Bill's ISIT Update - Oct 7, 2013

1. **FD-TIPD --** In my new role at the Faculty Director of Technology, Innovation and Professional Development, I've had the opportunity to set the wheels in motion on several initiatives, with the motivation of making a very practical justification to our campus for stronger support in the areas of technology and professional development, in and out of the classroom. Here are a few things that I'm thinking about / working on:

- We've begun discussions in specific areas of campus on the development of a "student pipeline" which will be a structure that will more effectively ensure that our online students will be directed to the front door of their online classroom, with the skills and information that they need to succeed, in a timely manner. This will include better and more timely information, stronger, multi-faceted communication with students on registration for online classes, and the development of a killer online student orientation/assessment tool. The biggest period of student dropout in our online classes is in the first two weeks. We can help our students get going in their classes and allow more students to succeed in this modality. (A draft of my initial proposal for the pipeline is attached to this)

- I've met with a group of our Student Services people, and talked about ways that we can start developing our online services, to the benefit of both online and face to face students.

- Next monday, I will meet with a group of our online instructors to discuss many of these plans and talk about issues like support, professional development, and student readiness.

- We have hosted our first Brown Bag seminar, on captioning video. Those who attended seemed to enjoy and benefit from the offering, and the format also was effective. The second BB seminar is scheduled for Wednesday in Lev. 40. The topic is "Image Editing".

- Development of a resource web site for TIPD at bc is underway, with a targeted launch date of the end of the month. This site should be a fantastic resource for faculty who are interested in beefing up their technology use and/or the pedagogy of technology use in their classes.

2. **MOOC Update**

A small group of faculty met with Sonya Christian, Todd Coston, and Leah Carter to talk about MOOCs, and how we might be able to leverage this relatively new

concept to benefit our students at BC. MOOCs, and the news surrounding them of low student success rates and rumor of their usage to overwork faculty and reduce the faculty workforce, have caused widespread concern in academia despite their fairly widespread adoption.

Our discussion centered around how BC might benefit from this idea without putting ourselves at any major risk from these potential negative factors. The group decided to move forward with a small number of MOOC offerings for Spring 2014 semester to be used as a pilot study for how these ideas might fit together in a productive way. One of my classes, COMS B74b (Web Design: HTML & CSS) will be among the first.

The structure of the MOOC / Traditional class combination will be as follows:

A regular online section will be opened for the class, with a higher maximum than usual. No other changes to the regular course or the curriculum will be needed.

A MOOC will be opened, using the same course materials (which will consist of video, reading, and other resources, as well as quizzes, projects and also peer discussion forums for students to discuss material.

The major difference between the MOOC and the Online Course will be the level of interaction between the faculty member and the students. In the MOOC, the students will not have the level of support, and interaction with the instructor that those in the regular section will have. However, within the first two weeks of class, students who are participating in the MOOC will be able to enroll in the regular section and continue their work for credit, with the full amount of support and interaction given to regular students. The MOOC section will be used as a place for students to "test drive" an online course and/or the material, and will contain multiple "advertisements" for the regular online section, and for whatever degree programs it is a part of. After the first two weeks, students in the MOOC can continue through the entire course (or not), as they please.

We have discussed different compensation structures for the MOOC section, but have not settled on anything yet. Clearly, the union will need to be involved in this process. One idea brought to the table was some percentage of the MOOC section be added to the regular section enrollment at the census date for the purpose of pay. For example:

MOOC Enrollment: 2000
Regular Enrollment: 50

Formula: Pay = (.01 X MOOC) + Regular
So: Pay = 20 + 50, which is 70, which is 1.5 pay.

This MOOC strategy has a few advantages to BC, our students and our community:

1)   It could act as a filter for students who may or may not be ready for this method of study or the particular material in the class.

2)   The low completion rate of a MOOC becomes a non-issue because students who drop from this section will not affect the college's success and retention rate.

3)   The offering of the course materials online becomes a service to our immediate community, and also to our global community of higher ed.

4)   The availability of the course materials as a MOOC might provide a place for less serious students to explore the materials, or try out new disciplines without the risk of "real" enrollment.

5)   This relationship between MOOC and regular online classes does not threaten the role or the value of the instructor, which is a common fear among those who are opposed to the use of MOOC structures in higher education.

6)   This initial study of MOOCs at BC will give us valuable data, which will help us as a college to make better-informed decisions about MOOCs in the future.