LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS MEETING

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2009

The LMS team met on Friday, November 13 at 10:30 a.m. in room 976 in the Durham Tech/Glaxo Wellcome Technology Center.

Members present were: Karen McPhaul (presiding), Janice Stuart, Becky Roehrs, Tracy Mancini, Steve Leadon, Brent McCardle, Charlene West, Megan Nicholson, and Peter Wooldridge. Attending visitors were Dora Bailey, Joan Brown, Tom Murphy, and Patrick Coin.

Karen McPhaul began the meeting by passing out a document for us to evaluate the different learning management systems based on the criteria that was discussed at the last meeting. We met with Judi Smith via webinar from South Piedmont Community College. She is currently the Associate Vice President for Distance Learning and has served in many other roles that are beneficial. South Piedmont was part of a consortium with three other community colleges that were hosted by blackboard. They decided to move to Moodle because of cost and the poor level of customer service. They made the move very quickly.

In March 2008, they contracted Remote Learner (a Moodle partner) to train a group of 20 people. The training was held for two days and the instructors were expected to offer at least one course via Moodle in the Fall. The College did simultaneously run two systems while all courses were migrated. After the training session, all but one of the instructors were very enthusiastic and ready to use Moodle. Some students initially had problems finding the system, but once the system was found didn't have many problems. South Piedmont discovered that faculty didn't really have a preference for which LMS was chosen, but wanted to make sure that training would be on-going and support growth and that content was not lost during the conversion.

In January 2009, they hit the ground running. They migrated everything from blackboard to Moodle in six months and strongly encourage us to take more time. She also suggested that we run both systems for three semesters and that migration occur during the summer. Training was offered online and self-paced but expected to be finished within a month. They also offered a face-to-face training which was two weeks and trained some instructors to migrate their own class. They are now offering more specialized training.

Migration takes a minimum of eight hours per course. SPCC decided to hire experienced faculty, about six individuals, at $100/course, between May 15 and June 30. Before migration from blackboard to Moodle, organization is key. The migration is not hard, just very time consuming. A very handy tool used was Bfree, which looks for all docs, pdf, and images and groups them together. She also discussed a LSU tool which would move discussion boards, but they personally hated it. Wide screen monitors were very beneficial when copy material from blackboard to moodle.

Faculty at SPCC love Moodle. Judi noted that Moodle has some issues but so did blackboard. Older students had a harder time adjusting, but younger students really like it. The environment is very similar to popular social websites. The older generation likes the more rigid environment of Blackboard.

Our next meeting is scheduled for December 4 and we should post material in our test course in moodle.