

Educational and Research Technologies Committee
Annual Report to the Faculty Senate
May 4, 2016

This committee is responsible for matters related to the development and implementation of educational and research technologies at the University that guide acquisition of information literacy by students and faculty. Current members are:

Name	Department	Term
Hung Do	BSAD	2018
David Feurzeig, Chair	CAS	2017
Mark Fung	MED	2016
Sally Huber	MED	2017
Randy Kelly	CNHS	2018
Helen Read	CEMS	2016
Marc Law	CAS	2018
Donna O'Malley	LIB	2016
Omar Oyarzabal	EXT	2018
Regina Toolin	CESS	2017
Mark Starrett	CALS	2017
Lini Wollenberg	RSENR	2016
Joanne Pencak	FPPC (BSAD)	2016
Thomas Chittenden	SAC (BSAD)	2016

The ERTC meets monthly, and will have one more regular meeting this academic year. The following are the issues we are pursuing and the updates reported to us in that time.

Larry Kost in memoriam

Larry Kost, Senior Lecturer in CEMS and Chair of the ERTC since its inception, passed away in December 2015 after a relatively brief battle with cancer. Donations in Larry's name may be made to the Vermont Youth Symphony Orchestra Association: www.vyo.org, or mail to VYOA, 223 Ethan Allen Avenue, Colchester, VT 05446.

Faculty Computer Acquisition and Support

Following up on last year's survey of faculty computer acquisition policies in the various colleges/units, we surveyed UVM faculty regarding their satisfaction. We also compared policies on computer acquisition and replacement across the various units, which revealed great variance in practice. This resulted in a resolution, which will be voted on by the Senate in its May meeting, calling for a more consistent and equitable provision of a basic or office-type computer for all full-time faculty across the University.

With a 25% response rate, our survey also found substantial support for some sort of Bring Your Own Device policy, whereby faculty would receive set funds for acquisition of computing devices and peripherals, in place of a fixed replacement schedule. A BYOD policy, however, would increase the difficulty of maintaining appropriate security and privacy controls, and could result in already overextended computer support being stretched even more thinly. After discussion with computing support staff in the various units, with UVM's security and compliance staff, and with the University Technology Committee (see below) about options for a BYOD policy, including the possibility of tying release of individual funds to completion of an online security training, we decided not to pursue this policy but instead focus our resolution on greater consistency in provision of computing equipment.

IT Governance: There is no unified procedure whatsoever for UVM's IT decision making. There is no defined process and no fixed group of people to advise the administration on IT decisions. Currently, for instance, the Provost might decide to spend money upgrading the wireless network; someone might then come forward with a more urgent need only to be told, "sorry, there are no funds available." The former IT Align Group has renamed itself the University Technology Committee, and has charged itself (under CIO Mara Saule and Associate CIO Julia Russell) with drafting a University-wide system for soliciting and evaluating IT funding proposals, by the end of the summer. The Chair of the ERTC sits on the committee. We have also asked the FPPC of the Senate to delegate one of its members to sit on the committee.

Expanded Section Descriptions

Faculty participation is low, despite the obligation (set forth in the Collective Bargaining Agreement) to post ESD's, and the Student Government Association has expressed its dissatisfaction. Our committee is working with the Student Affairs Committee and the Registrar to create online instructions and FAQ's to assist faculty in composing helpful ESD's and to find ways to increase participation.

Online Student Course Evaluations

In 2012, the Senate passed a resolution from the ERTC, approved by the President and Provost, to implement a University-wide online platform for student course evaluations. This foundered: first because the vendor chosen in the summer 2012 went under, then because a new Provost came with different priorities, while a new CAS Dean advocated the adoption of a different course evaluation system (IDEA), which also came to naught. In Fall 2015, the SAC revived and revised the proposal, proposing a Banner-integrated system that would allow students to be surveyed after the last class meeting and after all work had been returned, and could increase participation over other online systems by operating on a "opt-out" prompt that would appear just before students can view their course grade. The ERTC has taken up this proposal, despite concerns expressed through United Academics governance that a unified platform may eventually lead to uniform questions (even though the resolution drafts specify that the content of questionnaires shall remain under departmental control) and that a unified collection point for evaluation data is likely to lead to increased and possibly inappropriate use of the data (such as

competitive comparisons across colleges or publication of protected employee information).

Meanwhile, in the years since the 2012 proposal, all units except for CAS have moved entirely or largely to online platforms for administering student evaluations, using a variety of systems using Lime Survey, SurveyMonkey (which is insecure), or self-coded web platforms; this renders concerns about response rates of online vs. in-class evaluations moot outside of CAS, and in fact the proposed Banner-integrated system is likely to lead to improved response rates over existing online platforms. While this does not resolve all concerns, for those Units already using online evaluations, it does render moot one of the concerns with the original 2012 proposal, namely reduced response rates of online vs. in-class evaluations.

Concurrently, the new Dean of CAS has expressed interest in changing the way student evaluations are used in faculty assessment and performance review: he would like to see student evaluations play a smaller and more clearly limited role, and be better balanced by other kinds of observation, and would like faculty and administration to be properly apprised of research showing (for example) correlations between student evaluation scores and the race and gender of instructors. The Chair of ERTC is participating in a discussion about this. We hope that a change in CAS (and hopefully UVM's) institutional culture that leads to better context for student course evaluations and better knowledge about their proper interpretation will reduce the overall concern and suspicion around the topic of a unified online platform for administering the evaluations.

Technology Innovation Fund (TIF)

The student technology fee has recently gone up to \$77 from \$75. The primary use of this fee has generally been to support general purpose classrooms; significant portions of TIF have been used to expand wireless service on campus. Again this year, the TIF was not opened to competitive proposals. The lack of consistent procedure reflects the general ad hoc nature of IT governance (see above). We are continuing discussions with CIO Mara Saule about the uses of TIF and access to it.

Email/Calendar Migration

Faculty email and calendaring have been migrated to the new system (Microsoft Exchange) fairly smoothly, with minimal complaints expressed.

Respectfully submitted,

David Feurzeig
Department of Music & Dance
Chair, Educational and Research Technologies Committee