Educational Technology Advisory Committee
Report to the
IT Executive Committee

2012-2013

Educational Technology Advisory Committee Members:

Gad Allon, Managerial Economics and Decision Sciences, Kellogg
Ron Braeutigam, Office of the Provost (co-chair)
Stephen Carr, Office of the Dean, McCormick School of Engineering
Tom Collinger, IMC, Medill School of Journalism, Media, and Integrated Marketing Communications
Tracy Davis, Office of the Dean, The Graduate School
Michael Hannen, School of Education and Social Policy
Jennifer Hobbs, Graduate Students representative
David Keown, IT Planning, Information Technology
Greg Light, Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching
Franziska Lys, Department of German, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
Rene Machado, Office of the Dean, Bienen School of Music
Paul Riismandel, School of Communication
Sofia Sami, Associated Student Government
Geoff Swindells, University Library
Sean Reynolds, CIO, Information Technology
Joel Shapiro, Office of the Dean, School of Continuing Studies
Bob Taylor, Academic and Research Technologies, Information Technology (co-chair)
Emerson Tiller, Office of the Dean, School of Law
Jay Thomas, Office of the Dean, Feinberg School of Medicine

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Executive Summary

• The Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) was launched in May 2012 as one of the governance committees in a newly-established, federated framework for Information Technology planning at the University.

• The Committee met fourteen times during 2012-2013. The early meetings were dedicated for report outs from each of the schools and from each central support unit (Library, NUIT, Searle Center) regarding their top priorities for support of educational initiatives at Northwestern. The report outs helped the Committee to gain a campus-wide perspective on pain points for each of the units, and the report outs identified some immediate shared priorities for where help is most needed from the central units.

• The Committee determined that the most pressing need for action is a comprehensive review of the University’s course management environment, currently anchored by the Blackboard Learn system. A work group of twenty-five faculty and staff was created in January 2013 to conduct this review and to make recommendations for improvement to Northwestern’s electronic teaching and learning environment. Final recommendations will be made next spring in a report to ETAC that will also be shared with the Northwestern faculty community at large. A top priority is to identify a learning management system that will help our faculty to more easily adopt modern tools and capabilities for blended learning (in person and online).

• ETAC has begun quarterly, joint planning meetings with the leadership from the University Classroom Committee. These ongoing meetings will enable coordinated planning and prioritization of activities between these two committees, which are responsible for shaping many aspects of the educational environment on our campuses.
2012-2013 ETAC Meeting Summaries

May 11, 2012 ETAC Launch Meeting
Co-chairs Ron Braeutigam and Bob Taylor set the general agenda for the Educational Technology Advisory Committee’s (ETAC) work. Sean Reynolds presented the vision for the IT Governance framework at strategic, advisory, and operational levels. Bob Taylor presented on potential topics for the Committee’s study and investigations during the first year: including Learning Management Systems (LMS), E-textbooks, Smart Classrooms, Mobile, and Online Learning.

June 6, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Outs from SCS and NUIIT)
Representing the School of Continuing Studies, Joel Shapiro reported on the scope, scale, and method of its online education programs. Bob Taylor discussed NUIT’s strategic planning process and objectives around its educational technology services such as Blackboard, Lecture Capture, Smart Classrooms, and blended and online learning. Ron Braeutigam updated members on recent discussions between Northwestern and 2U around forming a consortium of universities to offer for-credit classes online.

July 18, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Outs from Communication and Medill)
Bob Taylor relayed information about forging a campus-wide agreement to use Mediasite for lecture capture and academic webcasting. Paul Riismandel presented on Viewcast Media Platform, a digital asset management system under investigation by the School of Communications and how it will be used to implement ePortfolios. Tom Collinger gave a report on the Medill School of Journalism’s educational technology strategic plan and recent projects including the Integrated Marketing Communications online graduate program.

July 23, 2012 ETAC Meeting (New Efforts Being Investigated at the University in Online Education)
Provost Dan Linzer provided details about in-progress discussions at the University regarding its potential engagement in two new online education opportunities. Northwestern was invited by 2U to join a consortium of peer institutions that would allow students to earn credit for tuition-based undergraduate courses offered via the Semester Online program. Northwestern was also considering a partnership with Coursera to offer Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) from select Northwestern faculty.

September 17, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Outs from SESP and McCormick)
Mike Hannen and guest presenters Keely Sorokti and Jeff Merrell put forward a report on the School of Education and Social Policy’s (SESP) educational technology strategic plan and recent projects including the SESP “Hive,” a social media platform based upon Jive, used by the Masters in Learning & Organizational Change program. Steve Carr presented a report on the McCormick School of Engineering’s experience with educational technology. Committee members discussed what educational technology topics might warrant deeper exploration by committee workgroups.

September 27, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Out from Feinberg; First LMS Market Survey)
Jay Thomas, assisted by Brian Agne, presented the Feinberg School of Medicine’s educational technology strategic plan and the variety of home-grown systems currently used to support Feinberg’s educational goals. Bob Taylor and guest presenters Bill Parod and Brian Nielsen presented information about Learning Management Systems and a survey of currently available options.

October 10, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Out from TGS; Committee Votes on Work Priorities)
ETAC committee members anonymously ranked the importance of several educational technology topics to determine schools’ interest levels and discover what areas may rate further study. Based on survey results, committee members proposed taking steps towards developing what would eventually become the

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Learning Management Systems Investigation Committee (LMSIC). Tracy Davis presented a report on online education efforts at The Graduate School.

October 31, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Outs from Law and WCAS)
Emerson Tiller presented a report about online education and blended learning efforts at the Law School and how several new degree programs are shaping its strategic plan for educational technology. Franziska Lys and guest speakers Adam Finlayson and Chris Comerford of the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences presented a report on the evolution of educational technology activities and current projects such as the Student Dossier, which is on track for University-wide adoption.

November 19, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Outs from Library and Kellogg)
Geoff Swindells reported on the Northwestern University Library’s educational technology strategic plan, advisory bodies, and core educational technologies and services including its digital collections and digitization projects. Gad Allon of the Kellogg School of Management presented a report on Kellogg’s educational technology strategy and tools including an online simulation game developed in-house and now widely used in peer institutions. Also highlighted were Kellogg’s online education efforts, including a MOOC on Udemy.

December 10, 2012 ETAC Meeting (Report Outs from Searle Center and from the LMS Study Group)
Greg Light and guest presenter Susie Calkins of the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence presented information about its workshops and seminars, individual consultation services, and group analysis and evaluation projects designed to help instructors develop their technology-enhanced learning. Tom Collinger updated the committee on LMSIC structure, membership, and goals. Ron Braeutigam and Sean Reynolds related the latest developments around online education initiatives with 2U and Coursera.

January 18, 2013 ETAC Meeting (Blended Learning and “Course Nuggets”; NUI Planning Cycle)
Greg Light gave a presentation about educational and learning objectives that are associated with course nuggets. Guest presenter Harlan Wallach explored the production processes and techniques used to develop course nuggets and presented examples of course nuggets created and used at Northwestern. David Keown presented an overview of the FY14 NUIIT discussion document, related activity within other committees, and a detailed view of the educational technology section.

March 12, 2013 ETAC Meeting (Classroom Design Activities at NU)
Sean Reynolds provided progress updates on how the University’s six Coursera MOOCs are developing. Mike Hannen, guest presenter Mike Curtis, and Bob Taylor reviewed classroom design and planning at Northwestern and how rooms of various sizes can be designed to support active learning, flipping-the-classroom, and blended learning pedagogies. University Classroom Committee co-chairs Jean Shedd and Ron Nayler discussed their committee’s priorities around classroom design and related challenges, the Kresge renovation, and how ETAC and the University Classroom Committee might collaborate on planning and projects.

May 14, 2013 ETAC Meeting (Online Education Activities at NU)
Guest speakers Jake Julia and Marianna Kepka talked about the 2U and Coursera initiatives in progress at Northwestern and the related governance and support structures. Guest speaker Candy Lee discussed her online teaching experiences, how those experiences varied between different platforms, and online tools she used to facilitate and enrich the teaching and learning experience. Bob Taylor provided a brief history of Coursera activities occurring on campus and apprised committee members of the status of the six MOOCs being developed at Northwestern.

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July 25, 2013 ETAC Meeting (First Report back from the Learning Management System Review)

Bob Taylor and the Learning Management System Review work group chairs (Greg Light, Gad Allon, Franziska Lys, Emerson Tiller) reviewed the group’s framework for LMS evaluations and discussed timelines for final recommendation to the ETAC committee. Canvas by Instructure is currently judged the strongest of the candidate LMS for Northwestern’s interests. Desire2Learn and New Blackboard continue to be studied. Canvas will be piloted by at least fifteen NU faculty in fall quarter 2013 courses, and pilot course opportunities will be opened up to additional faculty during the winter and spring 2014 quarters. ETAC approved of the LMS Review group’s progress and its plans to bring final recommendations to ETAC by June 2014. FY2014 Ron Braeutigam briefed committee members on the latest updates with the 2U and Coursera initiatives.
2013 Activity Summary of the Learning Management System Review Group

• In October 2012, ETAC identified a pressing need for action: a comprehensive review of the University’s course management environment, which has been anchored by the Blackboard Learn system for over twelve years.

• In January 2013, a work group of twenty-five faculty and staff was created to conduct this review and to make recommendations for improvement to Northwestern’s electronic teaching and learning environment. The Review Group is chaired by Greg Light, Director of the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching.

The Review Group agreed upon a charge of determining the best educational technology options for supporting NU faculty’s growing interest in blended learning, “flipping the classroom,” and online education—as in addition to providing continuing support for more traditional curriculum practices at Northwestern.

• In February 2013, the Review Group identified four sub-committees that will perform assessments in four major criteria.

The students and faculty in each pilot course will be surveyed by the LMS Review Group for faculty satisfaction with the LMS (led by Gad Allon, Kellogg); student satisfaction with the LMS (led by Emerson Tiller, Law); learning outcomes that can be attributed to the LMS (led by Franziska Lys, WCAS); and technology capabilities of the LMS (led by Bob Taylor, NUIT).

• During the winter and spring quarters 2013, the Review Group hosted on-campus demonstrations and briefings for four candidate LMS systems: LoudCloud, Instructure’s Canvas, Desire2Learn and New Blackboard.

• In June 2013, the Review Group determined that Canvas demonstrated the best initial fit for Northwestern’s interests in a modern learning management system. The Review Group requested that NUIT prepare for fall quarter pilots of Canvas in a variety of NU courses. A contract was signed in July with Instructure for access to the cloud-based Canvas platform for pilot courses by Northwestern during the academic quarters of the 2013-2014.

• Test accounts will be available to NU faculty during the 2013-2014 academic year in “sandbox” instances of Canvas, Desire2Learn and New Blackboard, for comparative review of the user interface and the functional feature set of these three top-rated LMS candidates.

• Briefings and workshops will be offered to faculty throughout the fall and winter quarters regarding the pilot and sandbox LMS efforts. An online survey of all faculty will be conducted in October 2013 regarding their experiences in Blackboard Learn and their teaching goals in an alternative LMS environment.

• At the end of the spring quarter 2014, the LMS Review Group will conduct a final assessment of the pilot courses experience. A recommendation for improvements to the Learning Management System environment at Northwestern will be shared with the campus community at large and will be presented in June 2014 to ETAC for further action.