LMS Review Meeting Notes

April 5, 2013

The committee discussed the summary of faculty input on the Blackboard system. Several issues were stressed, e.g. the absolute necessity of the Banner interface. Concern was expressed about the fractured student experience during a possible migration process, and how to recover any stored content within the Blackboard system if we decide to move to a different platform. See below:

[Note from T. Boshart: If Blackboard is shut down there won’t be any way for instructors to access the content themselves so we would need to develop a way to archive all the current content and find a place to store it so it can be retrieved and uploaded to a new system. If the new system can directly import Blackboard archives it would be simple. If it can only import Common Cartridge format courses then there is a good chance that some content such as tests could not be retrieved since Blackboard supports content and test question types that are not supported by Common Cartridge.]

An RFI will be issued shortly which will begin the evaluation and procurement process. An RFI is a useful tool to gather information about the market, and to communicate some of our essential requirements. RFI’s are very general in nature, and they are not considered part of the formal competitive process. Once the RFI is issued, we can begin to schedule vendor presentations. Vendor presentations will take place between now and the end of the term. We should try to schedule vendor presentations on Wednesday and Friday afternoons in Knight Library 101.

Open source products have several advantages, e.g. access to the source code, customization, front-end cost savings, etc. However, other costs should be considered, e.g. training, consulting, maintenance, etc., and must be factored into the total cost of ownership. Before we make a final decision regarding an open source product, we need to map out our technical and support capabilities on campus.

It will be important to provide enough time for a possible migration, given the support requirements. The committee agreed that we should try to extend our current contract with Blackboard through the summer of 2015.

Next meeting we will discuss the RFI draft, preparing for vendor presentations, and communication with the campus.