

## **An Ohlone Story**

### **Innovation in the BSM Program**

**Submitted by Lesley Buehler  
(In memory of George White, 1928-2006)**

#### **Overview**

The Business Supervisory Management Program (BSM) conducted program review in 2002. During the process it was found that several of the courses needed a technological component added to them as most supervisors today are using software tools on-the-job. While this curriculum modification was being done, an idea evolved for putting the BSM program online and also making the courses transferable and hence more attractive to a larger Ohlone Audience. The person behind the innovation was George White, an adjunct faculty member who had been teaching at Ohlone for over 28 years. The transition happened because he had this vision. Not having used a computer before in his life, he managed to acquire enough knowledge and skills to make this vision a reality. In the summer of 2004 the courses for BSM were granted transferability as lower division electives. By fall 2008, all the BSM Certificate of Completion courses should be available online to Ohlone students. This story reflects that achievement.

#### **Relationship to College Values**

*We provide life long learning opportunities for students, college personnel, and the community*

By updating the BSM courses and adding in technological components this allows Ohlone to better serve the needs of its students, college personnel and the community. More informed and experienced students are more marketable and in turn the community benefits from their knowledge base.

*We promote teamwork and open communication.*

Although Mr. White had no prior Computer knowledge and/or skills, he teamed with a full time faculty member, Ms. Lesley Anne Buehler, who became his technical advisor and teacher. Between his business acumen and her computer knowledge the program went online.

*We practice innovation and actively encourage risk-taking and entrepreneurship.*

The idea of offering courses online was innovative especially, when Mr. Whites' technical knowledge was very weak. He took a major risk in trying to learn about technology mediated courses and e-learning. At times it was incredibly challenging but he never gave up (neither did Mrs. Buehler!).

*Maintain high standards in constant pursuit of excellence*

The flexibility that is offered to a student to take a course online vs. traditionally opens a whole new world for them. Most of our students today are working odd hours and/or full time parents where coming to class at a set time is challenging for them. This ability to offer courses online helps the student achieve their goals, helps Ohlone reap more enrollments and shows a commitment to excellence in learning.

*Practice innovation and actively encourage risk-taking and entrepreneurship*

There was a lot of risk-taking with this venture. The innovation of putting a traditionally run course online was a major risk. We wondered if it would work or not? Could a gentleman with little computer knowledge who was in his late 70's complete this task successfully? Could he manage the demands of an online course?

*Demonstrate stewardship for our human, financial, physical and environmental resources.*

Putting components of this program online helps all these areas in many ways. For the Human component, one teacher is now accessible anywhere—anytime; within reason of course! Students who otherwise would not benefit from the business knowledge of Mr. White and Mrs. Buehler now had access. Adjuncts who normally could not hold office hours because they do not have a “physical office” could now hold office hours virtually and be there for their students.

Financial: Ohlone doesn't have to suffer the costs to support a classroom...no utility or housekeeping for the class time and we have lower costs on supplies (paper, board pens, flip charts etc.)

Physical and Environmentally: Less wear and tear on the college. No trash collected from students and/or faculty using the room. And, also for the student who doesn't have to commute to school it meant less wear and tear to the main college campus and/or their vehicles.

*Promote team work and open communication*

Team work and open communication were essential to for this process to happen. Mr. White teaming with Mrs. Buehler kept the course, active, current and easily accessible. Also, this was a great way for each of the parties concerned, Buehler and White to learn from one another.

### **Relationship to College Goals**

*Develop across the curriculum the Learning College Model, utilizing methods and technologies that hold the most promise for improving student course and program completion success rates.*

After converting the first BSM course (BSM 108) to online, there was an increase in the enrollment of the BSM student body. Interest was gained from students wishing to take more BSM courses online. Students were happy to learn that the BSM courses were considered for transferability to other schools as lower division electives. Students suddenly had more elective choices.

*Develop strategies to increase the proportion of full-time students including learning communities, cohort groups, enhanced facilities, and improved course availability.*

BSM is a certificate program that can also be part of an AA. By increasing offerings in its delivery more students can enroll full time and be part of a BSM cohort group as they progress through the course. Students, who bond together as part of a program, tend to stay together more and complete it. The Nursing program at Ohlone is another great example of cohort groups.

### **Demonstration of the Meeting of One or More of the Accreditation Standards (in this case the standards referred to are the statements found in the WASC Distance Learning Manual).**

*Each electronically-delivered course or program of study results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the course credit, degree, or certificate awarded.*

At Ohlone College all current courses reflect the appropriate learning outcomes due to the fact that ALL these courses are approved and monitored using several methods. These include the use of a Software Curriculum Tool called CurricUNET (see CurricUNET Story); the use of current texts (within the last 5 years) and materials to enhance the course; an overview of the entire course by the Distance Learning Committee; Completion of a Special Course Approval form; Overall approval by a Curriculum Committee and Chair; Input from Industry and field related experts via minutes collected from Advisory Committee meetings; (This is how Mr. White/Mrs. Buehler got their feedback about technology needs); and Current Industry Trends (This is also how Mr. White/Mrs. Buehler got their feedback about technology needs). An interview was conducted with the articulation officer who continually updates

articulation information. Program Reviews (to ensure program is updated and compliant) and Course Reviews (also to show courses are current and compliant).

*Enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning and assess their progress.*

Students who enroll in either the traditional or online courses for this program do have access to a wide range of support, from the publishers offering companion websites, to online instructor and student resources, to the students having access to student help labs, such as the Library Student Tech Center and Hyman Hall. There is also a 24/7 hotline for students working in online courses should they encounter technical difficulties. As for content help and connecting with their instructors, Ohlone has email accounts for each instructor. If this is an online course, then students have access to email, discussion areas, chat rooms and whiteboards. Often the student may contact the instructor via phone. With the advent of iTunes University, students can access missed or replay lectures via Podcasts from the faculty who are part of the iTunes pilot program fall 2006-Fall 2007.

## **Accreditation Themes**

### *Institutional Commitment (Theme #1)*

The mission of Ohlone College is to serve the community by offering instruction for basic skills, career entry, university transfer, economic development, and personal enrichment for all who can benefit from our instruction in an environment where student learning success is highly valued, supported, and continually assessed. This ties in really well with this story. First the BSM program focuses on student learning and it encompasses several of the Mission Statement arenas, for example basic skills (reading & writing such as in business documents) & career entry (such as preparing the student for the industry itself...What do Managers & Supervisors do?). There is much support services from the faculty who run this program and through their diligence and continual assessing strategies for this program led to the implementation of using technology mediated learning (Distance online courses). This also demonstrates the commitment that Ohlone College has to better serving the ever changing needs of its community.

### *Evaluation, Planning & Improvement (Theme #2)*

The need for the change in the BSM program resulted was from an evaluation survey used during the Program Review during the academic year 2004-05. Data collected from this program review showed what was felt and understood to be the current needs, disciplines and current technologies in several ways. A plan that arose out of the Program Review showed the need to continue using instructors for the BSM program who are professional people with backgrounds in business and education; they have and continue to, bring to the classroom not only theory/disciplines of their field but also practical hands-on experience. This hands-on experience is not only in the business supervisory field but also in the field of software technology that is required of business employees in today's "high-tech" world. Improving the program is a constant with continual dialog with and by faculty and their use of current materials. There are the regular meetings with the Dean of Fine Arts and Business and Advisory Committee members and the course review model with Curricunet. ®