UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
November 30, 2012
230T HEDCO Building, College of Education

PRESENT
Susan Anderson, Andrew Bonamici, Ron Bramhall, Ashley Buchholz, Dave Hubin, Madeleine Hudson, Jennifer Joslin, Loren Kajikawa, Alison Schmitke, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Beata Stawarska, Randy Sullivan, Tom Wheeler, Karen McLaughlin, and Glenda Utsey

ABSENT
Sue Eveland, Diana Salazar, Ben Smood, Kerry Snodgrass, and Paul Engelking

GUESTS
Ruth Keele, Marilyn Linton, Amy Giard, Lee Rumbarger, and Lindy Lavender

AGENDA
I. Presentation/demo of Oba platform – Dane Ramshaw, Learning Platform Systems Developer, COE (20-30 min)
II. Q&A with Ramshaw on Oba (15-20 min)
III. Continued discussion of online education (45 min)
   1) Select UGC representative to the Supporting Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Education Initiative Steering Committee
   2) Data on UO online courses
   3) UCSD Policy on remote and distance education
   4) Next steps & plan for winter term

MINUTES

I. PRESENTATION: OBAWORLD
Dane Ramshaw, Computer Technology Officer for Global & Online Education, College of Education, demonstrated the ObaWorld course organizer system designed by Professor Yong Zhao for the connection of educational centers (K-12) on a global scale. One aim of the project is to utilize open source code, rather than proprietary code, which allows for “customizing” of the program to meet the needs of users. Ramshaw explained that the ObaWorld software has just been moved to the Cloud platform, making it more powerful and capable of greater expansion and adaptation to other educational centers, such as universities. There are two versions of the program: ObaWorld for use by the K-12 institutions which is in a “garden” format (“the garden is walled; nothing can get in and nothing can get out”) and ObaVerse (as in “universe”), a non-hierarchical version that is open rather than being walled. It has been used by the Special Education department.
Dane demonstrated the dashboard design and navigation of the program. An advantage of the program is that it develops high-level thinking by encouraging students themselves to do page creation, content layout and organization, and delivery of specific content to specific individuals, groups, or organizations. This creativity is stimulated by the social media aspect of the program and the experiences of students in other social media programs (YouTube, Facebook, Voicethread, Tweeter, Prezi, etc.) The program is flexible and adaptable, incorporating a wysiwyg (“what you see is what you get”) editor, tags, attachments, drag-and-drop capacity for outside files from the web (or any non-virus-infected file).

Dane demonstrated step-by-step how to create a page in the program and how to publish it (to a group or to an individual), incorporating copyright tags and statements on material published, incorporating images, establishing threads of communication, incorporating external files and resources, etc. One important feature of the program is that it enables the update of multiple pages simultaneously, even though the pages may serve a variety of purposes. (It updates any changes in url linkages made by the user.)

The program allows for the portability of pages created by the user. They can be zipped by the user and exported to an external address. This prevents the user’s pages from becoming “stuck in time” at just the one location where the pages are created.

The program has a notification system, providing email alerts or other messaging alerts. There is also a search function capacity within the program. Additionally, in courses, the system can be used to monitor classes, either individual participants or entire groups, in real time. Students can also be given access to view each other and the instructor of the class, to engage in discussion, or to engage in technological multi-tasking.

II. Q & A WITH RAMSHAW ON OBA

Council members were interested in the demonstration and asked various questions:

Q. Where are we in regard to the interconnectivity of ObaWorld in comparison with our current course management system, Blackboard?
A. The interconnectivity is very easy, because both systems are connected with Banner. They both pull all their data from Banner. At a recent meeting of the deans, the Provost, and the President, the go-ahead was given to develop the interconnectivity of ObaWorld for use at UO.

Q. How does ObaWorld address FERPA concerns?
A. Because ObaWorld has already been developed for K-12 student populations, it has already undergone intense scrutiny for FERPA compliance. The system is very robust and with the Cloud platform has almost unlimited backup and security capabilities.

Q. In addition to integrating with other UO systems, is ObaWorld integrated with authentication systems for security?
A. Yes, ObaWorld will work with the Duck ID. Dane added that they are urging a single-sign-on authentication system that would allow access for all campus systems, instead of the
current system of siloed access to various systems (Duckweb, email, Banner, etc.

Q. With regard to pedagogy, are there other benefits to this system in actual teaching, aside from organization and course management and self-paced learning? Are there examples of how other people have exploited the pedagogical virtues of the system?
A. Not with this particular system. The system stimulates examination of what on-line learning is; the program is a tool to facilitate that learning. It forces a look at instructional design. It’s not just posting pdfs. You change the structure of the assignment. It’s no longer just an essay. It may be a workshop; it may be “forced” peer assessment. Conceivably this system could be used to flip the classroom.

Q. How does the Creative Commons License (creativecommons.org) work?
A. It puts an electronic stamp on content, but there are no digital rights management encoded in law at this time.

Q. What kind of assessment is available in this system?
A. This system can provide both formative assessment (assessment of learning as you go) and summative assessment (assessment of what you have cumulatively learned). The system could be set up to provide aggregate assessment across the institution (or parts therein); currently, it is designed for just one course at a time. The system could also provide student evaluations and course ratings. This could be helpful to the instructor in evaluating his/her own teaching.

Everything in the system is based on open sourceware. All it needs is to be configured. Dane used the analogy of designing a train system. The infrastructure (e.g. the gauge of the rails) needs to be uniform for the system to work.

The BlackBoard contract has two years to go. The ObaWorld system seems to be a viable option for replacing BlackBoard. The Library is forming a team to design the evaluation process for a campus-wide course management system to be selected. A representative from the Undergraduate Council is asked to serve on the committee.

The Council liked the idea of moving to a single course management system for the institution. Dane explained that a federation of opensource systems could be utilized in the background to create a seamless system experience for users. This is the way the industry is moving as a whole.

The Chair closed the discussion so as to allow time for other business.

III. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF ONLINE EDUCATION

1) COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE SELECTIONS:
• SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED EDUCATION INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE
  Randy Sullivan volunteered to serve as the UGC representative.

• LIBRARY LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EVALUATION
  Ashley Buchholz volunteered to be the student UGC representative.
  Ron Bramhall was nominated to be the faculty UGC representative.

2) UO ONLINE COURSE DATA
   The Chair announced that he will give Council members online course grade distribution data from the Registrar’s office. Course evaluations for the courses will also be provided. All of this will serve as preparation for meetings during the Winter term. The goal is to develop a campus policy for online education that promotes good practice.

3) UCSD POLICY ON REMOTE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION
   N.A.

4) NEXT STEPS AND PLAN FOR WINTER TERM
   – Understanding what is best practice. The idea is to gain insight by talking with practicing online instructors, and perhaps by looking at specific online courses.

   – Discussing the pedagogical issues connected with online courses in depth; online is the future and we want to move forward in a good way.

   – Crafting a policy. We need to develop a policy, but we also need to ensure that that whatever we come up with is useable. That is, it must not be burdensome to faculty and it must allow new courses to be reviewed quickly and effectively.

   Things to keep in mind during the discussions:

   – We are primarily interested in the development of online course components as adjuncts to classes already being taught (synchronous hybridization of online and face-to-face instruction);

   – The potential role of MOOCs in our curriculum is a separate question;

   – We should not lose sight of the UGC’s overall purpose—which is to encourage good course design, generally, and to enhance the General Education Curriculum. Technology is just part of this effort.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 14, 2013, 12:30pm at the Collaboration Room of the Knight Library.