Instructional Technology Task Force

Final Report to the Information Technology Planning Board

The Charge:
Define what should be UCLA’s institutional goals for education and instructional technology. Identify key pedagogical, academic, governance, fiscal and business parameters and principles that will enable UCLA academic units and faculty to use technology in instruction as appropriate to their goals for delivering instruction. Recommend actions for moving forward.

The Committee Members:

- Professor Maha Ashour-Abdalla
- Professor Jack Beatty (Chair, Faculty Committee on Educational Technology)
- Associate Dean William Broesamle
- Provost Brian Copenhaver
- Associate Vice Chancellor Jim Davis (chair)
- Professor Katherine Hayles
- Dean Robert Lapiner
- Associate Vice Provost Larry Loeher
- Associate Dean Adeline Nyamathi
- Vice Chancellor Roberto Pececi
- Director Tom Phelan
- Assistant Provost Ruth Sabean

Key Findings: The ITTF began with a review of the current status of the use of information technology in support of instruction at UCLA and comparable institutions. The Committee reached the following conclusions:

1. As an institution, UCLA has no current intention in the near term of entering the commercial eLearning market sector to deliver instruction to a new student population. Rather, the primary instructional focus will continue to be the current base of curriculum in fulfillment of undergraduate and graduate degrees to matriculated students who may be resident on the UCLA campus, or in distant locations (for example, at another UC campus, in study abroad programs or at UCDC). However, individual academic units and centers, particularly in the professional schools, are already planning for or engaging in the delivery of instruction using technology-based modalities to provide professional degrees, professional updates, certification, etc. to non-traditional students.
2. There are numerous examples of innovation in the use of technology in instruction across most if not all disciplines. These instructional changes are most frequently driven by an individual instructor’s passion for his/her specific content area(s) coupled with an increased interest in and success with the integration of technology in instruction. Typical examples include material-rich websites, electronic communication tools, and interactive discipline-specific software.

3. The experience of using a powerful new technology to improve teaching has caused major changes across the whole spectrum of learning and teaching - in and out of the classroom; before, during and after the delivery of instruction through more traditional channels. These changes, however, have been neither universal (many courses are either not affected or not much affected) nor systematic (no major element of traditional instruction has been entirely transformed). Whether universal or systematic changes will occur in the future is for UCLA to decide.

4. The integration of technology in instruction can be viewed as a continuum from minimal stand-alone use in classroom presentations to the delivery of instruction solely online. UCLA has moved roughly to the center of this continuum where a traditional classroom approach is highly enriched through instructional technology. With very few exceptions, the format of instruction remains predominantly that of lecture, seminar, and sections as it has been for decades. Within this traditional structure, however, there is broad and significant change in the way students now interact with materials, with the instructor, and with each other using digital tools.

5. As the use of technology increases along the continuum of integration, it becomes increasingly important for the institution to prepare for changes that will be required in every service that directly and indirectly supports the educational process. A core concept behind these changes is the transition to the provision of services electronically at any time/place as the primary mode of delivery. UCLA currently has made significant progress in service areas such as student services, course materials, networked classrooms, and simulation software for use remotely or in computer labs.

6. At UCLA, instructional technology solutions are predominantly implemented on a department-by-department basis. There is a growing recognition that some solutions need to be provided at the enterprise level. The “tipping point” at which ad hoc technology solutions benefit from standardization is characterized by pervasive use, highly depended upon to achieve core university business, and a mature technology with recognized standards. In addition, there is also typically a general acceptance that a standards-based campus-wide solution is preferable. Examples of technologies that may be ready for campus-wide solutions are course management systems and instructional materials repositories.
The Vision: UCLA is poised and ready to develop its own broadened definition of the learning experience and strategy for using IT to enrich and deepen it. The UCLA IT Vision expresses direction for reshaping the educational experience through new modes of faculty-student and student-student interaction, by integrating research throughout the educational experience and blending the classroom and online learning environments. The vision and pilot of Centers for Scholarly Interaction provide a means to further extend the educational experience. These virtual Centers link educational and research content and become the focal point for interaction, participation, and contributions by both UCLA and external participants.

The Strategy: UCLA must provide an environment in which it can define and move to those practices of effective learning supported by the optimal use of technology:

This strategy is based on the following assumptions:

- There is a need to provide support to assist individual faculty and departments with their choice of appropriate technologies and help them implement projects;
- Everyone at UCLA will have access to an agreed-upon set of IT services.
- There will be no general mandate for all instruction to be delivered online. Courses and programs to be delivered entirely at a distance will be decided by local units and focused on specific targeted areas.
- The “tipping point” between ad hoc solutions and standardized solutions should be based on the impact on students.
- Students and parents expect the UCLA experience to include the effective use of technology in administrative, learning, and community related services.

Recommendations:

1. Use Blended Instruction Pilots to create UCLA working case studies. These pilots should be about transforming the student experience by focusing instruction on active learning, with strong links to research and service, building on the current campus capabilities and understanding how to overcome the constraints related to the use of technology in learning. Starting points could include such areas as:

   - Curriculum development and active learning [Framework, design, materials, learning outcomes definition, modalities, schedules, activities]
   - Information technology infrastructure [network, remote access, electronic mail, helpdesk support]
   - Instructional technology infrastructure [computer labs, classrooms, instructional software servers, digital library resources, helpdesk support]
   - Instructor assistance [hardware, software, redesign of courses and teaching strategies, and to locate or develop new instructional materials, copyright acquisition, helpdesk support]
   - Student assistance [hardware and software; training in online learning; helpdesk support]
   - Review of academic policies and services [contact hours, course approval, course credit]
- Evaluation of learning and teaching [course evaluations, learning outcomes assessment, instructor and student portfolios]

2. Use the outcomes of the Blended Instruction Pilots to examine the broader impact on institutional priorities, direction, organizations, policies, services, and funding models with respect to the use of technology in instruction.

3. Establish an instructional technology organization tasked with coordinating the distributed support of technology in instruction, institutional-wide solutions, and the provision of additional services which the Pilots may surface.

4. Expand the College Faculty Committee on Educational Technology (FCET) to include campus-wide representation to work in collaboration with the ITPB to oversee the above, as well as the on-going implementation of all changes needed to implement the IT Vision for the student experience. This Committee would also serve as a strong advocate for instructional technology during institutional planning.

5. Examine the potential for UCLA to contribute as an institution to global education.

Other Committee Accomplishments:

- **Course Management Systems:** The ITTF supported the work of the Faculty Committee on Educational Technology in reviewing options for UCLA to develop a common approach to the systems which support instruction. As a result, a request for seed funding was added to the UTIPP recommendation.

- **Instructional Applications Server:** The ITTF supported the concept of a server to provide remote access for students to specialized software which is typically too expensive for individual ownership. As a result, a request for seed funding was added to the UTIPP recommendation.

- **Mellon Foundation Proposal:** The ITTF supported the preparation of a proposal to the Mellon Foundation, “Information Technology in Communities of Teaching” which would be based in part on the Blended Instruction Pilots. Preliminary discussions with Mellon have been very favorable with respect to the evaluation of the Pilots.

- **IT Strategic Vision:** The ITTF reviewed the document, with a special focus on all aspects related to student learning. The Committee sees the Blended Instruction Pilot as a key strategy to achieve the first goal of the first area of emphasis, “to use informational technology to stimulate the cultural, social and educational changes that will enhance the UCLA academic experience”.

- **External Discovery:** The ITTF hosted two external presentations. Dr. Carl Berger from the University of Michigan and Dr. Vijay Kumar from MIT to UCLA to discuss each institution's planning process and strategies for the use of technology in
instruction with a broad spectrum of UCLA faculty and IT staff. This series will continue as a mechanism to keep the campus informed about and responsive to external opportunities in higher education and technology.