advisory Group (TAG) were invited to the retreat to assist in the formation of the plan.

Discussion of Retreat Goals:

- We agreed the retreat should be a future-oriented brainstorming session,
- Our focus would be on a general technological outlook rather than specific technologies.
- We are not interested in technology for technology's sake, but technology for learning.
- We decided to start with a vision statement and then move to more specific outcomes.

Discussion of Vision Statement:

- Our vision statement should flow directly from our vision for academic excellence- i.e., our goals for academic excellence should guide what we want from technology.
- We want our students to be academically and technologically prepared for the outside world.
- Faculty should be an integral part of a technology vision. We'd like to have a group of faculty that embrace and explore educationally appropriate technology, and who are willing to talk about it with their peers. But we also want to be clear that faculty are not required to use technology in their pedagogy.
- We are not looking to force the integration of technology into pedagogy, but we do want to foster an environment in which professors who find it appropriate can use it. There is

- a value for students in experiencing diverse pedagogical styles.
- We're most interested in *transformative* uses of technology in pedagogy, not just adaptive uses. Pedagogy and technology do not need to be in opposition to each other.
- This is not just about faculty, however; we want to foster a community of learners. Technology can also be viewed as a platform for group work and collaboration.
- We can't afford to be laggards. We'd like to be at the forefront of emerging technology, but we need to be aware of the limitations of our infrastructure and budget. That said, we can think big in our vision statement.
- We decided the vision statement needed to incorporate six concepts:
 - a. Foundation in our University mission and strategic plan
 - b. Technology as transformative, not just adaptive
 - c. Students as active participants
 - d. A community of academic excellence
 - e. Information literacy/information fluency
 - f. Faculty as campus leaders in academic technology
- The *draft* vision statement we arrived at:
 - **In accordance with its Ignatian mission, the University of Scranton encourages the transformative use of technology in innovative pedagogy, led by faculty, to create students active, engaged, and fluent in the global context.**

Discussion of Goals/Outcomes:

- We agreed that decisions about academic technology should be outcome-driven rather than budget-driven. Outcomes should also drive decision-making processes as well as policies and procedures.
- Student learning is the ultimate outcome, and those outcomes are spelled out in our strategic plans. This plan should focus on how technology can enhance those outcomes, to help administrators identify next steps.
- Budget limitations are an issue. This plan will and should motivate conversations about where our resources should be allocated.
- Assessment should be incorporated into the plan.
- Academic Affairs should have a proactive rather than reactive view of technology.
- We'd like to encourage the exploration of emerging technologies. If we want our teaching to be transformative, we have to take risks.
- There should be a culture of open discussion of new technologies on campus. Communication "silos" between different divisions and departments can be barriers to effective technology implementation.
- Faculty need incentives to explore uses of technology in pedagogy. Currently, there are risks and discouragements involved in trying something new in teaching.
- Our prospective faculty ask about the availability of and support for technology on campus.
- We discussed how "digital natives" learn in different ways. Technology can help address multiple learning styles.
- Several *draft* goals we arrived at: Academic Affairs will...

- **Foster a culture of frequent, open, and transparent communication about academic technology among administrators, faculty, staff, and students**
- **Support and encourage experimentation and innovation among faculty, staff, and students**
- **Systematically evaluate and incentivize pedagogical uses of technology to enhance student learning**
- **Promote acceptance of multiple pedagogical styles among the faculty**
- **Provide engaging, useful, and convenient faculty technology training**
- **Demonstrate an appreciation for and sensitivity to discipline-specific technology needs**
- **Advocate for adequate and sustainable funding for academic computing**

Next Steps:

- Kristen will post notes from the retreat to the Technology Advisory Group website.
- The Provost's office will begin to draft out a technology plan.
- It will be shared with the Faculty Senate, the Academic Policy Committee, and the Administrators' Conference for comments.
- The retreat group will meet again after the plan is written to discuss implementation steps and specify five-year action items.