

18 September 2001: CMSAG Summary

In attendance: John Bevis, Joe Burley, Gautam Das, Randy Graff, Doug Johnson, Ron Thomas, Stephen Ulmer, Mike Wright

Next meeting: We will return to the previously agreed upon schedule of meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 9:30 AM. Therefore, the next meeting will be on 9 October. Unless otherwise notified, meetings will take place in 1012 Turlington Hall

Doug Johnson started the meeting by pointing out that a recent presentation by eCollege had generated high-level interest in that product. As a result, he suggested that eCollege needed to be on the table for consideration. There was no disagreement from the committee.

We briefly discussed whether or not it was advisable to open up the evaluation process to a public INT, RFP, etc. The consensus was that this was not advisable.

We discussed which vendors should be invited to make presentations to the CMSAG. The consensus was to invite Blackboard, e-College, and WebCT. We will, at the appropriate time, contact the vendors to schedule presentations. There was a consensus that these presentations should be open to the public. The issue of opening up the vendor presentations led to a brief discussion of the observation that teaching faculty have a very limited presence on the CMSAG. The consensus was to invite a couple of faculty using Blackboard and WebCT to join the committee.

Ron Thomas indicated that he has heard from a number of people familiar with eCollege and that he will pass their thoughts and comments on to Doug. He also indicated that he would work to arrange a conference call with a person who had extensive experience with eCollege.

Doug raised a couple of issues related to his chairing the CMSAG regarding a possible appearance of conflict of interest resulting from his current role as WebCT Administrator. The consensus of the committee was that any decision was to be the product of the group, that there was no conflict of interest, and that Doug should continue as chair.

The group then discussed some possible evaluation questions and criteria that would serve as the basis for the vendor presentations and our assessment. That list of questions will be refined, formalized, and sent to the vendors invited to present.

The group discussed a list of features of course management systems used in an online comparison program (found at <http://www.edutools.info/course/compare/byfeatures/index.jsp>) to begin the process of identifying critical tools that we desire. This discussion also generated a consensus that we need to keep the end users in mind -- faculty and students -- and that ultimately, it is the current pedagogical use of CMSs and future pedagogical possibilities for a CMS that should drive our adoption recommendation.

Homework: It was proposed that the focus of the next meeting be editing and developing the list of evaluation questions/criteria. To that end, committee members were asked to review and begin identifying a list of critical features that a recommended CMS should have as well as editing and adding to the list of evaluation questions.

Next meeting: 9 October. 1012 Turlington hall. 9:30 AM.