Online Education Initiative Steering Committee Meeting
Friday May 2, 2014
Courtyard Natomas
Natomas California

Attendees: Loretta Adrian (by Confer), Tom Bilbruck (by Confer), Gary Bird, Marie Boyd, Gregory Beyrer, Tom Burke, Henry Burnett, Sandoval Chagoya, Priyadarshini Chaplot, Anita Crawley, Dan Crump, David DeGroot, Bonnie Edwards (by Confer), Jessica Millikan (for Barbara Fountain), Kelly Fowler, John Freitas, Terry Gleason, Maria Gonzalez, Chris Graillat, Jory Hadsell, John Ittelson (by Confer), Pat James, Jayme Johnson, Brian Keliher, Carol Lashman, Richard Matthews, Joe Moreau, Robert Pacheco, Joe Perret, Arnita Porter, Joanna Quejada, Bruce Racheter, Ray Sanchez, Fred Sherman, Erik Skinner, Dave Stephens, Fabiola Torres, and LeBaron Woodyard.

Opening Remarks and Scheduling:
John opened the meeting at 10:00 am, and Joe noted that one of the tasks for today will be to discuss and perhaps approve the Application to the Consortium so that can be sent out to the field, ideally as early as next week. The CAI and EPI Steering Committees have put out their calls for participation to the system, and we would like to get ours out so that colleges can prioritize their participation in these initiatives.

John proposed that for ease of scheduling travel arrangements the committee agree to have meeting sites alternate between Los Angeles and Sacramento. The specific meeting location may change, but flights can be consistently scheduled into those two cities. The first Friday of each month the OEISC will meet in person and the third Friday of each month the committee will meet on Confer. (The committee will probably skip the July 4th face to face meeting.)

Approval of Minutes:
Two changes were made to the minutes of the OEISC from April 4, 2014: change "friends and colleagues" to "professional colleagues" in the description of the launch team members, and correct the spelling of Dave Stephens name. With those changes the minutes were approved unanimously by the committee.

State U Online Document Discussion:
Henry led a discussion of the State U Online document by Rachel Fishman. The Golden State College of California was proposed in about 1992 as a community college, but as a separate organization with no tenured faculty, which would be separately accredited and based on television course delivered content. The idea was eventually rejected in California, but later the University of Illinois Global Campus was set up using a similar premise of having no tenured faculty and so on, but later met its demise. It was not well thought out politically, and there was no faculty buy-in. However, Rachel's document highlights five steps to building a successful effort in this realm:
1) Start with the clearinghouse.
2) Do shared contracts.
3) Work with shared Student Services
4) Have shared articulation credentials.
5) Share things beyond state borders.

This document might allow the OEI to learn from the successes and missteps of others. Currently there are some informal clearinghouses but they are not used consistently and it might make sense to consolidate and streamline them. We have some soft shared contracts with libraries and research data bases. It seems logical to leverage the size of the community college system to negotiate really good deals, and obviously one area this will be a major factor is with the Common Course Management System (CCMS). We have had great successes with CCCConfer and @ONE. However, there was also a notable failure in the early 90's, with an effort by eleven colleges to come together and build a common ERP; although a lot of money

went into the effort, very little came out of it. Brian noted that this document is a new and interesting starting point for discussion, but he cautioned that it has some distinct biases and it would be dangerous to base the whole committee discussion on it. Henry agreed that California has 41,000 course sections offered, which is more than the course sections in most or all of the colleges in the document combined. California is the big player in education. Carol noted that in the research she just started studying on programs in Illinois and Maryland, there were optional online course programs involving about 100 courses to choose from, and about 400-500 students participating. Another committee member agreed with Brian noting that most of the findings in this report are from 4 year institutions which might not be applicable to community colleges. Henry did note that some of Rachel's work involved smaller two year technical schools and community college like institutions in Kentucky.

Regarding student services, Anita Crawley noted that the community college system in California has an amazing number of student services that are offered online, however, they are located all over the place and are hard to find. They need to be consolidated and brought under one umbrella. As a positive note, CCCApply and Federated Identity are two large elements of registration that are already used by a majority of the community colleges.

LeBaron noted that the California Community College organizational structure is much more complex with many challenges of decentralization, but that decentralization is also a big strength in allowing individual colleges to break new ground in assisting students in meeting their goals and graduating. Degree attainment is a significant factor in student success. If a student completes an Associate degree and then transfers to another school where they do not complete their BA, they still retain the AA degree. However, students who transfer without an AA and do not complete a BA, have nothing to show for it. It is important to work cooperatively, share credits and help students to attain a degree, graduate and transfer. Bonnie echoed that the ultimate goal is to come together to leverage the work being done with ADT, CID and the inter-segmental work with ASSIST to remove roadblocks that keep students from thriving and progressing.

Brian agreed that degree attainment is the goal but noted that as we look for roadblocks, we need to remain aware that the locations of the roadblocks may have changed. Enrollment has dropped by 11% system wide and 102 of 112 colleges have dropped in FTES. While that doesn't mean that this effort isn't needed, it might not be at the same level. On his campus, 23 courses used to be backed up, but this semester there is only one course with no seats as of the census date.

Bonnie focused on what we can do to help students, for example, looking at programs that are difficult to fill at the local level, like engineering. Evaluate the situation and be thoughtful about how to serve students, perhaps by offering courses online that would complete programs that otherwise cannot be offered. For example, there is a psychology transfer degree that has a required research course for the degree; offering courses like that one would open the door to transfer degrees for students in small schools where they would not otherwise be able to be offered. LeBaron also noted that things may have changed, but the committee still has the responsibility to respond to the language in the legislation that directs the focus on those courses that had the highest demand, filled the quickest and were needed for transfer between institutions. It is a great opportunity for using good data analysis and input from the field to be able to tease out the courses and other elements that are needed. It can be challenging to get accurate information on current shortages when data is from thirty days after the end of term, but one member noted that the counselors can be counted upon to know what courses the students are having trouble getting.

Discussion of Big Questions:
The purpose of this discussion was to open up the issues around these questions, without necessarily finding "big answers" at this time. Instead, group leaders will take important points into the workgroups for further discussion in the breakout sessions.

1) What is the OE Consortium? What do you expect it should be, and what is its purpose?

It is a group of colleges that are involved in sharing all of these activities and courses. It will bring the best of online education to the students of California to help them make speedy progress toward their goals. It must be reciprocal, that is there must be basic agreement on reciprocity. The use of the CID course numbering system will build in reciprocity. Transfer level curriculum might provide challenges, if 3 out of 4 colleges have a transfer degree and the other doesn't have it. Financial aid and other areas will also need reciprocity.

Is it for colleges that can offer online courses, or is it also for colleges that want to have access to courses? Is it a set group, or can anybody join the consortium? There is a vested interest in the quality of the courses and in overall governance. What if the colleges that start up want to keep others out later? Is this a confederation or a kind of joint powers authority?

The consortium develops a roadmap for online education within the community college system and encompasses the policies, agreements, courses and the planning for courses to offer in the future.

2) Which colleges will apply to be pilot colleges in the consortium, and should there be a limit? What makes a good mix of colleges?

It should include a mix of: north/south, urban/rural, small/large and maybe others as well.
For the pilot program, do we want to let it be only colleges that have something to give, in addition to the desire to take? Would colleges need to have a minimum number of CID courses or 75%, or a certain number of transfer degrees, or some kind of requirement list?

Success in teaching online courses will be essential. Not just diversity in the demographics of the institution, but also diversity in the online missions. Whatever the selection criteria is, it should allow for the colleges with the most experience to offer rise to the top. It should include a teaching college, a home college, and at least one that has high numbers in success and retention. As a factual point, it is required by the ACCJC that all services be available to all students in a comparable way.

3) How will the work of the steering committee differ from the work of the OE consortium? Who addresses what courses go into the portal? Who addresses those questions that might have an impact on institutions (is it the Steering Committee, or the Consortium)? What authority does the Consortium have? Does the Steering Committee have the ability to tell them what they can and cannot do? How does the authority flow from the Chancellor's Office down?

The Academic Affairs workgroup should look at content issues and whether courses match CID.
The Professional Development workgroup will address quality online courses and course design.

Bonnie felt that Steering Committee would be overseeing the work of the Consortium. The Consortium would do a lot of work of drafting and planning, but then their work would come back to the Steering Committee for the overall vetting process and approval. In terms of hierarchy, others agreed that the Steering Committee is the more statewide representative body that obviously has higher authority to represent the state and the representative constituencies. Erik also noted that in that hierarchy, the grant is from the Chancellor's Office and they will provide oversight from above, as well. LeBaron also confirmed the formal relationship between the Chancellor's Office and the state legislature; which means that ultimately the responsibility for oversight falls to the Chancellor's Office. They are engaging the system to provide the best advice, but they provide final authority.

4) What should the communication norms be for various venues, live, online, Listserv, Basecamp, and so on? What are things that we should encourage and what should we avoid?

There are many avenues for communication, but it is important to be clear in those communications. At some point, everybody wants an answer with regard to approvals, but because this committee represents a variety of constituencies, it is important to recognize that opinions are expressed, but nothing is final until it is voted on.

Some discussions will fit better and be more productive in one environment or another.

5) If something is of great benefit to students, but may have a challenging impact to institutions, what should we do?

Strong campuses benefit students. Distinguishing between student wants and student needs is important. Right now students cross boundaries to take courses all the time. Seat exchange might be one way to help both. From the student perspective, "I know that there are open seats, but I can't come at those times, because I work or whatever. It does not meet my needs as a student." We don't know the students that we don't know. We don't know the potential students that are not currently coming to our colleges because what we offer does not meet their needs.

On a broader level, anything that keeps a student from completing is an issue that we need to address. The distinction of "want vs need," might need to be more carefully determined; it might look like a want, but be a genuine need that we are not addressing. If none of the class sections are being offered at night, there is a need we are not addressing. If class sections overlap by 30 minutes, students will have to choose one class or the other.

The group went into break-out sessions for the workgroups.

Workgroup Reports:

Professional Development Workgroup:
Pat reported that the group looked at three items: a flowchart of teacher and course design standards, including independent review standards for the teachers; a process for arriving at the standards both for teaching and for course design (using the iNACOL standards for course design as a basis); and a process for reviewing the reviewers. She will put the flowchart that was developed up in the Steering Committee area on Basecamp. @ONE will take the lead in interviewing the reviewers and looking at the minimum qualifications, as well as the desired qualifications. One of the tasks that the potential reviewers will be asked to do is to review a course. If they are hired, they will be contracted with @ONE. That process will begin immediately so that a database of courses that have been reviewed may be able to be in place even though the Consortium has not yet been established. A committee member asked why the workgroup was not using Quality Matters for review. Pat explained that this process will work quickly and sustainably and will be compatible with the variety of trainings that teachers may have gone through, including Quality Matters. The staff members at @ONE have been trained using Quality Matters training. LeBaron noted that Quality Matters is proprietary, while iNACOL is not. Both are well researched and well documented, and iNACOL is open source. A cross-walk of all of the standards that are being used will be developed. All courses must pass the reviewer to be posted to the portal. Content happens at the college based upon the curriculum at the college, but how the content is delivered and how effectively those elements are designed is what the standards will address.

A question was asked regarding what to do when colleges offer courses that don't meet the standard, for example if they put up largely publisher material, and the workgroup noted that will be addressed during the course review process. Issues of academic content would need to be addressed by the Academic Affairs workgroup if they want that to come through the review

process. The standard that is developed will need to be sent to the colleges to oversee and evaluate as we move forward. Erik noted that if there are issues in oversight, and "bad actors" in the field, they can be reported to the Chancellor's Office to monitor and address.

Consortium Workgroup- Pilots Sub-group:
Tom noted that the group had a good meeting with the primary focus on the application for pilot colleges and a plan to get them on board quickly. There will be a preamble that will be incorporated into the application letting colleges know what is desired. The committee decided to use a two-step application process. The first step will just be "expressing interest," then the second step will involve a more detailed set of questions to answer with the goal of getting enough information to screen for the best colleges. Brian thought that this process might end up taking more time, because colleges that wouldn't be eligible wouldn't be identified until the second part of the process. Other members thought that have a non-intimidating first step was more important to avoid scaring off applicants. The letter of interest will go out as soon as possible, maybe within the next 30 days. The workgroup has identified a lot of the questions for the next round of screening and they will need to put those together. LeBaron felt that this process will allow the committee to identify schools that are interest in the process, as well as some schools that have already ramped up online courses. The goal is to try to identify schools by next month and then have those schools ramp up to start the pilot in the fall. The hope is to be able to provide approval to the initial list of schools at the next meeting. The Steering Committee is where the final decisions are made.

Consortium Workgroup– Bylaws Sub-group:
The workgroup discussed the draft of the bylaws. Some questions came up with respect to Article 3 pertaining to authority and responsibility. In the wording, "The CCC Chancellor's Office has delegated the authority and responsibility for oversight…," the committee thought it might be better to change "oversight" to language that better reflects the specific duties and responsibilities. The approval process might involve these steps: first, the bylaws workgroup reviews the document, then the consortium workgroup reviews it, followed by the Steering Committee, then the Consortium Pilot will review, revise, and make recommendations, then back to the Steering Committee to review and approve, and finally back to the Consortium to review and approve.

Article 4 involves membership and requirements of membership and MOU which is not yet created. It is essential for the Consortium to accept course credit for courses completed within the Consortium. It makes sense to keep some elements fairly general at this point, so that the Consortium can make decisions on what they believe will work based upon their experience with online courses. Kelly noted that the colleges that are likely to be interested in this process will be the experts in the field of online education. They could vet out the requirements and figure out what would be most appropriate. However, some of the specifics will need to be vetted by academic faculty on those campuses. Therefore, it is imperative to get out this letter of interest to the campuses, so that their faculty can be involved and have buy-in; without it, progress is impossible.

Academic Affairs Workgroup:
Did not meet separately, they joined the Common CMS workgroup today.

Student Services Workgroup:
Ray noted that the workgroup is focused on the four areas of: tutoring, orientation, test proctoring, and basic skills readiness. There will be sub-groups for tutoring and for orientation to online learning. They are concerned about equitable funding for student services; on home campuses student services often seem to be second class status, and they want to make sure that doesn't happen in online learning as well.

Common CMS Workgroup:
Fred put together a structure for the group to use to plan the schedule. An RFI will go out sometime in the next few weeks, and an RFP will go out in November to be returned in December. The selection process will happen sometime in the winter of 2015, with the pilot beginning in the fall of 2015. There are issues that need to be addressed and tasks still need to be segmented out for the workgroup members. This is a draft timeline completed only within the Common CMS workgroup and will need to be synchronized with the timelines for the other workgroups. The project team will work on coordinating the overall project plan and will bring it back to the OEI Steering Committee.

Basecamp Orientation:
Steve provided an overview of Basecamp and its features. It was chosen because it is easy to get into and will provide members with the ability to communicate with the whole Steering Committee or within workgroups. Tiles on the homepage represent the different groups that a person belongs to. There are a finite set of elements to work with: discussion, add files, to do, comments, text documents, and events (which is a calendaring system). Later it may be possible to add chat, or other more robust features, but for now these elements provide a variety of modes of communication. It is an easy tool to use because of the fact that there are limited menus.

The event calendar is visible to all who are in that group.
It is possible to forward an email into a discussion area on your page.
Each person can set their preferences regarding emails from projects, whether receiving them individually or as a daily notification of activity in the group.
A lot of help is available and the intent is to have a Basecamp consultant to this group, as well as a curator of the group. Launch team members are currently set as the administrators for their workgroups. As administrators, they have the ability to move discussions that might be of interest to the whole Steering Committee into the main discussion area. Workgroup chairs can be added as administrators by those launch team members. Administrators can also copy a thread to another group or project. Members asked about whether or not there could be an agreement not to have discussions on Listserv, but instead to agree to have them in Basecamp.

Some members expressed an interest in being members of all of the workgroups so that they can follow all of the discussions.

Action Item:
Steve will send out instructions on how to get discussions as an RSS feed. Members who would like to be members of multiple workgroups should let Steve know in response to a message he will send, and they will be added to those other groups.

Comments:
Erik emphasized that if progress is not made on this project, this will be a very short-lived initiative. The legislature is looking for progress.

John asked workgroups to contact himself or Fabiola to add an item to the agenda, if they need a vote to be taken at a future meeting.

The Steering Committee has had discussions, but nothing has yet been voted on. Some members wondered if the pilot would be beginning in the fall and many expressed interest in expressing that intent.

Motions:
Erik emphasized that progress needs to be made on this initiative, if everyone stays focused on having a perfect process, nothing will be resolved and all of the members of the committee will have a lot of free time, because there won't be an initiative. There needs to be some level of trust. Collectively we need to move forward with a basic level of trust and develop a process where other colleges will be able to come on board later. Would it kill the initiative to start the

pilot in the spring? Erik responded that he genuinely though that it would; the legislature wants elements that are far more revolutionary than what is being planned here, and they will take action eventually if they are not satisfied with the progress.

Two Phase Consortium Screening Process:
Ray made a motion to adopt a two phase screening process for the selection of initial colleges to be in the Consortium. Greg seconded the motion. Committee members strongly encouraged colleges to discuss this with their Senate before faculty members leave for the summer. It will be sent out through multiple communication channels. A majority of the committee voted in favor of the motion.

Intent to pilot the Online Consortium in the fall of 2014:
Ray made a motion of intent to pilot the Online Consortium in the fall of 2014. Erik suggested changing the wording to "make every effort possible." Ray changed his motion to, "We will make every best attempt to roll out the Consortium in the fall of 2014, unless it is not possible to do that effectively." Jory seconded the motion.

Wrap up and Planning for Future Meetings:
John asked the committee to look at doing longer meetings in order to not have to cut off discussion of important topics. He suggested scheduling the meetings from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm, which would provide an extra two hours of meeting time. He will try to get the meetings done by 4 pm, but will allow the extra time in case it is needed.
There was a consensus on trying it out beginning with the next face-to-face meeting on June 6th in southern California.

The next virtual meeting will be from 9:30 am until noon by CCC Confer on Friday May 16th.

The meeting was adjourned at 3pm.