

Minutes of ILSD Kickoff Meeting May 6, 2008, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Present at the meeting were Shahra Meshkaty, Andrew Allen, Chris Wessells, Jack Pope, Ed Starkey, Lee Ann Otto, Julie Sullivan, Jim Straub, Roger Manion, Conley Robinson, David Light, Cel Johnson, Merrick Marino, Greg Zackowski, Carole Huston, Mary Whelan, Jerry Ammer, Lance Nelson, and Mary Kowit

Chris welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Innovative Learning Spaces Design Committee. Shahra Meshkaty and Andy Allen will be co-chairs of this committee. Chris introduced Julie Sullivan.

Julie welcomed committee members. She said she is delighted and thanked everyone for their participation in this important committee. Innovative learning space design reflects current research in the physical environment's enhancing learning for students. USD is currently working on its new WASC reaccreditation proposal and one of the three major WASC points (effectively using technology and learning spaces to enhance student learning) will be supported by the work of this committee. Selection of the members reflects a wide spectrum of varying backgrounds and expertise. Julie again thanked members warmly for their participation.

Chris returned and introduced Shahra Meshkaty, who had a PowerPoint presentation about learning spaces and the agenda for today's meeting.

Shahra greeted and welcomed everyone to the committee. She noted the lack of success in recruiting student participants. We'll continue to seek student members. We'll be making a website for the ILSD Committee and may post some notices there to attract students.

Shahra introduced her presentation. She began with a run-through of some of the technology that we already have at USD, including video teleconferencing. Jim Straub said that we had done 15 to 20 video teleconferences last year. We also assisted in the final exam for a student from the University of Madrid who couldn't get back for her final, and also in interviewing several job candidates. Jim also stated that we have about 175 general use classrooms, of which 131 have some technology and 125 have Sympodiums or consoles. USD has been trying to make the classrooms uniform for ease of use.

Shahra's presentation continued with some sample learning spaces from other institutions. Coronado 221 was one of the first learning spaces USD has redone. We're hoping to design more collaborative learning spaces. For example, how could we convert the School of Business Administration lounge for collaborative learning? She cited the use of movable partitions which will reconfigure learning spaces. She also mentioned the chronic need for electrical power, including the possibility of movable connections. Another possibility is banks of computers along halls and walkways with stools for short-term use.

Other examples of technology already in use at USD are clickers and streaming media (for uploading lectures). USD has an Echo 360, a lecture capture solution that Shahra won and which has been installed for use in the MSGL program. Wimba is another under-used technology. We could use it more for interviewing. It's easy to use and we have a site license for it. Jeff Wright in the Mathematics department recorded his lectures in advance for use in his classes when he had to be away from the classroom.

Chris said that part of the charge of this committee is to be an advisory group to him as the CIO of the university. Jim Straub and Shahra have tried to be very equitable in deciding where to install what equipment, but maybe there are some new and different things that we haven't yet considered.

Shahra said they had just been reacting to faculty requests and trying to be fair. She asked what, for example, we might do to improve student collaboration in the big open entry areas of the various classroom buildings on campus. Chris said that some of the work of this group will assist the USD campus task force. Shahra mentioned the need to have processes in place by which faculty can be placed in their preferred teaching spaces.

Chris mentioned a binder that he had had at the University of Rhode Island, of low-, medium-, and high-tech classrooms on campus. Jim Straub has prepared a draft document.

Jim thanked Roger Manion, who had begun a similar process 10 years ago at USD. Jim took 6 weeks to compile a manual of what technology is available in what classrooms on campus. His primary model was that of Penn State. The manual contains lots of minutiae regarding what's in each classroom, information which is sometimes required by outside contractors.

Shahra requested that committee members please review this document and make suggestions for modifications by our next meeting. Beginning with the new Student Life Pavilion, we'll be designing some casual learning spaces for students. She also mentioned outdoor classrooms found at some institutions, complete with sun shades and wireless connections. Carole Huston wondered whether the document reflects new standards. What is its exact role?

Shahra answered that these are basic acceptable standards across campus. They are not etched in stone. Chris said that these are general guidelines. He suggested holding the next meeting in a SOLES classroom. Mary Whelan inquired whether there's a list of all classrooms and Chris replied that we'll be generating one.

Shahra mentioned the possibility of having a form on the ILSD website to solicit input from the community. She said we currently receive funding for 10 to 12

classrooms a year for technology upgrades. This figure does not include any renovation costs.

Jack Pope expressed some doubt about the usefulness of the classroom technology document for faculty. He just wants classrooms to meet the minimum requirements for technology and to have some more experimental classrooms available. Jim Straub remarked that when he arrived at USD approximately 6 years ago 10 classrooms had “baseline” technology, a figure which has now reached 130 classrooms.

Cel Johnson remarked that the technology profile of a classroom can be entered into Resource25, the campus scheduling software. The schedulers on campus might require a mandate from the Provost’s office to require use of R25 for scheduling. Roger Manion remarked that before we can produce the detail book, faculty needs to come up with their requirements. Then we can target classrooms needing upgrades. Chris suggested a needs assessment be conducted.

Greg Zackowski inquired whether some schools require qualifications before requested technology upgrades can be implemented. Chris said some of that relies on training. Carole Huston emphasized that these upgrades and improvements happen piecemeal, not all at once. Part of the WASC assessment is conducting an internal audit and disseminating it to faculty and students.

Lance Nelson pointed out that some faculty members in his department have not even seen some of the sophisticated SOLES technology. They’re more concerned with deteriorating furniture in their assigned classrooms. These faculty members often do not even know what’s available. Jerry Ammer mentioned that several lobbying groups of which he is a member use “stories” as a way of letting people know what’s available and how others have used these techniques in their own situations.

Carole Huston mentioned the Lunch and Learn series. Shahra mentioned the faculty showcasing. Cel suggested presentations at faculty meetings to overcome faculty reluctance to attend training sessions. It was generally agreed that we’ve started the educational process but more needs to be done.

Merrick Marino stated that traditional spaces focus on in-class time and that there’s not much emphasis on the 2 to 3 hours spent outside of class. How about spaces like the library, residence halls and the Student Life Pavilion? Shahra reiterated that *all* spaces are included, formal and informal. She also mentioned the “when are you going to stop bringing us new technology?” people, a small but ever-present faction. Shahra also asked what new faculty and students are expecting to have available on campus when they arrive.

There was a brief discussion about when the next meeting of the ILSD Committee should occur. Some favor late August and some prefer after school starts.

Lance Nelson asked how he can get what he needs in the classroom. Shahra replied that faculty should discuss it with their chairs and their deans. Shahra emphasized our desire to get website suggestions and agenda items for the next meeting. Jerry Ammer proposed a blog on the website wherein members can exchange ideas. Lance expressed the need for goals and deadlines for the committee and Shahra suggested using the charge the committee received from Provost Julie Sullivan.

Andy Allen mentioned the possible need for a parallel document for students and that perhaps this committee should form itself into two subcommittees, one for faculty and one for students. The meeting adjourned around 12:25 pm.