Faculty Technology Newsletter

February, 2013

A note from the editor:

Much is happening on the technology front at Boston College this winter. The Academic Innovation Program debuts, faculty are previewing potential replacements for Blackboard Vista (no decision yet), and student email begins a phased migration to Google Apps. See below for more details. As always, please send me your comments, suggestions and technology news!

Clare O'Connor, Biology Dept. (clare.oconnor@bc.edu)

Academic Innovation Program will use technology to enhance faculty-student interaction

Flipped classrooms, blended classrooms, web conferencing, analytics: technology continues to transform undergraduate education. Recognizing the power of technology to enhance faculty–student interaction at Boston College, the University Council on Teaching (UCT) and the Academic Technology Advisory Board (ATAB) are pooling resources to introduce Academic Innovation Programs (AIPs). Faculty are encouraged to work together and to think creatively as they develop AIPs. Areas of potential interest include the redesign of courses to incorporate technology, strategies to enhance collaboration, and the use of analytics to customize instruction.

To kick off this initiative, Executive Director of Academic Technology, Rita Owens, will be hosting a series of five faculty luncheon discussions on focus areas identified by UCT and ATAB to have wide faculty interest. The discussions will be held in the IDeS conference room at 2125 Commonwealth. Planned sessions include:

- Large and/or Introductory Courses (Friday February 15th Noon-1:30pm)
- Experiential and Out-of-Classroom Learning (Friday February 22nd, Noon-1:30pm)
- Interdisciplinary and Co-Taught Courses and Programs (Friday February 22nd, 2-3:30pm)
- Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages (Friday March 15th, Noon-1:30pm)
- Effective Writing and Reasoning (Friday March 22nd, Noon-1:30pm)

Other ideas are also welcome! Send them along to eteach@bc.edu. Following the faculty discussions, the UCT and ATAB will prioritize the projects and IDeS staff will determine the resources that will be required for each. UCT and ATAB hope to announce a list of AIPs that will be implemented in the 2013-2014 academic year by the end of May. To learn more about the AIPs and/or to sign up for a luncheon, consult the project website:

http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/atab/innovation.html

Mark your calendars for spring IDeS events

March 19 - "Teaching with Virtual Communication Tools" luncheon, Lynch Executive Center, 12 noon

May 15 - eTeaching Day fittingly falls on the Ides of May this year. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Gardner Campbell, from the Virginia Tech Division of Learning Technologies. The program will also include the popular TWIN (Teaching with New Media) awards and presentations about some exciting Media Kron projects, which now involve partners outside Boston College. More details to follow.

ATAB sends out call for ATIG and ETG grants

Faculty should have received the annual call for Academic Technology Innovation Grants (ATIGs). ATIGs are designed to encourage faculty to bring new instructional technologies to campus or to develop novel instructional approaches that involve technology. *ATIGs are only awarded for projects that will be self-sustaining at Boston College.* The maximum award for 2013 ATIGs is $20,000. The deadline for this year's submissions is **March 1.** Grant applications will be reviewed by the ATAB board, and awards will be announced in early May.

ATAB also supports smaller ($3000 maximum) Exploratory Technology Grants (ETGs) designed to encourage faculty to explore novel technologies. ETGs can be used for stand-alone projects or to provide the basis for a more fully-developed ATIG grant. ETGs are reviewed on a rolling basis by the ATAB executive committee, and decisions are made within 3 weeks. For more complete details, information about previous ATIG and ETG grants and links to the online application forms, visit the ATAB website:

http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/atab/grant.html

Student email migration to Google Apps begins

Starting with a pilot group in March, BC student email will be moving from CommuniGate (WebMail) to Google Apps for Education. Students will have access to an applications suite that includes mail, calendar, drive, docs, sheets, slides and sites. Faculty will still be able to use current tools to communicate with students, who will retain their "@bc.edu" email addresses. Student email migration should be complete by the fall. There are currently no plans to move faculty and staff email from Microsoft Exchange to Google Apps.........

Celebrate your birthday with a new password!

Cybersecurity is a growing threat. One of the ways to protect your online identity is to change your password at regular intervals. Beginning in the Fall of 2013, BC employees will be required to change their passwords within the 30 days prior to their birthday. The new password will be good for the following year. The most secure passwords are long and contain a combination of numbers, upper case letters and lower case letters.

Get acquainted with the Faculty Microcomputer Resource Center (FMRC)

The FMRC is more than just a place. The FMRC is also faculty helping fellow faculty members to use technology effectively in their teaching and research. Tucked away in Carney 403, the physical FMRC offers faculty access to devices and programs that may not be available in their home departments. The FMRC is staffed this semester by Michael Connolly MW from 3:30-5 and by Clare O'Connor T 10-11:30 and F 1:30-3. The three FMRC moderators, Connolly, O'Connor and Kit Baum, are also available for "house calls" and consultations at other times.

Reminder - Email quotas are coming soon!

Except for special circumstances, faculty will soon be asked to maintain email boxes whose total size is less than 2 Gbytes. To ease the transition to a quota system, faculty whose current boxes are larger than 1.4 Gbytes will be given quotas 40% higher than their current size.

Thanks to Kit Baum, Scott Cann, Beth Clark, Michael Connolly, Rita Owens and Barry Schaudt for supplying information and commentary for this newsletter. - C.O.