



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Office of the Provost

TO: Texas Tech University Faculty and Staff
CC: M. Duane Nellis, President
FROM: Lawrence Schovanec, Provost
Melanie Hart, Vice Provost
Noel Sloan, Chief Financial Officer
DATE: April 23, 2014
SUBJECT: Texas Tech University – Worldwide eLearning

One of the initiatives of Texas Tech University is to increase the accessibility of educational opportunities locally, regionally, at the state level, nationally, and internationally. One method of pursuing this initiative is through distance and online offerings. Although we currently offer many high quality and nationally recognized online degree programs, to expand the scope of our impact additional programs are needed. In support of this initiative, President Nellis has approved the funding for a central organizational structure for online and distance education, Texas Tech University – Worldwide eLearning, to be implemented September 1, 2014.

The Office of Online Compliance & Regulation has been in place for several years and will be a component of the new structure. This office ensures that Texas Tech is authorized to offer programs online and at the regional teaching sites. These authorizations are obtained from several organizations including the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, SACSCOC, and other states in compliance with federal regulations. The negotiations with Pearson have been terminated, and we are in the process of identifying a partner to assist with marketing of our online programs. The Office of Online Compliance & Regulation will oversee the activities of this partnership.

The second component of the structure, The Office of Instructional Design and Web Technologies, will assist with the design, delivery, and review of online courses (synchronous and asynchronous) to ensure they are of the highest quality, provide opportunities for significant interaction, and are compliant based on the *Principles of Good Practice for Online Learning*. Instructional designers, Blackboard support personnel, media support specialists, and instructional technology support staff will supplement the staff currently housed within the TLPDC. These individuals will assist faculty, staff and students with a wide-range of services. This component will also provide travel grants to faculty and staff (up to \$1,000 per person) to offset the costs of attending conferences and other training opportunities directly related to online and distance education.

Most of the funds dedicated to eLearning will be used to support online initiatives of the colleges, departments, and faculty. Departments will have opportunities to apply for competitive program development grants to assist with increasing the offerings of online and distance education degrees (\$10,000-\$20,000 per grant). Faculty members developing courses as a part of an online degree or certificate program will receive compensation (up to \$5,000 per course) for designing high quality, compliant courses that incorporate sound pedagogical principles. The instructional designers and

other specialists will assist with this process. Additionally, there will be funds returned directly to the colleges to support online and distance education programs. These funds can be used for technology associated with online and distance education, graduate student stipends to assist with the teaching of online or distance courses, and other online and distance education costs.

Dr. Justin Louder, Assistant Vice Provost, will direct these offices. Dr. Louder is highly qualified to supervise these initiatives. Dr. Louder has been serving as the director of the Office of Online Compliance & Regulation since 2012, and has a doctoral degree in Instructional Technology and Higher Education Administration. Additionally, Dr. Louder holds several certifications related to online course design and delivery (e.g., Certified Blackboard Trainer, Certified QM Peer Reviewer), and is an experienced online instructor.

Additional information about the grants, incentives and training opportunities will be forthcoming throughout the summer. As we continue with the preparations to offer the new services starting in September 2014, we look forward to working with you to continue to develop and deliver high quality programs for online and distance delivery. With the support of the faculty and staff, Texas Tech will be a leader in online and distance education.