

# 2008-09 Online Education Activity Report

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The following are examples of the items undertaken during the 2008-09 academic year and include most of greatest significance.

- Upgrade of FerrisConnect software completed in August 2008 – the culmination of a multi-year, \$1.5 million project. The majority of expenses were allocated to hardware/software, implementation consulting, and faculty training
- Hardware has been added to support FerrisConnect, including at least three servers
- A technology readiness report production was facilitated by Enid and participated in by many with the report delivered about October 5. The initiative started with the identification of potential vendors, a RFP process, and selection of the vendor. In response to the report, some changes have been made in I.T., including the addition of a backup e-learning administrator, funded for the first year from the Office of the President
- A Senate special committee on e-learning presented their report in August 2008 that was accepted in Fall 2008. That report is posted on the academic affairs website at: <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online/E-Learning/08report.pdf>
- The E-Learning Management Advisory Team was convened in August 2008. They have generally met twice each month to address goals, priority audiences, policies, planning, and a proposed budget for fiscal year 2009-10. This group advises Academic Affairs and places primary emphasis upon the fully online courses and programs.
- The Advancing Online Task Force was expanded to include broader representation of faculty from colleges. It meets monthly to primarily address issues of teaching and learning. Examples include the online SAI and student orientation that were partially addressed last year. Their scope generally includes all forms of online instruction. Leadership of this group initially convened for the HLC online learning change request in 2006 group leadership was transitioned to a faculty member last fall. Kimn Carlton-Smith assumed this role.
- The Senate appointed a sequel committee to the earlier task force to serve as a Liaison to the Senate for online initiatives. Scope includes all forms of online. Group is called AHELL. John Schmidt is the chair of this new group.
- Student orientation modules were developed by the FCTL and by Enid Carlson, to address different components. All have been made available for faculty to incorporate within their classes, if desired.
- A stipend equivalent to ¼ load was given to Gloria Lukusa-Barnett to continue her leadership with FerrisConnect initiatives through fall 2008 (she is on sabbatical in spring 2009)
- FerrisConnect teams dissolved and the IT reps and the trainers' group evolved into the FerrisConnect Advisory Board (FAB)
- Online training for FerrisConnect was developed and is in active use by faculty and facilitated by Bill Knapp
- FerrisConnect training is incorporated into New Faculty Orientation Week
- The online instructor certification program continued this year, with three reaching level 3; 1 level 4; and 1 level 5 – Kimn Carlton-Smith.
- FCTL has continued to expand the instructional technology offerings through Bill, Meegan, and other faculty with offerings on Twitter, Tegrity, Clickers, etc.
- A proposed revision to the course-development agreement was proposed to align the agreement with current "Best Practice" guidelines that have been in effect for a few years; the Advancing Online task force has initially discussed this proposed revision. The document is a part of the FFA contract and will need to be reviewed through that process.

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- An “Online Learning at Ferris” section has been added to the Academic Affairs website at (<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/>). Reports, minutes, and other items are being posted so people have the opportunity to be informed about the varied groups’ activities.
- A benchmarking study was completed for E-MAT by Enid Carlson-Nagel that explored questions of organization, class size, compensation for course development, and other topics with many other U.S. universities. The report is on the website: <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/online/E-Learning/draftreport.pdf>
- A variety of costing models were explored, attempting to determine the break-even point for Ferris courses when considering other university operational costs.
- In the summer of 2008, a draft policy regarding class size was provided to the FFA leadership. In essence, the policy, consistent with the research findings, recommended that departments set class size and that it be established the same for face-to-face and online, except when there are extenuating circumstances, such as writing intensity. To broaden the conversation, a separate committee was appointed to address this topic.
- Extended staffing was available for the week before and the first week of classes during both the fall and spring semesters – resulting in a wide range of support for faculty and students as we fully transitioned to FerrisConnect this year.
- A brochure was produced by Gloria Lukusa and others that was distributed during the Technology Road Shows and at all student orientations in the summer that talks about online, Blended Learning, FerrisConnect, etc. This “orientation” for new students and parents is expected to continue in the summer of 2009.
- Technology Road Shows were facilitated through a group in FCTL and IT. The “show” played in several colleges and the reception was very positive.
- A FerrisConnect celebration was held September 10, 2008. Bringing the “project” to a close was important in moving to its next phase. . . that of ongoing operations. The contributions of many were recognized.
- As the result of a task force recommendation, facilitated by Enid Carlson-Nagel, Tegrity was acquired and is being implemented as a pilot by several faculty, the FCTL, and I.T.
- The same task force also proposed the acquisition of Webex, which has been implemented, training provided, and is enjoying widespread adoption
- FCTL has taken over responsibility for training in FerrisConnect – with a goal of moving toward a more pedagogical focus than a tool focus, as the tool will continue to evolve or change
- Bill Knapp has begun the process of monitoring requirements for student authentication and will involve others in making a recommendation for increasing this security measure
- E-MAT developed goals and objectives, proposed an emerging organizational structure, and recommended a budget for the fully online operations. That budget is expected to take effect July 1, 2009.
- Individuals are beginning to monitor the possible next stages of content management systems as this field and the available systems continue to change.
- Surveys were conducted by FAB;/FCTL and ITS regarding technology support and related services. Those findings are still being analyzed.