

October 9, 2017

Chris Shamburg

VP and Interim President

NJCU Faculty Senate

CC: Donna Piscopo

RE: **Senate Instructional Technology Committee Report**

The Senate Committee on Instructional Technology met on Thursday October 6th for the first time this Fall 2017.

**Members of the Committee AY 2017-2018**

Max Herman (chair)

Robert Aslanian

Debananda Chakraborty

EunSu Lee

**Charge from Senate Executive Committee regarding Blackboard**

We reviewed the charge from the Senate Executive Committee from May 23rd, 2017, asking us to address the following question:          ***What is the rule(s) or policy, if any, to allow chair, faculty, or administrator access to another faculty's Blackboard and/or Publisher's account; in fact, on the latter literally change the faculty's password?***

To answer this question we reached out to Jennifer Fox, Acting Director of Online Learning at NJCU. She was unable to attend our meeting on Thursday, but responded to our query via e-mail as follows:

“At the bottom of every course shell inside Blackboard, there is a privacy notice that states:

*Access to this course is limited to the students who are officially enrolled and the faculty member who is assigned to teach it.  In some cases, guest access will also be provided to the department chairperson for purposes of faculty supervision and evaluation.*

Dan and I have made it a point to only allow guest access to Blackboard courses after receiving written consent from the professor”

We also inquired about ownership of content on Blackboard sites, specifically whether original content posted by instructor becomes property of the university or whether the faculty member retains ownership of that material. Ms. Fox stated that she would get back to us on that issue.

Having reviewed existing IT policies and statements from the Office of Online Learning, it appears that the only policy statement of rules governing access to Blackboard is that which is mentioned above and that there is no official policy regarding intellectual property with respect to Blackboard.

**Recommendation:** We believe that it is important to have a comprehensive Blackboard policy in place, specifying access authorization, archiving of courses, ownership of intellectual property, use of copyrighted materials and other matter pertaining to the rights and responsibilities of faculty who utilize Blackboard as part of the courses. Similar policies have been enumerated at other universities, including the University of Kansas, Carnegie Mellon, Pace University and Villanova University.

We recommend that the Senate Instructional Technology Committee review Blackboard policies at other academic institutions and work with Jennifer Fox and Dan Ward of the Office of Online Learning to draft a comprehensive Blackboard policy for NJCU.

**Classroom Technology-HDMI and VGA connections**

In our last report to the Senate, dated February 22nd, 2017 we made the following recommendation regarding classroom AV technology

1. All classrooms and conference rooms (including conference rooms in Karnoutsos hall) should have accessible HDMI ports for video/audio input.
2. Replace Extron video display boxes in all classrooms and conference rooms
3. VGA to HDMI adaptor cables should be provided at no cost to faculty who have laptop computers with VGA only video outputs.

We are happy to note that the IT department has upgraded most of the classrooms in Grossnickle Hall to allow for HDMI connections and that all of the old Extron video display boxes in Rossey Hall have been removed and replaced with more modern technology. Yes, the conference/seminar rooms in Karnoutsos Hall have still not been upgraded.

**Recommendation:**

Remove and replace all Extron video display boxes and install HDMI inputs in all conference/seminar rooms in Karnoutsos Hall and any other buildings on campus where they exist.

**NJCU Website Design and Functionality**

In our last report, dated February 22nd, 2017, we noted several problems with the design and functionality of the NJCU Website. We recommended that the university establish a dedicated web team composed of IT, Marketing, and solicit faculty input on website functionality. We recommended that specific IT and/or Marketing staff be tasked with updating and maintaining website in conjunction with faculty/staff members.

At the President’s Town Hall Meeting on September 27th, President Henderson announced that an external consultant was hired to help revamp the NJCU website. This is a positive step which we hope will enhance the design and functionality of the website. As of yet, however, there doesn’t seem to be a plan for input from faculty in this endeavor.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the external consultants create a mechanism for faculty input regarding the redesign/revamping of the NJCU website. Since faculty and staff are primary users of the website their input and feedback are essential. Perhaps focus groups can be convened from faculty and staff across a variety of colleges and disciplines to provide comments/critique or some faculty members could be randomly selected to serve as beta testers of the website as changes are made, before the website goes live.

**Assessment of Faculty and Student Technology Needs**

As noted in our report from February 22, 2017, it has been over 5 years since faculty and students were last surveyed by IT department about their technology needs. We recommended that the Senate ITcommittee work with staff from Informational Technology and the Online Learning Office to prepare a new survey of Instructional Technology needs for students and faculty

**Recommendation:**

Request copies of previous surveys from the Information Technology department as well as examine technology surveys at other institutions for use as a template to design the new survey.

Invite Phyllis Szani or her appointed representative from the Information Technology Office and Jennifer Fox or her representative from the Online Learning Office to participate in the construction of a new IT survey. Set a deadline of March 2018 to complete the design of the survey, to be disseminated in April-May 2018