

Academic Technology Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING: 11/04/2022

Submitted Exec. Committee: _____

Submitted Academic Senate: _____

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE: 12/02/22

Approved by Exec. Committee: _____

Approved by Academic Senate: _____

ATC Members Present: Chris Sales (Chair), Jorge Balbas, Cecile Bendavid, Ovande Furtado, Paige Hajiloo, Joel Krantz, Stephen Kutay, Sam Seifzadeh, Wayne Smith, Jenn Wolfe; *Absent:* Soheil Boroushaki; *Excused:* Tomo Hattori; *Permanent Guest:* Helen Heinrich; *Executive Secretary:* Ron Philip; *Recording Secretary:* Celene Valenzuela; *Guests:* Ryan Conlogue, Paul Schantz, Kate Tipton

1. Announcements – None.

2. Approval of Minutes – The minutes from the October 7, 2022, meeting were approved.

3. Chair’s Report

- a. **Faculty Senate Update** – Chris Sales shared that at the October 20, 2022, Faculty Senate meeting President Erika Beck and Provost Mary Beth Walker provided a report. Statewide Academic Senator Adam Swenson and Dan Weingarten, Chair of the Educational Policies Committee, provided an update on the AB-928: Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021. There was a discussion related to student housing and on-campus dining during Associated Students President Shayan Moshtael’s report and an additional conversation on the possibility of CSUN being designated an R2 Research university by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Currently, CSUN is a teaching university. Chris Sales shared that there was also an announcement of the new Associate Vice President of Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness position reporting to the Provost. This position champions the importance of data at CSUN.
- b. **ACAT Update** – Chris Sales shared that at the September 30, 2022, Advisory Committee on Academic Technology (ACAT) meeting, there was a conversation on the Accessible Technology Initiative, the CSU CSUCCESS Survey Report, and updates provided on an upcoming podcast training series and a piloting effort with video conferencing platform, InSpace.

4. VP/CIO’s Report

- a. **CSU CSUCCESS Survey Report** – Ron Philip shared that the CSU-administered CSUCCESS survey, conducted at the end of the Spring 2022 semester, offers specific and important data as CSUN considers digital equity efforts going forward.

Helen Heinrich shared that CSUN had a major role in the outcome of the survey results, with a total of 629 CSUN student respondents. All students who were eligible to participate in the CSUCCESS program were invited to take the survey. While not all eligible new first-year and

transfer students participated in the CSUCCESS program, 86% of the survey respondents participated and were loaned a device. Of those respondents who did not participate in the program, 38% were not aware of the program, and 18% did not participate because they thought that there were strings attached. This information is significant as future consideration is made on communication efforts.

Helen Heinrich shared that when CSUCCESS program participants were asked about their situation before participating in the program, 60% had a reliable device and internet access whereas 25% did not have a reliable device or internet access. Helen Heinrich emphasized that as it relates to the psychological impact of access to technology and devices on the student experience, 67% of student respondents strongly agree and 27% agree that they feel more prepared when having access to a reliable device. This sentiment is even stronger when sorted based on the race and ethnicity of minority students. When asked if students feel more supported by CSUN through this program, 71% strongly agree and 24% agree. Helen Heinrich noted that the data is significant, especially as it relates to increasing student sense of belonging at CSUN. As it relates to the program improving the ability to complete assignments and take notes, students agree that it is important to have access to the CSUCCESS device bundle. In addition, students are very satisfied when using their devices to write papers or other documents.

- b. InSpace Pilot** – Helen Heinrich shared that Academic Technology is piloting the InSpace video conferencing and collaboration platform. The InSpace platform is similar to Zoom however the tool was specifically created for education by educators. Faculty interested in participating in the program can register to join an information session on Monday, November 7, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Faculty can also email the Faculty Technology Center at ftc@csun.edu.

Ovande Furtado inquired on the reason why MS Teams, which is part of the Microsoft Office 365 suite, is not more promoted as a videoconferencing tool. Ron Philip shared that discussions and data collection are currently happening in this regard. Currently the Microsoft Office 365 suite is available to faculty and staff. Additionally, a favorable contract with Zoom is to expire in a few years. Jenn Wolfe shared that not having Zoom as the primary videoconferencing tool could be complicated when meeting with others outside of CSUN especially when focusing on compatibility.

Joel Krantz inquired about the Zoom chat feature that allows attendees to view the chat details only after they have entered the meeting and asked of the possibility of allowing attendees to view the chat discussion that transpired from the beginning of the meeting. Joel Krantz added that it would be useful to have a Zoom feature that allows the Host/Co-Host to clear the chat at any time without ending and restarting the meeting. Ryan Conlogue shared this is how the feature has been programmed by Zoom. The CSU campuses meet with Zoom account representatives regularly, and this feedback will be shared at the next meeting.

- c. Accessible Technology Initiative** – Ron Philip shared of the critical importance of the varied efforts pursued aligned with the Accessible Technology Initiative at CSUN. Specific efforts are being pursued to get instructional materials accessible by the beginning of the academic semester in response to the Payan v. Los Angeles Community College District case ruling. Kate Tipton shared data on the accessibility posture of instructional materials and the accessibility score, noting that the Canvas Ally tool provides valuable data on the accessibility of course content. Kate Tipton shared that CSUN's accessibility score numbers have remained relatively

stagnant for some time, adding that there are new ideas on where to go next to increase the accessibility posture in collaboration with faculty.

Helen Heinrich shared that according to the Payan v. Los Angeles Community College District, CSUN is obligated to provide accessible materials to students by the beginning of each semester. From an institutional perspective, we need to focus on how we can help faculty and CSUN to arrive at compliance. The Canvas Ally data tool can guide CSUN in this process. As far as next steps, in collaboration with faculty, there will be a more targeted approach in which Canvas Ally data will be used to identify colleges and departments that need more support to make their course content accessible. There will be an increase in focused workshops and training.

Ron Philip stated that the Academic Technology Committee could play a vital role in the Accessible Technology Initiative effort across colleges and having educational material at scale accessibly available before the beginning of the semester. Stephen Kutay inquired about the data that is currently available noting that perhaps this information could help develop an approach to overcome the biggest accessibility obstacles first. Kate Tipton shared that the biggest obstacle is PDF accessibility. Stephen Kutay shared that he and his student employees have attended a helpful training on PDF accessibility hosted by the Universal Design Center.

Ron Philip shared that it takes approximately six hours to mark a PDF for accessibility. It would be ideal to create accessible documents from the inception. Stephen Kutay suggested that reviewing faculty coursework, sharing with them their accessibility report, and matching it to a standard accessibility bar may motivate individual faculty to make content more accessible. Cecile Bendavid shared that a video showing students experiencing accessibility barriers may motivate faculty to make their content accessible. Jenn Wolfe shared that many published files are outdated and no longer being used. Unpublishing the files may help the CSUN accessibility score. Ron Philip shared that with the CSUN website relaunch, individual departments and colleges are reviewing their published material to ensure that the information is up-to-date and accessible. Joel Krantz noted that there is a significant number of files that come directly from publishers and vendors that are not accessible. Ron Philip shared that there are three prongs to accessibility, one of them being the procurement of accessible materials.

5. Discussion Topics

- a. **Research Needs Roundtable** – Chris Sales shared that in collaboration with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Division of Information Technology, the Academic Technology Committee can help lead CSUN more progressively in the area of research. CSUN has arrived at a point where research interest is extensive across colleges. Going forward, the committee could consider and discuss tools and procedures to facilitate research in all disciplines. Chris Sales invited committee members to a roundtable conversation, based on their disciplines and research.

Jorge Balbas shared that most research in math is qualitative, the traditional “conjecture and prove” approach of classical (pure) math. But the department has hired a few faculty members over the last decade and a half with an interest in applied mathematics, scientific computing, statistics, and data science. Among this group, some follow the more traditional research line mentioned (PDE theory), and some do more computer-based research (design of numerical methods for PDEs, data analysis, optimization), and some do a bit of both. There

are collaborative efforts between the College of Science and Math and the College of Engineering and Computer Science on multiple faculty research projects. When focusing on students and considering applied mathematics and data science, CSUN needs computer resources and access to data sets. The lack of computing skills represents a handicap for students working on computer thesis projects. And we only offer one undergraduate course in scientific computing (whose pre-requisite of COMP 106 or COMP 110 has been removed), so if they don't know how to program when they start their graduate work at CSUN, they'll have to learn it on their own. In practice, they usually choose a project that requires minimal computing.

Wayne Smith shared that there has been an increase in undergraduate research at CSUN, some are fully funded and some are less funded. As research data sets get larger, faculty and students need more computation, storage, remote resources, and collaboration. Students will also need more skills in this research space. Wayne Smith added that at this point there is infrastructure at CSUN, however there is no research structure. From a Faculty Senate, Standing Committees, and university-wide perspective, we do not have enough meetings and opportunities to have a conversation with interested key stakeholders to structure research work. Meeting once a year with the research subcommittee is helpful, however, as we move forward and potentially become a research university, more faculty will need to develop the knowledge and skills not only to submit a grant form but also to make data available. Coordinating with stakeholders and having supporting infrastructure is very important.

Chris Sales shared that the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has offered training for faculty that focused on compliance, gaining additional knowledge in research, and grants. Ron Philip shared that with a high level of research happening on campus, there is a need to implement institutional research structures. Christopher Stanford, Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs, is interested in visiting and collaborating with the committee.

6. Policy – None.

7. New Business – None.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.