

**Distance Learning Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 10/27**  
**2:00-3:30 pm**

**Members Present:** Karen Allen, Anthony Basilico, Kathy Beauchene, Sara Cichon, MaryAdele Combe, Dan Donovan, Alan Gousie, Gene Grande, Norm Grant, Carol Mancinelli, Leigh Martin, Sandra Megerdichian, Maureen McGarry, Elizabeth Morais, Jaime Nash, Donald Paquet, Beverly Pepe, William Pellicio, Susan Sienkiewicz, Teresa Squizzero, Cathy Tessier, Martha Vigneault, Marla Wallace, JoAnn Warren and Robyn Younkin

**Special Guests:** VP Lela Morgan; Linda Richard (IT)

**Opening Remarks**

**VP Morgan** expressed the administration's gratitude for the work of the committee and is looking forward to offering a degree program online soon. She shared the following statistics with the group:

DL enrollments increased by 200 seats from the Fall 2007 (900 DL Seats) to Fall 2009 (1100 DL Seats). In 2007, a total of 696 students enrolled in DL and she projects a total of 1500 students for 2012. The projection is based on increasing enrollments due to degree offering online.

VP Morgan did identify two major issues/concerns related to the growth of Distance Learning 1) student verification and 2) faculty teaching/load assignments.

- 1) Student Verification. CCRI submitted a response to NEASC standard related to "verification procedures". Discussion ensued as to various strategies currently used to "assess" student learning. See Report Circulated at the meeting. The major concern of NEASC is the quality of the offering, and ensuring that students enrolled are completing the work.
- 2) Faculty Teaching/Load Assignments. VP Morgan asked the committee to consider a policy recommendation related to the ratio of on-campus teaching to online teaching load/assignments. Preliminary data for "onload" teaching assignments indicate a ratio of 3 on-campus to 2 DL courses. Specialized accreditations (i.e., health and related programs) may already have specific guidelines to follow.

A discussion ensued as to the rationale for the ratio analysis and the need for a policy recommendation coming from the DL Committee. Dan Donovan indicated he would include a further discussion on the next meeting agenda. VP Morgan indicated that in

the event our DL Program grows, we need to stay abreast of NEASC Accreditation Requirements and Faculty Teaching Load/Assignments will need to be addressed.

## **Report of the Best Practices Subcommittee:**

M. McGarry reported on the Best Practices Sub-Committee Work. Documents circulated at the meeting. The Best Practices Sub-Committee has focused on Disclosure and Quality Issues.

### **Additions to the Original DL Sub-Committee “Best Practices” report (2004)**

- Proper Identification for DL Courses in all publications online and in print for all semesters. This item has been addressed. Last Spring a new Identification Numbering system was created to differentiate course formats. C. Tessier indicated that DL courses are listed within the “by campus” course listing as well as “DL” course listing in the bulletins. D. Donovan reported that he provided an explanation of the course formats on the Distance Learning “For Students” page. <http://www.ccri.edu/distance/>
- Bulletins and courses available to students should alert students to check their email for instructions on how to get started with DL courses. Last Spring the DL committee submitted “new” copy for instructions and preparation for DL Courses to be included in the Course Bulletin. Discussion related to “add/drops” ensued. DL instructors are advised to check course rosters daily to check for changes in enrollment. Outstanding issue: informing students that if that add the course “late” they should contact their instructor immediately. C. Tessier suggested that on student bills and/or registration, text could be added that might include a statement.
- A Generic Multimedia link that demonstrates how to use WebCT, Email, Bulletins/Discussions, etc. should be created. WebCT videos are available on the WebCT Documentation page; however, as we move to Blackboard 9, these will need to be revised.
- Meet with Advising Staff to provide a demonstration regarding DL Courses. The Committee discussed that many students are not prepared for online learning and during the advising process, (assuming they register on campus in consultation with advisors) they should be made aware of the rigor and what they may expect to encounter. C. Tessier suggested that a representative from this committee meet with the Advising Staff during one of their meetings (Career Development Day was mentioned). Other suggestions included adding online learning to the College Success or First Year Experience courses.
- DL courses should link to library services. M. Wallace provided an update on student access to library collections. Students must enter a barcode (from their Student IDs) to access online materials. Students can now apply for and receive such barcode online through the library (pilot program in place for possible use in the Spring 2010). Faculty will be able to link directly to the sources needed.

Additions/Modifications to the Quality on Line – Benchmarks for Success.... 4/00

#### **Teaching/Learning Process**

- Student interaction with other students is facilitated through a variety of ways (class voice-mail and/or e-mail systems, chat room, discussion board as applicable) to encourage students to work with each other and their instructor(s).
- Course materials promote collaboration among students as applicable

### Course Structure

- Before starting the program, students are advised about the program to determine if they have the self-motivation and commitment to learn at a distance.

### Student Support

- A structured system is in place to address student concerns. (The department policy and the grievance/appeal procedures could be linked here.)

D. Donovan reported that both documents will be posted online for DL Faculty.

## **Amendments to the Distance Learning Policy**

**D. Donovan** reported that no recommendations have been submitted for policy changes. Once again asked committee members present to bring forward any items in the policy that may need to be corrected.

## **Guidelines for Using Online Testing in DL and Other Courses**

D. Donovan reviewed the CCRI's response to the NEASC Standard:

Description of the institution's verification procedures (the procedures through which the institution will ensure that the student who registers in a distance education program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the grade)

Highlights from Report:

- CCRI issues unique usernames and passwords to access course materials
- Faculty are directed to adhere to stated guidelines in terms of assessment including:
  - If any one test is worth a substantial portion of student's grade (20%+), test should be proctored
  - No more than 50% of final course grade should be based on online tests and that multiple tests are used to determine final grade. The remainder 50% should be determined by other assessment methods (proctored final exam, multiple research writing assignments, graded discussion boards postings and/or group or individual projects.
  - Faculty are encouraged to implement various methods to ensure the integrity of online testing (delay release of score until availability period ends, prohibit copying and/or printing; randomizing test questions and/or responses, limiting time, forcing completion in one sitting.

D. Donovan thanked the Nursing Department for sharing their "Electronic Online Exam Policy" (circulated at the meeting). S. Megerdichian informed the committee that the policy will be implemented this fall. She will report back to the committee.