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CCCCO System-wide Architecture Committee (SAC)
Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 20, 2011
CCC Confer

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The meeting was called to order by Tim Calhoon at 1:35pm.

<u>**Attendees:**</u> Tim Calhoon, Catherine McKenzie, Jay Field, Dale Pittman, Tom Wallace, Glen Kuck, Paul Bishop, Bruce Racheter (staff), Caryn Jones (staff)

<u>**Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes:**</u>

Tim Calhoon called the meeting to order at 1:35pm.

The minutes for the meeting of April 5, 2011, were approved unanimously.

<u>**Update on TTAC:**</u>

Catherine McKenzie

TTAC met April 28th and 29th and had an engaged and open discussion. The focus was on creating overarching goals for the action items of Tech IV, to help create better guidelines for progress during the year. Presentation of the status of the projects was made, and then discussion centered on what steps would make sense in the next iteration. Four main recommendations were developed, that Patrick later presented to the Student Success Task Force. Those recommendations were:
1) Change the way that students interact with their educational goals and accomplishments by developing system-level technology tools that map clear academic sequences and support pathways.
2) Change the way that courses and programs are tracked by building system-wide, customizable solutions that strengthen local capacity to improve access, success, efficiency, and compliance.
3) Change the way that outcomes are monitored by developing a statewide information system that provides real-time student data to guide decision making.
4) Change the way that online education is delivered by strengthening distance education infrastructure, coordination, and quality controls.

Various tools are being improved and developed, and one of them involves a partnership between the Community College system and MyEDU.com. It is being revised and improved for use by the colleges and students in ways that will be helpful with online advising and scheduling. MyEDU will brand it for particular colleges including their specific programs and degrees, and they are doing it at no cost to the colleges. Community college involvement enables us to guide development in ways that are beneficial to our students. Glen asked for clarification regarding the cost, and Catherine confirmed that there is no cost to the student or to the college. This cooperative endeavor is still in the early stages, but more information will be sent out to the colleges as details become available.

Tim sent out the notes and recommendations from the TTAC retreat to SAC members.

Project Development Updates for Federated ID and Open CCCApply
Tim Calhoon

There have been some changes in our contacts with XAP. Tim and Catherine will be meeting in June with XAP at their client conference and will be able to meet with new representatives and communicate our issues to the new leadership.

Federated ID is progressing through internal testing. Webpage testing is complete and mobile and tablet testing is proceeding, with Unicon working on any bugs in their next sprint cycle. The next steps will involve determining the final look of the "skin" and application security testing. They will be hiring an external vendor to test the system and determine whether or not they can break into it.

Open CCCApply has functional specifications complete as well as database services. The following items are in process development: hooking up the application form to database services; developing open navigation between form pages; progressive high school/college lookup; community powered help desk research (Get Satisfaction is a likely candidate for this); help desk RFP for account reset issues and so on (Gartner will be reviewing the RFP); and finally, administration, download, and reporting specifications.

The timeline for completion of the next steps is:
Fed ID and Application and Basic Download Aug 2011
Admin and Reporting – Dec 2011
Beta Testing- March 2012
Deployment- Aug 2012

Tim explained that the intent is to make it easy to jump between pages in the application process while still notifying the student of the status of those pages, regarding which have been completed and validated and so on. He demonstrated the look of several pages including the progressive high school/college lookup. It operates similar to a Google-look up with various possibilities coming up as suggestions to simplify finding the correct high school/college. Soon they will be downloading the scheduling requirements and looking at the first stages of functionality.

Tim would like to find contacts for people to help review the requirement documents. He will be sending out an email requesting help. If committee members have an expert on their staff, who can help to get accuracy in the requirement documents, that would be very helpful. Additionally, we are interested in leveraging business intelligence tools. Tim is working with Patrick, because the CCCAssess database uses some of the same tools. The intent is to start with CCCAssess and CCCApply and work on building out a platform that can be used with both. CCC Datawarehouse could be very useful with various business intelligence tools, especially reports and so on. Tim would like

committee help with business intelligence vendors. He would like to look at Open Source possibilities first to see if there are any that would have enough functionality, otherwise it may be necessary to go to commercial products.

Tom Wallace said that he would check on the availability of a staff person who might be able to help with CCCApply especially with regard to data transformations and that he would get back to Tim if the person is available.

Catherine and Tim emphasized that committee members should contribute questions, comments and concerns to the discussion. Although the meeting is happening on Confer, it is still critical that there is interactive discourse on the issues presented.

Glen and Paul expressed an interest in seeing a demonstration of what has been developed with MyEDU. Tim said that he would set up a demonstration meeting separate from the SAC meeting sometime in the next month and send the information out so that any committee members and interested members of their colleges would be able to attend.

Vendor Presentation: Blackboard Collaborate

Valarie Schreiner

Valarie presented updates in the steps that Blackboard Collaborate is taking since the acquisition of Elluminate and WIMBA. She wanted to present some of their decisions regarding what they are going to deliver, as well as preview a few of their long-term plans. She emphasized that her presentation is focused on forward looking statements regarding the future but that these are not promises about specific products. Changes can and probably will happen as these products are developed.

Catherine mentioned that the Community Colleges have had experiences with both Elluminate and WIMBA, and that some of our suggestions and requirements probably helped in the development of accessibility in some of those products as far back as twelve years ago.

Valarie emphasized that the company remains focused on the education market and on product features that are important to educators. They are also putting more effort and significant resources into making their tools completely accessible to everyone. She realized after watching a technologically savvy presenter who was blind really struggle with Elluminate, that although they had made progress, it wasn't good enough. Even though he was very aware of technology, he was not able to use the product. Since then real effort has been made to have both students and professors give input regarding their real experiences with the products.

The product support and customer service offered by the company will remain the same. However, they have had to make hard decisions about which products they can really support while moving forward, since as a result of the merger, they had an incredibly large suite of products. Some of the older WIMBA products are on a path to not being supported, for example WIMBA Create and Diploma.

However, Blackboard is continuing with many tools that are being further developed. They are also starting from scratch with questions about what products are really needed in the future. Web conferencing, for example, is conferencing but also a whole spectrum of conferencing options; sometimes just chat, sometimes chat with whiteboard, and further all the way up to the full features of a virtual classroom. They will have all of that in one environment. They do want to make the user experience easier with a cleaner appearance. The interface is overwhelming right now. It has powerful functionality, but it is hard to keep track of all of the functions. The newer interface with fewer options is cleaner and less cluttered.

Catherine mentioned that one of the reasons that the CA Community College system had developed a portal for CCC Confer, was so that the front end would be useful and consistent. Her hope was that Blackboard would take the best of the products from each company.

Valarie explained that Blackboard decided to evolve to a single product, now called Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing. They also decided to continue with a WIMBA process which allowed for ad hoc collaboration, on the fly, in real time, without needing to schedule anything in advance. So, the Enterprise Instant Messaging Component from WIMBA will continue. Additionally, WIMBA had a really good voice authoring tool, used for foreign language courses. It was a unique tool and was absolutely loved by its users. It will continue, but now with the name Voice Authoring. The desire is to bring the best of both Elluminate and WIMBA together in Blackboard Collaborate with Conferencing. It will have whiteboard integration between the instant messaging product and the whiteboard product.

Valarie described some of the progress being made in the area of video as well. There are use cases for both Multipoint video and also the WIMBA product "Follow the Speaker." Sometimes it is helpful to have the Multipoint small thumbnail views of multiple speakers, other times (for example with a sign language interpreter) it is important to always see full screen view of the interpreter. Blackboard will continue to have Multipoint, but also have to have "follow the speaker" as an option that can be turned on and off. There are many examples like that, being developed over time, using the best from both product lines and bringing them together.

Blackboard is working on the conferencing console so that you will be able to switch from IM to immediately launch into a web conference to demonstrate something without the need to schedule it, a blend between IM and web conferencing. On the control panel they wanted to put the 80% use keys front and center but still make it possible to use the other functions. They wanted to make the simple things easy, but the complex functions still possible. They have worked to integrate primary functions with large simple buttons making them more prominent. They also worked to keep the basic functionality similar between the two versions, so that it would be a simpler upgrade when people choose to convert to the new version. There will be a lot of flexibility within Confer about choosing when to switch to the new version.

Looking forward into their plans for 2012, Blackboard will be looking at some content enhancements, in some areas that WIMBA did better, as well as some that are important innovations. They will be working with the content library, with easy creation and distribution of MP4 content, content migration tools for WIMBA Classroom, and interfaces for content integration. Additional innovations involve: echo cancellation, directory authentication and mobile extensions.

Blackboard Collaborate is developing the three main tools of: web conferencing, voice authoring and enterprise IM. Underlying those three tools are the base of integrations/administration and mobile access. Blackboard is moving toward federation also, which will be compatible with the work that Tim is doing with Shibboleth.

Recently there have been problems with audio conferencing. Blackboard is researching the issue and looking especially at telephone integration and how to do it well, because these issues seem to be interrupting conferences that use the phone with conferencing. They are not yet sure why, it may be a problem with the Premier Bridge, but it doesn't seem to happen on the voice-only calls.

Valarie assured the committee that all licenses that are current through WIMBA or Elluminate will be honored and the perpetual licenses will also be honored. The CA Community Colleges will also be eligible for the conferencing upgrade, although private labeled versions of the product will take just a couple of weeks longer than standard version.

Catherine and Blaine will be attending the Blackboard User Summit in July to present what has been done in California. The user summit will also be a great place to get demonstrations and see all the newest products.

Valarie asked the committee members to pass on any feedback regarding concerns or issues with Blackboard Collaborate:

bbcollaboratefeedback@blackboard.com

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will occur on Friday June 17th from 1:30-3:30pm.

Catherine will be on a reduced weekly schedule, working Tuesdays and Wednesdays, beginning on July 1st.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 pm.