Note: this version includes an addendum with several recommendations specific to the UO campus.

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A Report on the Frye Institute Practicum Project
Assessment of Educational Technology Programs at the University of Oregon

Andrew R. Bonamici, Associate University Librarian, Instructional Services
Dale C. Smith, Director, Network Services

Our proposed project (see attached) was to conduct an assessment of the University of Oregon's educational technology environment. We were going to gather and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, including but not limited to:

- revenues and expenditures, with a focus on the student technology fee
- scope and adequacy of services
- market penetration of key services in areas of instruction, research, outreach, and administration
- impact on student learning, overall student experience, scholarship and research, outreach, and administrative processes

As might be expected, we’ve not managed to accomplish all of this. What we have done is to:

- gather initial expenditure data on the student technology fee. Due to changes in fund administration, record keeping practices, and key personnel, we were not able to assemble the complete 10-year history originally planned.
- conduct a faculty survey of the perception and use of educational technology in support of instruction.
- met every week, forming a closer working relationship between the library and central computing

The key piece of work that we’ve accomplished was the faculty survey. Design of the instrument was influenced by a 2005 survey conducted by the University of Washington, with extensive consultation with UO administrators, the Ed Tech Committee, and survey design experts on the UO campus. This survey was sent to all instructional faculty, including graduate teaching fellows and focused on the use of technology in support of education, particularly in the classroom environment. We received 141 faculty responses, a return rate of 9.77% and 24 GTF responses, a return rate of 1.97%. These response rates were disappointingly low. The University of Washington had a response rate of 34.4% for a survey that was also open to all instructional faculty and graduate assistants. However, even with the small self-selected sample, we believe that we gathered some very interesting and useful data.
While our faculty survey appears to have a response bias towards faculty who are engaging in the use of technology in education, we have identified some interesting results that will drive some investment and changes in the University approach to supporting educational technology.

- While a relatively high number of respondents (75%) report having access to a dedicated laptop, several open-entry comments reveal that lack of access to a decent laptop is a serious disincentive to use of technology in the classroom. Partially in response to this, we are increasing the number of laptops available for checkout through our library system.
- The respondents were generally accepting and supportive of the use of technology in education: the vast majority of respondents are aware of colleagues at the UO or elsewhere who make effective use of educational technology in their undergraduate instruction (89% agree; 2% disagree), they generally believe that educational technology has potential for enhancing the undergraduate student learning experience in my area of expertise (88% agree, 4% disagree). Instructors are also comfortable learning to use the educational technologies needed for their UO teaching (86% agree, 4% disagree). Most respondents do not find technology too difficult to use (88%) or time-consuming to incorporate (76%).
- Respondents were positive about encouraging faculty to acquire at basic technology skills (86% agree, 4% disagree), and to inform students of the technologies required in each course (82% agree, 4% disagree).
- Respondents were negative about online quizzes and exams (16% agree, 48% neutral, 31% disagree) and accepting course assignments electronically (37% agree, 36% neutral, 27% disagree). Open entry comments suggest that concerns about academic integrity may underlie resistance to adopting these technologies.
- While instructors find online library resources easy to find and use (69%). However, this did not translate into curricular integration of library resources (36% high importance; 33% low importance, 23% no opinion) or full-text reading assignments (37% high importance; 28% low importance, 26% no opinion).
- In terms of classrooms, the majority of instructors report that their assigned classrooms are properly equipped with A/V equipment (68% agree, 8% neutral, 17% disagree). Some of the aspects of the classroom environment received significantly lower ratings and a high number of open-entry comments. This includes adequacy of location and size of instructor consoles and podiums (46% agree, 29% disagree), classroom furnishings that accommodate preferred teaching methods (43% agree, 34% disagree), and basic facilities such as lighting and chalkboards (49% agree, 30% disagree).
- The majority of instructors rate their own skill level as intermediate or higher with the tools that are most frequently used: computer in the classroom (79%), presentation software (76%), data or video projector (51%), course websites on Blackboard (58%).
- The majority of respondents reported online course syllabi (63%) and grades and progress reports (55%) as “very important or extremely important” to their
students. On the other end of the spectrum, video archives of lectures (59%) and audio archives/podcasts (59%) were “not very important” or “not important at all.”

- As mentioned above, the majority of respondents (75%) have access to their own wireless-capable laptop for use in the classroom. A lower number (49%) report a wireless-capable laptop as their primary computer. The majority of computers (55%) are at least two years old.

- Some additional points that stand out in reviewing both the summary results and open-entry comments:
  - there is strong opposition to mandating anything.
  - instructors feel strongly that the appropriateness of technology depends on the course.
  - although a substantial number of faculty (47%) report that putting lecture notes online is “important or very important” to their students, a substantial minority (25%) are opposed, and several provided very negative comments about this practice. This will be interesting to compare with student responses.
  - There is general satisfaction with the quality of the support, but there's not enough of it.

Specific short-term actions that we are actively pursuing based on the results of this survey include:

- Classroom Committee: In response to relatively low satisfaction with consoles and podiums, we are working with a faculty focus group to evaluate current classroom setups and gain input that will help guide our classroom projects, including changes that will be made this summer.

- Libraries: In response to the relatively low use of online library resources and full-text reading assignments in the curriculum, provide more outreach, training, and support for integration of e-reserves and other online information resources into Blackboard and other networked teaching/learning environments.

- Faculty, with support from Libraries CET, Academic Learning Services, and other academic support units: Explore opportunities to prepare students to use technology in their discipline or career field by integrating technology into the curriculum, beyond instructor use of presentation tools. [current example: Suzanne Clark’s “New Research” symposium <http://newresearch.uoregon.edu/>]

The last key change we’ve observed over the past year is that in meeting and talking about common issues and challenges, we’ve formed a closer working relationship between the library and central computing. One concrete result of this is that we’ve managed to define and gain funding for a Learning Commons project that will be launched this fall.
In closing, the Frye Institute allowed us to grow professionally in ways that were not possible before. We are better collaborators. We take more ownership of problems and finding solutions. It was a great experience for both of us to attend Frye together. We think we are having a significant impact on campus in ways that would have not been possible if only one of us had gone to Frye. Many thanks to EDUCAUSE, CLIR, the Woodruff Foundation, the University of Oregon, and to all of our 2005 classmates.
19 July 2006

**ADDENDUM:**

**RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON**

**A. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SURVEY AND FOLLOW-UP FOCUS GROUPS:**

1. We recommend that the Ed Tech Committee conduct another survey of faculty during 2006 – 2007, using a random sample to a) reduce the likelihood of selection bias and b) provide a way to send targeted reminders to encourage response to the survey. We further recommend conducting a student survey that mirrors the faculty survey from a student perspective. We would be pleased to assist the Committee with this project.

2. In response to relatively low satisfaction with classroom consoles and podiums, we recommend involving a wider range of faculty end-users in this aspect of classroom design, beginning with this summer’s classroom upgrade projects. **Status:** several focus groups were held in June; initial observations shared with Media Services and other critical stakeholders.

3. In conversations with teaching faculty in focus groups, and in observing the general state of UO classrooms, we recommend charging an individual and/or unit on campus with "ownership" of the full range of issues associated with maintaining and supporting these mission-critical teaching and learning environments. **Status:** During 2005-2006, Media Services assumed many of these responsibilities, including but not limited to:
   - Improved coordination with other campus services involved in classroom support, both general use and departmental
   - Held meetings with the EMU to improve coordination of non-instructional event support; provided follow-up assessment of EMU equipment, facilities, and staffing capacity.
   - Installed phones in general classrooms
   - Signs are being installed in all general use classrooms providing a single number (Media Services) for any trouble call, whether equipment or room facilities
   - A remote network diagnostic system is being installed so that Media Services can detect equipment failure centrally
   - Satellite carts have been procured for expedited emergency response to general use classrooms.
   - Student employees are conducting regular room checks and systematic preventive maintenance in general use classrooms

4. In response to the relatively low use of online library resources and full-text reading assignments in the curriculum, we recommend that the UO Libraries provide more outreach, training, and support for integration of e-reserves and other online information resources into Blackboard. **Status:** The UO Libraries are approaching this from several angles, including development of an updated roles and responsibilities document for library subject specialists that
   - provides clear and consistent expectations
- improves communication with the rest of the campus
- reinforces the full range of library responsibilities, including functions related to CET and Media Services, and
- demonstrates the level of contribution library subject specialists make to the core mission of the university.

5. Curricular Integration of Technologies: We recommend that the faculty explore opportunities to prepare students to use technology in their discipline or career field by integrating technology into the curriculum, beyond instructor use of presentation tools. This effort should be supported by Academic Affairs, the Libraries CET, Academic Learning Services, and other units as appropriate.

**Status:** We recommend that department heads and other academic leaders examine Suzanne Clark’s New Research symposium ([http://newresearch.uoregon.edu/](http://newresearch.uoregon.edu/)) as a potential model for structured discussion in other departments and disciplines.

6. Laptop Access: lack of access to a decent laptop is a serious disincentive to use of technology in the classroom, and the survey reveals an apparent "have/have not" gap between departments, disciplines, and/or categories of staff. We recommend that the UO conduct an inventory (not a survey) to get an accurate picture of the faculty computing environment, and then develop resource allocation strategies that provide all instructors with a basic University-provided and maintained laptop appropriate to their discipline.

**B. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS:**
(see attached background document, “FryeInterviews_UOsummary.pdf)

1. Central backup and data archiving: We recommend that the UO develop a central backup and archiving facility for research output, including datasets. Design and development of this service will require collaboration between the VP for Research and ORSA (policies; proposal review; compliance with granting agencies), Information Services (systems engineering, central storage, networking), and the UO Libraries (metadata, content management, user training, coordination with Open Access Initiative), and representative users from academic departments and research institutes.

2. Planning: The University of Oregon does not have an institution-wide strategic plan, but uses a very strong identity to drive most decision-making. The identity of the University of Oregon is focused around several principles and facts:

   - The University is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). The AAU was founded in 1900 and currently consists of sixty American universities and two Canadian universities. The AAU focuses on issues important to research intensive universities, such as funding for research, research policy issues, and graduate and undergraduate education.
   - We are a liberal arts institution.
   - We are a public University.
   - We are located in Oregon.
   - We have a long history of collaboration throughout the institution. For example, our oldest interdisciplinary Institute recently celebrated its 50-year anniversary.
We have active and vibrant representation of faculty issues through our faculty senate. We are a very decentralized institution. We value sustainability.

It is hard to translate an identity into the kind of specific action plans necessary for responsive service units. A framework is needed that recognizes the UO’s distinctive and valuable institutional characteristics, while simultaneously providing a consistent structure for technology planning at both the unit and campus level.

As a starting point, we recommend adopting the 1994 *Educational Technology Vision Statement* (see attached). This has stood the test of time, and the Educational Technology Coordinating Committee recently re-examined and reaffirmed this statement and its seven core principles. We recommend expanding the document to include principles directly targeted to the University's research mission and to administrative efficiency and productivity. At that point, the document should be widely promulgated for discussion by the entire UO community and formally adopted by the UO Administration as the established framework for guiding and shaping the development of technology-related programs and services. This effort would establish a planning framework parallel to the UO’s *Long Range Development Plan* for the physical campus:

http://www.uoregon.edu/~uplan/CampusPlan/CampusPlan2005Aug01/CampusPlan8.1.05.pdf

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attachments:
Frye Institute Practicum Proposal, 2005
Summary of interviews with campus executives, Spring 2005
Ed Tech Vision Statement, 1994