Essex County College
The February 17, 2009 ICAC
Meeting Report for ACC

Ron Bannon

March 3, 2009
0.1 In Attendance

Rita Willis, Rachel Pernia, Patricia Alelov, Mohamed Seddiki, Jeannette Lim, Arios Jules, Ines Figueiras, Samuel Lumbsden, Elizabeth Barkley and Ron Bannon.

0.2 What Was Discussed

1. I reviewed ICAC’s February ’09 report to ACC.¹

2. I reviewed the online Sakai User Group² and how it works. Of special note was the discussion area, and it was emphasized that an online grade book was one of the more discussed topics.

3. An overview of the physical Sakai User Group meetings (every Monday and Wednesday from 2:30 – 3:30) was discussed. The main point here is that Jeannette Lim, Ron Bannon and Arios Jules have been making themselves available during these times to informally meet with anyone interested in Sakai. In addition to getting faculty introduced to Sakai, many issues are discussed at these meetings that pertain to the implementation of Sakai at ECC. Presently during these meetings we are discussing single sign-on issues as they relate to third party add-ons, and Sakai’s grade book as it relates to ECC’s needs.

4. A short overview of our public ECC Sakai informational site.³ This site is for informing the ECC community about Sakai, but it is also designed to promote the formal Sakai User Group.

5. I reviewed my experience⁴ with Sakai and what I have done so far. The main issues for me so far have been using textbook specific products (WebAssign) and the need for Sakai to interface with these products. Today’s textbooks offer a vast array of online products, where online assessment tools are fully and professionally integrated. I demonstrated⁵ Blackboard’s implementation of WebAssign integration to drive the point that we need single sign-on integration with external products. IT is aware of this, and I am hopeful that we will have an answer to single sign-on authentication at our next meeting.

²http://groups.google.com/group/eccsug (need to be a member to view)
³http://eccsug.blogspot.com (public site)
⁴http://screencast.com/t/R95GsUKm9ph (video posted)
⁵http://screencast.com/t/FkbgUrVQcN (video posted)
6. I presented what I believe is the “killer LMS application” for students and faculty. . . . an online grade book. I demoed Engrade’s\(^6\) version and emphasized that we need to get Sakai to work like this. Ines Figueiras, Samuel Lumbsden and myself are testing Engrade this semester and we are all pretty enthusiastic about it’s potential to keep students informed about their performance to date. An online grade book, if used properly, can act as a very nice Early Intervention Program (EIP) and will allow for better institutional program assessment. It was also pointed out that Sakai’s grade book implementation does not coincide with our own grade scale. IT is aware of this problem and I am hopeful that we will have an answer to this issue at our next meeting.

0.3 What is Planned . . .

1. I will meet with Jeanette Lim and Arios Jules to discuss two main issues:

(a) Shibboleth\(^7\) authentication for using external web applications. Both Banner and Sakai support authentication, and I am asking IT to investigate Shibboleth authentication model as it relates to Sakai and what already exists under Banner.

(b) Grade book implementation. Getting Sakai’s grade book integrated with Banner, or possibly concentrating on a Banner based grade book.

(c) Time permitting, I would like to start a Sakai specific Frequently Asked Questions [FAQ] for both students and faculty.

\(^6\)[http://engrade.com]
\(^7\)[http://shibboleth.internet2.edu/]