

Distance Learning Executive Committee
Agenda
April 28, 2008

Approval of minutes of February 18, 2008

Dean search

OP 36.06

Commentary section of DL strategic plan assessment report

Task Force on DE Faculty Incentives—Hickerson and Baker

IT updates – Austin

1. Physical Plant project in ATLC: Outage (Power) impacting web services and electronic mail
2. Ad Astra Update (impacts distance learning students and faculty)
3. Update on Online Learning Support Working Group
4. FYI on Domain and Mail Migration Effort

Idea re extension course fees

Other

April 28, 2008

Distance Learning Executive Committee Report of the Distributed Education Incentives Task Force

Members: Steph Anderson, Kathy Austin, Matt Baker, Jim Brown, Dave Gruver, Liz Hall, Sherry Herzog, Bob Hickerson, Peggy Johnson, Janet May, Michelle Moskos, Debra Nash, Valerie Paton, Pat Patterson, Sam Segran and Milton Smith.

I. Background. The task force met to discuss the general considerations for providing incentives to expand distributed education (DE) programs at Texas Tech. Members of the committee participated in both divergent and convergent thinking exercises, collected models and anecdotal information from colleges and universities across the country and drew upon information provided by Brent Guinn of the College of Engineering. Various working papers detailing this background will be provided upon request.

II. Discussion. While not developing a specific model for providing incentives for distributed education, the group agreed upon a number of guiding principles which will provide a framework for future decision making. These principles include:

- ✦ Employing a wide range of incentives to faculty, staff, and academic units. Such incentives include a range of rewards and recognitions. Some examples include program awards, graduate teaching assistant support, partial faculty appointments and summer faculty appointments for development and delivery of programs, inclusion of DE duties in strategic faculty positions, supportive workload policy, conference/travel support.
- ✦ The importance of implementing distributed education programs must be emphasized by leadership and included in strategic and action planning from the university-level to the academic unit. It is essential that faculty and staff be truly committed to DE as a strategic intent of the university.
- ✦ A robust, effective support structure which relieves faculty and departments of much of the burden for course conversion, production, routine delivery issues, assessment and training is fundamental.
- ✦ Any real or perceived issues concerning potential negative impact on faculty promotion and tenure must be resolved within the institution and conversations within respective fields of study or disciplines effecting external letters of faculty assessment for tenure and promotion must become routine and public.
- ✦ A holistic, reliable and centralized student, marketing and administrative support center must be further developed.
- ✦ A program development funding model sponsored by the Office of the Provost in consultation with CODE must be established.
 - Funding for program development should follow strategic priorities and be awarded based upon objective criteria, including rigorous market analysis (including competition, costs, and anticipated revenue based upon Weighted Student Credit Hour generation) and realistic assessment of long-term sustainability

Attachment I

**Agenda and Results of Modified Nominal Group Technique
Exercises**

February 7, 2008

Guiding Principles for Incentivizing Distance Course/Program Offerings

Results of a Modified Nominal Group Technique Feb. 7, 2008

- [3] Genuine recognition and reward
- [2] Realize creative potential
- [3] Integrate through existing P&T and Workload
- [0] Communicate w/ Admin
- [2] Synergy, Not Competition
- [1] Include Faculty and Resident Faculty
- [1] Standardized Delivery
- [0] Deal w/copyrights
- [1] Incentivizing faculty through departments
- [1] Holistically encourage programs, not just courses (allow for different levels of incentive)
- [1] Incentivize trainings/conferences
- [1] Liaison/facilitator for help (one stop support)
- [7] Faculty must be monetarily compensated
- [0] Accountability/Quality
- [1] Simple; equal treatment; across college compensation
- [0] Address redundancy; fair
- [3] Based upon student credit hour generation
- [1] Facilitate across department special interest groups
- [0] Broad incentive package
- [2.5] Quality accountability
- [0] Explicit/clear
- [13] As simple as possible in the higher ed environment
- [1.5] Bullet proof re: state law/requirements
- [1] Resident students & distance ed = efficiency in use of resources + more manageable work load (faculty efficiency)
- [2] Be sensitive to resident/traditional experience
- [2.5] Flow revenue directly to program for high demand programs
- [2.5] Incentivize w/training and support opportunities
- [0] Mindful of unintended consequences
- [0] Recognize Leadership
- [1] Proactive
- [7] Upfront for high demand program development \$

Attachment II

Summary Notes – Meeting of DE Incentives Task Force

February 18, 2008

Attachment III

Discussion Notes – Meeting of DE Incentives Task Force

April 7, 2008

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- Combinations are common, i.e. faculty may be given a workload reduction and a stipend during the semester a course is being converted to distance delivery and for one or two subsequent semesters while the course is being piloted. After that, compensation is eliminated in some cases, reduced in others.
- Some institutions combine incentives for the department and faculty, i.e. a stipend paid to the department, as well as to the professor developing or teaching the course.
 - A fairly common model is to provide a substantial stipend (\$3,000 to \$5,000) to faculty for the development and first 1 or 2 deliveries of a course, after which all incentive money is funneled to the department chair for further development of the DE program.
- For departments
 - Most successful programs provide financial incentives for the department which provides the program. This is typically in the form of “instructional support” funding which can be used by the department chair to support additional travel (such as to desirable conferences which couldn’t be afforded otherwise); equipment (such as new computers); to pay TAs/RAs; or to pay summer salaries for faculty who teach in the DE program. In most cases, department chairs use this funding for the benefit of faculty delivering distance programs or for the development of new DE programs, but it is sometimes given as unrestricted funding which can be used at the discretion of the chair. This system creates buy-in by the department chairs, a critical element in successful programs.
- Support
 - Professional support for faculty and departments is a common element in all successful programs – support may be the most important incentive of all to individual faculty members
 - Various studies show that time is among the most important commodities for faculty, particularly junior tenure-track faculty, and the DE program must make production/delivery as easy as possible in order to obtain buy-in.
 - Very successful DE programs standardize orientation, training and delivery, including standardization of technical platforms, to maximize efficiency and return on investment
 - These programs frequently include DE delivery in faculty contracts (PDQs) and require new faculty to attend DE/blended delivery orientation sessions/workshops
 - Technical problems (or rumors of them) with delivery of DE instruction is a major disincentive for faculty

- Several members have suggested that restrictions on the use of additional compensation can be alleviated by using part-time instructors or instructors dedicated to DE program delivery
 - As an example, Northern Arizona University relies heavily on contract instructors to deliver programs to off-campus sites. These instructors are hired on contracts of varying lengths, from one to three years, and they have established a form of “career path” for the instructors who stay with them. These instructors are paid by funds provided by the DE unit, but are hired by the academic unit (who maintains oversight of program content and includes the instructor in faculty development activities). The DE unit directs the operational assignments of the instructor.
- The use of retired faculty to deliver DE programs is common (and is used in the TTU Hill Country program)
- Dr. Hall commented that the TTU service learning program uses an incentive model in which faculty are paid a summer salary to incorporate service learning activities and concepts into existing courses. These courses are then delivered on-load without additional compensation. This model could be adapted to meet the needs of the TTU DE program.
- In examining the various models, it’s clear that delivery of a course at a distance costs more than delivering one face-to-face on campus. That cost is likely in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000 per section, regardless of how the incentive model is constructed.

✦ A framework for constructing a comprehensive incentive model for Texas Tech – what elements should be included (note: these points provided to stimulate discussion)

- Strategic level
 - *Develop a business case and plan for further development of the DE program, including the role of off-campus sites*
 - *Provide clear guidance to deans*
 - *Develop a practical revenue model to fund the DE program, including start-up funds for the next two years*
- Operational level (colleges, divisions)
 - *College of Outreach and Distance Education maintains comprehensive DE plan*
 - *DE plans developed at each participating college and aligned with strategic planning*
 - *Comprehensive DE training, production and support systems developed/augmented(DLEC task force working on this)*
 - *Standardized technical/equipment platform is defined and enforced for future development*
 - *Comprehensive incentives program developed and endorsed by Provost*

Attachment IV

Hickerson's Notes –Incentives for DE at Texas Tech

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- ✦ Menu of incentives provided, to include:
 - Release time/workload reductions
 - Equipment (such as iPod or tablet PC) required for program development or delivery granted to faculty following development
 - TA/GA support for development and delivery of programs/courses
 - Additional compensation provided where appropriate
 - For development and/or delivery/revision
 - For DE related research
 - For mentoring new faculty
 - Tied to success/assessment/SCH generation?
 - Experienced faculty mentors provided
- ✦ Recognition of importance of DE in P&T

Questions:

- 1) Will incentives apply to all programs/courses after 9/1/2008, or only to new programs courses developed under proposal system?
- 2) If any existing programs are to be included, will they be selected by objective criteria, including alignment with strategic goals and need?
- 3) Can existing PDQs of faculty be modified to require participation in DE?
- 4) Will faculty incentives be determined, in part, by workload calculations? What will be the criteria given different expectations of workload in different colleges?
- 5) What policies will need to be modified/revised?
 - a. Partial list of existing OPs which might be affected
 - i. OP 70.16 Compensation in Excess of Base Salary
 - ii. OP 70.15 Multiple and Other Employment
 - iii. OP 32.01 Promotion and Tenure Standards and Procedures
 - iv. OP 32.07 Other Employment, Faculty Consulting and Public Offices
 - v. OP 32.16 Additional Compensation for Faculty/Staff through the Division of Outreach and Distance Education
 - vi. OP 32.18 Academic Workload Calculation
 - vii. OP 36.06 Off-campus Residence Courses Taught in State

**Distance Learning Executive Council
Draft Minutes
April 28, 2008**

Attendees: Katherine Austin, Matt Baker, Fred Hartmeister, Bob Hickerson, Jon Hufford, Debbie Laverie, Michele Moskos, Valerie Paton, Sam Segran, Rosslyn Smith, Rob Stewart, and Jeff Woldstad *V. di West*
Guests: Carla Myers, Milton Smith
Absent: Stephanie Anderson, Joe Claudet, and Lynn Huffman

Minutes: Dr. Rosslyn Smith asked the group to review the draft minutes from the February 28, 2008 meeting and send her changes.

1. College of Outreach and Distance Education Dean Search

Dr. Smith announced that Dr. Matt Baker had been extended an offer as the founding dean for TTU College of Outreach and Distance Education. Smith thanked the group for their participation and feedback during the interview process. Dr. Baker indicated that before making a final decision, he wanted to visit the off-campus locations; he noted that the off-campus staff should have input and he wanted to make sure that he had a chance to visit at those sites.

2. TTU Operating Policy 36.06

Smith indicated that she had not received feedback from the group. Dr. Stewart had the following comments and questions:

- a. **Item C:** Unclear as to whether part-time faculty include adjunct faculty. The group discussed that "adjunct" is defined differently by each college. Adjunct faculty who teach and are compensated are classified as part-time faculty. The group discussed clarifying this point in the O.P.
- b. **Item F:** Stewart suggested that we reference O.P. 36.07 that lists small course requirements. Ms. West noted that IRIM runs a report on small class and has available if the Coordinating Board requests the numbers.
- c. **Attachment A:** Stewart indicated that an estimation method for tuition is necessary. Ms. Moskos concurred and indicated that she receives a large number of requests for this information from current and prospective students. The group suggested deriving a common formula for in-state and out-of-state students. Mr. Hickerson commented that his incentives committee had agreed that fee collection on distance courses was a key component for faculty compensation (direct or indirect).

Smith noted that the Coordinating Board had made major changes to state guidelines and that she would send to the group. Smith asked group members to make comments to the document(s) and send to her as soon as possible.

3. **Commentary Section of DL Strategic Plan and Assessment**

Smith asked that the group review the commentary and send her changes electronically.

4. **Task Force on DE Faculty Incentives**

Hickerson and Baker reported:

- a. The group had agreed upon a wide-range of potential incentives, but that the consensus was that incentives should be directed to the department (not the individual faculty member) to distribute. The current compensation system fosters free lance efforts and we need a more strategic approach, based on a cogent business plan.
- b. The group debated the need for a centralized production unit. Dr. Austin reported that her task force was preparing a recommendation that indicated that a centralized unit is not sustainable, manageable, or feasible in our current environment. Austin suggested that a synergistic model of coordinated efforts will be the recommendation of the current task force.

Smith asked Dr. Milton Smith to provide an overview of the recent College of Engineering survey on compensation for distance learning. M. Smith reported:

- The COE faculty recommended an incentive structure that distributed the revenue in the following manner: 40% faculty (up to \$3,000); 30% to the college; and 20% to the department.
- The percentage going to faculty would not be additional compensation, but put into a business fund for summer pay, travel, equipment, and teaching assistants.
- Faculty wanted to replace the existing fee structure with a \$300 per credit hour fee, but that they are considering a higher cap for faculty, possibly disbursement based on a sliding scale.
- COE has yet to work out off-campus instruction issues, as well as dual sections that include off-site and on-campus.

5. **Information Technology Updates**

Austin updated the group on the following items from the TTU IT Division:

- a. **Physical Plant Electric Project in the ATLC**
Physical Plant must schedule major electrical work in the ATLC Communications Facility. The TTU IT Division is currently working with the Operations Division to determine what downtime will be necessary. In the worst case scenario, critical services will not be available from 4 am to 4 pm on Sunday, May 18th. Critical services include TechMail, internet access, www.ttu.edu, www.texastech.edu, and on-campus network access for some areas. Austin indicated that negotiations are underway to avoid any downtime; the TTU IT Division will be releasing announcements in a multitude of venues once a solution is confirmed. Several group members requested that Austin send the final announcement to the DLEC.
- b. **Ad Astra Updates**
The TTU Office of the CIO and the Office of the Provost are working to implement the new class scheduling software, Ad Astra. Austin confirmed that changes to distance learning sections and locations would be included in the new system.

c. Online Learning Support Working Group

The working group is preparing a final recommendation for the CIO and Vice Provost, as previously indicated.

d. Domain and Mail Migration

The TTU IT Division is working diligently to migration non-TTU domains to the TTU domain and independent mail servers to TechMail. Based on a recent external consulting evaluation, these migrations are necessary to enhance our IT security posture.

6. Idea: Extension Course Fees

Smith proposed that a unified approach to course fees be piloted with extension courses (not submitted for formula). She suggested that a flat fee be derived for Master-level courses by college. The fixed fee could then be easily communicated to students. She met with Stephanie Anderson and Becky Hyde and they indicated that working out the fee distribution on the back-end should not pose a problem in Banner. The group agreed that the pilot was an excellent idea and a good first step in a more defined course fee structure.

7. Other

- a. Moskos reported that she has implemented a new marketing tactic with Eduventures; TTU bought time on a multimedia display at Dallas Love Field (digital signage). She is eager to see how the marketing efforts translate into increased interest in the TTU distance learning.
- b. The TLTC will be working with a pilot faculty group this summer to train them on the new version of WebCT (now called BlackBoard) 6.2. The TLTC is working closely with the TTU IT Division to upgrade current services.

8. Adjournment