# Meeting Notes
## NSHE E-Learning Task Force
## Thursday, October 31, 2013

Attendees:  Mark Fink, Chair; Erika Beck, Caroline (Carrie) Bruno, Kevin Carman, Cynthia Clark, Paul Davis, Darren Divine, Lisa Frazier, Christian Fritsen, Kendall Hartley, Richard Kloes, Fred Lokken, Terry Norris, Alex Porter, Tony Scinta, Jeffrey Wong

Guests:  Steve Zink, Renee Davis, Chris Herald

1.  **Discussion of Remedial Transformation Project Report**
    The Task Force reviewed the findings and recommendations of the 2012 Remedial Transformation Project and assembled questions/comments for RTP guests who will be invited to the November meeting.   Mark Fink noted that need not reinvent what the remedial group accomplished but, instead, see how e-learning technologies can be applied to the remedial strategies identified.

    The task force discussed questions to pose to remedial representatives, who will be invited to the November 20 meeting.

- What changes have occurred since the Remedial Transformation Project report was issued?
- What is their perspective on using e-learning technologies, not just for placement but for instruction as well?
- What is the efficacy of online methodologies for remedial education?  What does the research show?  What data exists?
- What elements of math are best taught through e-learning methods?
- What has been their experience using pieces of online instruction vs. all online?
- How does College America integrate with the 4-year institutions?
- Do we know why students are withdrawing from studies after completing remedial courses?
- What is their take on hybrid formats (on-campus and online) and flipped lectures?
- For the 79% success rate cited by CSN on page 10 of the final report – at what level did students actually test?
- Is there a gap in remedial instruction that e-learning can address?  Couldn't see a clear gap in the remedial report other than getting students better prepared for college math.
- Can the NSC representative talk about the module system used on that campus?  Could this approach be used for adult learners to focus on skills they really need rather than re-teaching things they already know?
- Can the UNR and UNLV representatives talk about the co-requisite model (stretch method) that allows students to complete remedial while they are in the credit-class?
- What is their experience between remedial education for adult learners vs. traditional-age students?  Are there differences?  Would e-learning better meet the needs of one type of student over another?
- We know one size doesn't fit all, especially in remedial education.  Do they have thoughts on how our task force can develop a few options to serve different learning styles? How do we assess the best method?

- What is their experience using online questionnaires?

The Task Force returned to a general discussion. Guest Chris Herald, core math director at UNR, noted that courses at his campus are not advertised as hybrids but all classes have online homework supporting the learning. There are very few purely online classes at UNR, as these have not proven to be very successful nor popular. Over the past five years, enrollments have averaged no more than 30-40 students in any one class. Students need more than they get in an online environment; they are less engaged unless they are getting individualized help. Even with videos and animated notes, students benefit more from being in a live class.

After these remarks, Mark Fink said that members appear to be on the same page. The Chancellor's charge allows for online components but not entirely online, which will help allay faculty fears that e-learning purports to "get rid of classroom instructors." The task force must be mindful that there are problems with rote learning too. We need to look at methods that work across a student's academic program. Frequency of contact is what's important, especially in an online environment. What appears to be missing is hard data – rather than simply anecdotal. Learning Analytics is the new buzzword this year, and we may need to use the task force charge to argue for learning analytics. Kevin Carman cautioned, however, about big data sometimes leading to misinterpretations.

Tony Scinta noted that Smarter Measure is being pilot tested at NSC. There is no data yet, but it is very comprehensive. He emphasized that data will need to be disaggregated for other characteristics (first year, ethnicity, first college attendee, etc.). Often, the students targeted for online courses perform badly, fail, and never come back. We need to understand how best to reach individual audiences. Mark Fink said he is open to piloting some of this in order to get something underway quickly, with the task force making recommendations for things to study in the future.

Lisa Frazier pointed to the dangers of relying on rote learning. There are differences between math skills and math thinking and application. Skills can be taught fairly quickly, but we need students to learn math thinking and application. If the task force brings in vendors, we need to investigate content.

Fred Lokken noted that the task force has both a challenge and an opportunity. The Richard Katz report tells of a new reality, with growing competition coming across the state's border. In addition to serving our own students, NSHE can become a credible provider of content to others. He hopes the task force will consider a great array of tracks/pathways that get us there.

Kevin Carman agreed that giving students more online options needs to be informed by data. Simply converting existing classes into an online environment has not been successful. The task force needs to examine best practices. Erika Beck agreed; fundamentally, it's all in the pedagogy, but we need good data.

Fred Lokken added that reaching the adult learner will be the big challenge. These students are often place-bound, but they are motivated and persistent. He has seen data where as many as 900,000 people in Nevada's workforce already has some college credits or wants to go to college.

Kendall Hartley appreciated Fred's comment.  If we look at this from an adult learner perspective, we may find a common approach.  Our task could be viewed as something above and beyond what is already taking place on each campus.  Maybe Fred's comment about competitors could be viewed as a phase 2 of the task force's charge.

**ACTION** –
- Nancy Flagg will seek data from Bob Potts/Bill Anderson at GOED/DETR about college-going characteristics of the state's workforce.
- Erica Beck and Tony Scinta will share links to the Columbia and California studies.
- Nancy will send out draft questions for the remedial representatives.  Final feedback from the task force is due November 5.

2. **E-Learning Workgroups**
   Co-chair Mark Fink sought feedback from the Task Force on the composition of several proposed workgroups (Remedial Math, Remedial English, E-learning, and General Education) to assist the Task Force in efficiently and effectively meeting its charge.  Mark asked if everyone was comfortable with this approach.

   Lisa Frazier cautioned against having the e-learning people in a separate group.  She advocated for spreading these representatives among the other three workgroups in a more integrated way.  There was general agreement with this approach.  Lisa also advocated having both faculty and instructional design people on the workgroups.

   Jeff Wong asked if the groups will work simultaneously.  Mark said much of the work should be systemic, whether phase I or phase II.   Erika Beck asked how Mark viewed the workgroups integrating with the task force.  He said they would complete tasks and bring their recommendations to the task force.

   There was discussion about whether workgroups were needed at all.  After a robust dialogue, the consensus was to move forward with three groups (Remedial Math, Remedial English, and General Education).  Workgroups will be given deliverables to meet but will report back to the task force with recommendations.

   **ACTION** –
   - Task force members to send suggestions for Remedial Math and Remedial English workgroup participants by November 5.  (Suggestions for the General Education workgroup will be solicited at a later date.)  The chancellor will make the final selections of workgroup members.

3. **Review of Task Force Timeline**
   Task Force Co-Chair Mark Fink reviewed a draft timeline for meeting the objectives and deliverables laid out in the charge to the Task Force        **.**

   **ACTION** --
   - Identify tasks at the November meeting that aren't currently listed under Phase I or Phase II that are burning issues that should be addressed.  An example:  whether to recommend creating an academic resource library at the System level that would serve as an asset database for use by NSHE faculty.

4. **Collaborative Partnerships**
   The task force reviewed a draft spreadsheet for compiling and documenting potential e-learning vendors.  Mark Fink noted this is a very early draft.  Much will come down to outcomes and cost-benefit analysis.  Can we create products in house?  There may be instances where that makes sense and in other areas it may be best to use a vendor.

   Carrie Bruno suggested open resources and free resources as options, such as NROC and My Open Math Lab.  Mark said he would add these to the spreadsheet, and added the task force may want GBC to demo these resources at a future meeting.

   Erika Beck said it was a fair question to ask when to use vendors, but she views the list as premature and cautioned about being careful how it is used.  The work groups may come back with other suggestions.

   **ACTION** –
   - Task force members are to send additional items to Nancy Flagg for inclusion on the spreadsheet

5. **New Business**
   The task force discussed new business.
   - TMCC has created a website for publicizing e-learning activities, and campus personnel have established their own meeting dates to stay abreast of the task force's work.  UNLV is creating a similar website and Kendall Harley and Cynthia Clark are also making regular reports to the Faculty Senate and the Graduate and Professional Student Association.  NSHE will create a website for communicating more broadly to all campuses.  The Nevada Faculty Alliance has also contacted Mark about developing methods for keeping faculty informed about the task force's work.
   - Mark Fink intends to visit every campus.  Currently, he plans a two-pronged approach: tour e-learning operations as well as schedule campus meetings to discuss the task force's charge and progress.  He will follow any format each campus prefers.
   - The November 20 meeting will start at 1:00pm to accommodate the chancellor's schedule.  Subsequent meetings will return to the third Wednesday at 1:30pm.

   **ACTION** –
   - Institutional representatives on the task force will provide Mark Fink with the names of a liaison that he can work with to schedule campus meetings.
   - Institutional representatives will inform Mark about suggested timing for campus visits.
   - Nancy Flagg will follow up with Nevada Faculty Alliance to develop periodic communication methods.