

CSU Stanislaus Plan To Study Affordability of Clickers for Students

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Introduction

In response to the Chancellor's Office memo of March 23 2011 requesting a plan from each campus, "to improve affordability of clickers for students," the Technology and Learning Subcommittee (TLS) of University Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) and the Office of Information Technology (OIT) have developed this plan proposal for stakeholder discussions about clicker use on campus and the possibility of moving towards a campus standard to reduce students' cost of education.

Clickers (also known as Student Response Systems) as an appropriate choice for instructional use were first discussed and tested by faculty at CSU Stanislaus in 2003 and in 2005 a group of faculty compared products and features and selected eInstruction as the best product for campus use (see *An Informal History of Clickers at CSU Stanislaus* on page 3).

Since 2009, both OIT and the TLS have been aware of clicker proliferation on campus resulting in students having to purchase more than one clicker. OIT and TLS began studying what steps might be taken to address this issue. The California State Student Association Resolution of Fall 2010 brought the issue to the fore and TLS was directed by UEPC in January 2011 to raise faculty awareness of the issues and investigate a possible move towards standardization.

Following UEPC's charge, the TLS in collaboration with OIT has already developed a list of key issues and fact-finding methodologies, and has begun to implement them with the goal of continuing this work in the 2011-2012 academic year. In order to meet the Chancellor's Office deadline of June 1st for submission of the requested plan the following points (required by the CO) for developing a formal Campus Clicker Plan are proposed:

1. CSU Stanislaus Clicker Goals

- a. Reduce student expenditures on required course materials by eliminating or discouraging multiple brands of clickers that often accompany textbooks or are required extras.
- b. Identify the most effective clicker system to eliminate the need for individual faculty to do their own research and testing.

2. Process & Timeline

a. Spring 2011

- i. TLS identifies and assesses clicker proliferation issues, and identifies campus stakeholders.
- ii. First interviews with faculty and students about clicker use.

- iii. TLS does the first general student survey on clicker use.
- iv. First open forum for faculty discussion on clicker best practices.
- v. First webinar presenting other campus practices, evaluations, and decisions.
- vi. Issues & plan proposal brought to UEPC, Senate Executive Committee, Academic Senate, and Academic Affairs Council and comments solicited.

b. Summer 2011

- i. OIT collates the student survey responses and gathers data from clicker surveys provided by other CSUs on feature comparisons and pricing structures for distribution to faculty in Fall 2011.
- ii. OIT investigates text or web-based cell phone clicker technology.

c. Fall 2011

- i. Annual campus Technology Fair (Oct. 5) to highlight clickers, with major vendors and faculty invited for demos and to demonstrate best practices
- ii. Develop the review process for clicker recommendation.
- iii. Second open session for faculty and student discussion on clicker issues.
- iv. Follow-up student survey on clickers.
- v. TLS to collate information for report to faculty via UEPC.

d. Spring 2012

- i. Continue stakeholder dialogs and any additional surveys determined to be necessary or which will add value to the process.
- ii. Report provided to UEPC for adoption and potential campus standardization or policy statement.
- iii. UEPC & SEC discussion & resolution.
- iv. Senate discussion.

CSU Stanislaus Campus Clicker Comparisons in Brief

iClicker – at the campus bookstore, \$40 new, \$30 used. No registration fee and clickers can be shared among students (registered in each class). Fairly easy to install and use, minimal prep time needed before class use. Extensive use by College of Natural Sciences as well as individual faculty in Psychology and Nursing. Works on Mac and Windows. <http://www.iclicker.com>

eInstruction (also called CPS) – at the campus bookstore, \$26.01, \$12.50 used – but there is a \$12 semester registration fee or a \$39 lifetime registration fee. Moderate to steep learning curve for instructor but may have more data gathering capabilities than its competitors (useful for accreditation). Works on Mac and Windows and integrates with Blackboard. Still some use by Psychology Dept. <http://www.einstruction.com>

Quizdom – \$50- \$60 – no registration fee. Slight to moderate learning curve. Works on Mac and Windows. One known user in Psychology. <http://www.qwizdom.com>

An Informal History of Clickers at CSU Stanislaus

- 2003 – The first interest in clickers comes from a professor in Natural Sciences who wishes to use them for taking attendance in a large survey course. OIT tests a couple of clicker brands and determines that for the professor’s need, the existing clicker systems are fallible and therefore not suitable for this purpose.
- 2005 – Two additional faculty express interest in using clickers and OIT invites three vendors to demo their products in open sessions for faculty. Based on the features and flexibility, eInstruction is chosen by the attending faculty as the best product for CSU Stanislaus.
- 2006 – Use of eInstruction clickers grows in the Psychology Dept. and experimentation occurs in Philosophy, and Natural Sciences. The College of Human and Health Sciences signs a standardization agreement that gives preferred pricing to CHHS. eInstruction offers the standardization agreement to the other colleges and the University but without momentum in the colleges, no further agreements are signed. Some faculty choose their own clicker system. From 2006 through 2010, eInstruction is a regular participant in the annual Campus Technology Fair.
- 2009 – eInstruction use on campus continues. iClicker representatives visit campus and approach individual faculty and this product begins to be used by Nursing, Psychology, and the College of Natural Sciences with the cost being solely born by students. A number of CSU campuses (Chico and SFSU in particular) report that due to lack of standardization, some students may need to purchase up to four different brands of clickers for their classes. OIT & UEPC’s Technology and Learning Subcommittee recognizes the clicker proliferation occurring on campus (now three different brands) and decide to address this in the future through the TLS process.
- 2010 – In November, the California State Student Association passes a resolution calling for standardization of clickers at each CSU campus to ease the financial burden of the growing cost of course required course materials. The student TLS committee member formally brings the CSSA resolution to TLS and requests action on behalf of our students.
- 2011:
- January 27 - TLS brings the CSSA resolution and clicker proliferation issue to UEPC and hears from Dr. Ken Schoenly (Biology) about the College of Natural Sciences iClicker initiative and adoption. From the UEPC minutes: “Following discussion, the UEPC is in agreement for the TLS to study the issue, gather information across campus, and organize and host an open forum/workshop in which the various companies would be invited to demonstrate their specific clickers for faculty and students. TLS would then move forward with a recommendation for our campus.”
- February 18 – TLS begins to develop a plan for the remainder of 2010/11 and for 2011/12 to raise awareness and engage stakeholders about the issues.
- March 18 – Dr. Mark Grobner (Biology) speaks to TLS in depth about the College of Natural Sciences choice of iClicker and expresses interest in campus discussion on the topic. A survey of student opinion on clickers is suggested (and is conducted in May (see 2.a.iii, above).
- March 23 – Chancellor’s Office issues a memo to each campus calling for their clicker plan by June 1st.