INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR INTEGRATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING (DL) INTO ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

This proposal is being made in response to Strategic Plan: Initiative 1. Goal 3. Action Step 1:

Strategic Initiative I:
The University will provide students with transformative, collaborative, flexible and career-relevant learning experiences.

Goal 3:
Invest in the development of delivery modes that reflect the continuum of learning access options

Step 1:
Create and maintain an integrated sustainable Distance Learning model that incorporates online course offerings into on-campus departmental academic program planning

To achieve Goal 3, the Dean of Faculties put together a task force to develop the proposal. Members included several chair volunteers (Martha Einerson, Glenn Carlson, Monica Roth Day, Mary Balcer, and Suzanne Griffith), Maria Cuzzo, and Harry Anderson, along with Christina Kline and the Dean. The group has drafted a plan which calls for each department (and/or academic program within a department) to work with Distance Learning to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to integrate the two together.

Proposed timeline

At this point, this proposal is coming to Senate for its input and feedback. The next step, after receiving feedback, would be to pilot this process with a departmental volunteer to work out unexpected glitches and address unintended consequences. This pilot would be conducted in fall 2015 and returned then to Senate in a revised format for its approval to move forward.

We expect the eventual work would begin first with departments and programs with greater depth of experience in working with Distance Learning. These departments and their programs would produce MOUs that can then serve as patterns for subsequent MOU development. Each department chair will coordinate MOU development with programs. All MOUs will be reviewed and approved by departments.

The group defined integration as:

Integration *Departments view Distance Learning offerings as 'theirs' and think of online as simply another way courses are offered and delivered. When departments are able to take ownership of their DL curricular offerings and staffing, academic programs will plan for reduced overload staffing and have on load*

staff or qualified adjuncts teach courses in DL. Departments will have clear staffing plans for their DL offerings.

The group discussed issues and barriers to achieving such an integration and also discussed the Distance Learning delivery models currently in use. This is not an exhaustive list of possible delivery models. Some of the models currently in use are as follows

1. MODEL 1:-Distance Learning courses are taught on overload. This is not a long term sustainable model and cannot continue into the future.

2. MODEL 2: The model used by Communicating Arts (a complete online major). Distance Learning pays for dedicated academic staff positions. These individuals teach exclusively online and advise online students. Departments also receive revenue sharing and S & E support from DL for these positions.

3. MODEL: 3: Partial percentages of full time faculty and instructional academic staff positions are paid for by DL. That percentage is for online instruction only. For example, in Psychology, .25 of one position is paid for by DL, so .25 of that position is for online instruction as a part of the load. In this model, there is still revenue sharing and S & E support from DL.

4. MODEL 4: The model used by TED: A course taught online is also taught on campus by the same faculty or instructional academic staff, on load. This model can be coupled with model #2 or #3. This is based on serious streamlining of curriculum to integrate DL offerings. In this model, there is still revenue sharing support from DL.

5. MODEL 5: The model, most recently used by WLLC, involves dedicated qualified adjuncts for DL offerings. One or more persons teach the same class each semester, as many sections as needed, on an adjunct contract. In this model, there is still revenue sharing support from DL to the department.

The group came to propose the MOU idea, because it allowed planning for unique relationships and needs between departments/programs and Distance Learning. Extensive discussion occurred about the diverse models in use and about the differences between online majors, minors and programs offering General Education electives only. There are myriad ways in which these models work or don't work for departments. The group concluded that the only way to fully integrate Distance Learning courses with department (program) curricula across campus was to respect inherent differences, approaches and needs.

What follows is a draft plan proposal to Faculty Senate calling for the creation of Memoranda of Understanding between each academic department/program and Distance Learning. The working group has developed guidelines for what should be included in all MOUs and ideas and questions to spur department and program discussion. This proposal honors what is negotiable depending upon the unique departmental/programmatic situation

For discussion purposes, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is defined as:

M**emorandum of Understanding** (**MOU**) --*describes a bilateral or multilateral agreement between two or more parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action.*

Guidelines for MOUs between Distance Learning and Departments/Programs

The Working Group would like to propose that Faculty Senate require the establishment of Memoranda of Understanding between each academic department/program and Distance Learning to support curricular integration and ownership. These MOU's will be unique to each department, but will include similar basic guidelines. It will be important to approach these MOU discussions with a student-centered philosophy. This means we must consider access and degree completion with all students online or on campus.

Guidelines for the MOU's are as follows:

- Each department and program will receive a history of its Distance Learning course offerings, as well as historical enrollments for departmental courses, trends related to DL growth and the percentage of departmental courses and enrollments in DL.

- The Integration of Distance Learning is part of the University's Strategic Plan, and is in response to the need to enhance the continued growth of DL.

- Departments are expected to position themselves to cover all of their DL course offerings on load OR with adjunct instruction.

- If DL must temporarily continue overload contracts, it will make them available on a limited basis.

- In conjunction with DLC, each department will address these in their MOU.

    a. In its MOU each department would indicate its plan for using historical data to plan curriculum.

    b. Each department would also establish growth projections in order to predict and plan course demand and plan course coverage.

        i. To establish demand, departments could consult with current students, prospective students, prospective employers, advisory groups, and/or relevant community groups.

        ii. There are also avenues that might be used to help establish demand like the research conducted by study groups for our strategic planning, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, O-Net and the statistics made available by the U.S. Department of Labor.

c. Each MOU should contain a clear statement from the department about how it wants to handle on campus students enrolling in its online courses and how it will manage sufficient offerings to serve students at a distance.

d. In its MOUs, each department/program should discuss how to handle DL students needing to complete capstones, especially in Interdisciplinary Studies and the Individually Designed Major.

e. Each MOU would include a statement regarding advising support to DL online majors, including Interdisciplinary Studies.

f. Budget implications must be planned and considered in the MOU.

- Helpful questions to consider in crafting your department's unique MOU include:

    1. Who else needs to be consulted on your MOU development (such as other departments that might offer courses that you need)?

    2. What questions do you have about crafting your departments MOU? Work with Executive Director of Alternative Delivery and Outreach.

    3. What is your two year rotation timeline for these courses?

    4. How flexible can you be on the course enrollment to accommodate seniors or other students with special needs?

    5. How are you engaging in proactive enrollment management within your program/department? This means planning to serve student needs. What predictive thinking have you done to think this through from the student perspective?

    6. What else needs to change in order to achieve your MOU goals? This might include curriculum streamlining or thinking in a macro way about your total course offerings, your degree requirements and how to achieve these goals

    7. How will your full time staff and faculty lines figure into the consideration of course offerings? Think about how to engage qualified adjuncts. Qualified adjuncts could be acquired from anywhere, as these involve online courses and programming..

    8. What are the costs associated with this MOU?

    9. What is the authority of the Chair to coordinate the requests and process?

    10. What professional development does your program/department need to have high quality instructional pedagogy and teaching/learning happening in the courses?

Departments and Distance Learning will be free to introduce other concerns for consideration in these MOUs.