

LMS Evaluation Committee

Room UP 301, Seminole Campus

September, 24, 2003 - 2PM- 3:30PM

I. Sub-Committee Reports

Faculty/Student Input and Feature Set Sub-Committee:

- Discussion included the idea of meeting with faculty at each campus before the LMS Olympics to give them a chance to view the systems being evaluated. Action Item was to have Discovery Days at each campus. These would allow the faculty at each campus a chance to provide feedback about each of the learning management systems
- Survey to instructors using WebCT was conducted to determine which tools are most widely. At this point, over 100 have responded. The results have not been analyzed yet but will in the near future.

Total Cost of Ownership Sub-Committee:

- Sub-committee met last week. Conferlete Carney has taken the lead on this sub-committee. He will work with Doston Hunt, Purchasing Director, to send out a formal Request for Quote to each of the vendors. The information will be compiled and presented to the whole committee at the first November meeting.

Technical Architecture Sub-Committee:

- David Cremer and Mark Ingles have taken the lead on this sub-committee. David has determined that Mark and he will wait until the field of products is narrowed to the final two before determining the architecture requirements for the LMS.

II. Conference Call with Doug Johnson, University of Florida – Doug was called because the University of Florida has just gone through an evaluation of various learning management systems. They decided on WebCT Vista. The purpose of the phone conference was to find out why they chose Vista.

- According to Doug there were a number of key factors why UF decided to do an evaluation of various LMS:
 - Rapid growth of faculty using an LMS. 64,000 users; 75% of the student body using an LMS
 - Spending money on various IT systems instead of consolidating services
 - Growth problems related to server capacity
 - UF wants to create investment opportunities with their new LMS
 - Doug was the only person supporting the various LMS being used at UF. He was also the only instructional designer supporting faculty
- UF had 3 different learning management systems to support:
 - WebCT CE – most widely used by faculty at UF by a factor of 4
 - Blackboard – used by College of Health Science
 - Homegrown – used by College of Business

- Doug tried to create a rubric that took into account the ease of use and feature set of each LMS. However, there was opposition by the faculty on the committee that used Blackboard. They felt that the rubric would not be fair because Blackboard was considered to be easier to use but did not have as many features as WebCT Vista. In the end, a majority vote was taken to decide which platform to purchase. One of the College of Business people on the committee felt that WebCT Vista was a much better system than their own homegrown LMS. WebCT Vista was the winner. According to Doug, those using Blackboard voted for Blackboard and those using WebCT voted for WebCT. It was two people on the committee not partial to either system that voted for WebCT Vista because of a richer feature set and its ease of use.
- A question about other LMS that were in the running was asked of Doug. He mentioned that Angel was one of them. It was then asked of Doug why Angel was not in the final two. He mentioned that Angel was a viable alternative because it seemed to have the best of both worlds, ease of use and a rich feature set. There were a couple of reasons UF did not consider Angel. One was the size of the company. There were some concerns that a company as small as Angel might be ripe for a take over. Second, the only large institution that was using Angel is Penn State University. This was a concern to the members of the committee.
- The last question asked of Doug was about the migration of courses from WebCT CE to WebCT Vista. He said that for the most part it was smooth. He did say it could depend on the course organization being migrated. There was still some manual work that needed to be done.

III. Vendor Question Item

- The next item was to look over the vendor questions that UF had developed during their evaluation process. The committee looked at each question to determine if they were pertinent to St. Petersburg College. Some questions were added to the list and some were deleted. The committee has until Friday afternoon to get other questions to the chair. The questions will then be sent to each vendor to be used in the LMS Olympic packets

IV. Discussion about Faculty Input

- The last part of the meeting there was discussion about what type of faculty input should be compiled. Many on the committee felt that it was very important that faculty provide feedback about this decision. It was determined that the input should come to the committee in the form of general comments than from a rating that one system is better than another. The final decision will be the committee's. The committee did not want faculty to feel that they made a choice and if the committee chose a different LMS, these faculty might feel as if their opinion did not matter.
- It was also decided that an email will be sent to all of SPC about the various groups on the committee such as MCTFT, NTPI, and Corporate Training. The faculty as a whole may not understand that these groups have slightly different requirements than eCampus. Their way of work is not the same as the rest of the college. However, it is very important that the next LMS be able to handle traditional online courses as well as these other groups' requirements.