Meeting Notes from 11-29-2010, Email Correspondence

**Members Present:**  Melissa Dennis, Maurice Eftink, Ruth Mirtz, Patricia Oswalt, Penny Rice, Debra Riley-Huff, Debra Scardine, Wayne Shaw, Gregory Tschumper, Rachel Willis, Kelly Wilson

**Blackboard Upgrade:**

Rice informed the committee that the FTDC is investigating the possibility of upgrading the current Blackboard environment version 8.0 to version 9.1 this December.  The new Blackboard looks quite a bit different from the old.  Rice mentioned that it will most likely take some of our faculty a while to get used to it, but she feels like the new features it provides will be well worth it.  A Blackboard 9.1 test environment has been set up, and Rice charged this committee with reviewing the test environment to help make the final decision as to whether the December upgrade takes place or not.

The Blackboard 9.1 test environment is available at https://testblkbrd.olemiss.edu.  Committee members should be able to log in using their WebID and password.   Rice reported that users should see their current Bb courses in the test server environment (provided they had courses in the Bb 8 environment).  Rice also set up a Classroom Technology Course in the test environment so that everyone would have a course with which to experiment.

Highlights of committee member comments are as follows:

Willis - I am both an instructor and a student user on Blackboard, and after playing around with the new version I definitely think that it is more user-friendly than the current version.  The layout makes the site easier to navigate, and, I'm not sure if this is just because this is a trial, but at the top of each page there are instructions for what the tools on that page can do, and I found this to be very helpful. Overall, from a student perspective, I think the upgrade would be very welcome.

Scardine - I really like the new setup, it seems to offer a lot of great things. I especially like that now you can add documents to a class your teaching right there on the first page instead of having to go through tools and extra steps. As a student, I like that the report card shows up on the home page. The layout will take some getting used to, but I think that this could be a very nice upgrade and it wouldn't take very long to figure things out!

Shaw - I say let's upgrade.  Stephen Monroe and I have been playing around in it, and we like what we see.

The consensus of this committee is that we move forward with the upgrade to Blackboard version 9.1 in December.

Rice also reported that representatives from Blackboard will be on campus December 16th, to show us Blackboard's mobile and community system offerings.  Members of this committee are encouraged to attend.