

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT
(April 14, 1999)

4-27-99
FS mtg -

Responses to the Major Concerns Expressed by Academic Committees
Relating to Distance Education

In September 1998 Brenda Killingsworth, Chair of the Faculty, requested that that Faculty Senate committees provide reports to EPPC on recommendations made by the Faculty Senate on non-traditional teaching formats (Faculty Senate Resolution #98-15, see reverse side). These recommendations were rejected by Chancellor Eakin. After reviewing the reports from the Faculty Senate committees, EPPC supports the Chancellor's action.

The following are EPPC's responses to the major concerns expressed by the committees.

1. The Faculty Senate should adopt the new, revised the version of "Quality Assurance Standards for Undergraduate Courses offered via Distance Education at East Carolina University" and the "Guidelines for the Implementation of the Quality Assurance Standards." These two documents are revisions of policies previously created by the Faculty Senate and by the ECU Graduate School.
2. Any full or part-time ECU faculty member or administrator with faculty status is qualified to develop or to learn how to develop and to offer a course on-line that he or she is qualified to teach in a traditional format.
3. The Faculty Senate should develop an evaluation form for use by students enrolled in on-line courses. Results of this form will be used in instructor's annual evaluations. The form should be structured such that instructors are not penalized for hardware, software, and other failures not within the faculty member's control. Currently, in evaluating the instruction in online-courses, students are penalizing instructors for these problems.
4. Other methods for evaluating on-line courses periodically as they are being taught should be developed by the Faculty Senate or the Unit delivering the course. The aim of these evaluations is to identify and resolve problems in the delivery of the course while the course is being taught. The results of these evaluations will not be used for annual evaluation of instructors.
5. Unit administrators need to be aware of the amount of work that goes into the development and delivery of an on-line course. Unit administrators need to take this into account when evaluating faculty performance.
6. On-line courses are subject to peer-review just as are traditional format courses.
7. Faculty members should receive reassigned time for course development or a summer stipend for course development when developing a course that is to be delivered over the internet. On-line courses taught by a faculty member count as part of that faculty member's teaching load. A faculty member teaching one three-hour on-line course and two three-hour traditional courses has a nine-hour load.
8. Funding of internet course development (summer stipends) should not be done at the expense of funding traditional course development. (The resources of the Teaching Grants Committee should not be used to fund development of internet courses unless the committee is provided with additional funds specifically for this purpose.)
9. Currently approved, traditionally taught ECU courses that are offered on-line must contain the approved course content.
10. New courses developed for on-line delivery must go through the same approval process as traditional format ECU courses. Library needs for on-line courses must be reviewed as they are for new traditional format courses.
11. Enrollment in internet courses should be limited to twenty-five students per course, as recommended by the various agencies currently offering package deals on the delivery of internet courses (Real Education, Blackboard, etc.).
12. Instructors of on-line courses need to notify the library of special course-needs well in advance of the delivery of the courses.
13. The library must have the capability of providing the same level of service to students taking on-line courses as to students taking traditional format course. In addition, on-line courses will require greater flexibility in access to library resources.
14. A distance education advisor should be designated in each unit offering distance education courses for students who are taking distance education courses only.
15. The issues of who owns on-line course materials and of the use of copyrighted material needs to be resolved. These issues are being addressed by a UNC General Administration committee. The committee must have its report to the General Administration by March 2000.
16. Student use of printers in labs is creating problems. How will these problems be resolved? This issue is being addressed by an IRCC sub-committee chaired by Ernest Marshburn.

Resolution #98-15

Approved by the Faculty Senate: 21 April 1998

Approved by the Chancellor: **DENIED** 19 May 1998

In December 1996, the Faculty Senate formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Non-Traditional Formats to consider recommendations concerning policies and procedures for courses and programs offered in non-traditional and/or non-residential formats. These policies and procedures should include accreditation concerns, faculty credentials, provision of proper resources and learning environments, appropriate student data, and impact on faculty welfare. Listed below is the Ad Hoc Committee's report.

Recommendation 1:

The Faculty Senate adopt the attached "Quality Assurance Standards for Undergraduate Courses Offered via Distance Education" and that the University Curriculum Committee be charged with assurance that courses and programs meet these standards.

Recommendation 2:

Development and offering of a distance learning course or program be under the direction of a permanently tenured or probationary term faculty member without administrative appointment. [Fixed term faculty may only function in a supportive role.]

Recommendation 3:

The property rights associated with distance learning material will reside with the faculty member developing the material and may only be used with his or her permission.

Recommendation 4:

All distance learning programs or courses will require a six month notice to all supporting agencies.

Recommendation 5:

A distinction between distance learning courses and programs and those offered on the Greenville campuses shall be indicated on official transcripts and diplomas.

Quality Assurance Standards for Undergraduate Courses Offered via Distance Education (Adapted from the policy adopted by the Graduate Council, 9 September 1997)

Preamble

In recognition of the growing number of undergraduate courses being offered using "Distance Learning" (DL) techniques and in consideration of the unique characteristics of the delivery formats often used in DL and with the desire that DL undergraduate courses offered by East Carolina University maintain a uniform high quality the following assurances are required by the Faculty Senate prior to offering an undergraduate level course via a DL format. Please provide assurance that:

A. Faculty

1. A permanently tenured or probationary term faculty member is designated as the "course director who is responsible for the content, delivery, and conduct of the course
2. The course director has either the appropriate training and/or support in designing the course content to fit the delivery method being proposed for the course.
3. The course director has the appropriate technical support for the delivery method being proposed for the course, and that this support will be readily available to address technical problems likely to be encountered throughout the course.
4. The course director assumes the responsibility for determining, writing, and disseminating to prospective students the prerequisites described below prior to beginning classes.

B. Students

1. Prerequisites clearly describe the necessary technological skills required by a student to fully participate in the course.
2. Prerequisites clearly describe the minimum essential hardware and software technology necessary for a student to fully participate in the course. Prerequisites clearly describe the supplemental resources (e.g. caliber of library, laboratory etc.) necessary for a student to fully participate in the course.

C. Course Content and Design

1. The course is consistent with the unit objectives of an established undergraduate program.
2. The course contains strategies that promote significant interaction between the faculty member(s) and students, and among the students.
3. The course director provides opportunities (i.e. appointments) for the faculty member(s) and students to have individual and timely course related consultation sessions through either face-to-face, e-mail, or telephone communications.
4. All-course multimedia (e.g. text, graphics, audio, video) provided to a student do not violate copyright laws.
5. All course multimedia (e.g. text graphics, audio, video) provided to a student are in a format that can be efficiently delivered via the minimum essential hardware and software described in the prerequisites and/or to the specifications established by the North Carolina information Highway (NCIH) or other video conferencing system.
6. Any additional technological knowledge beyond the prerequisites necessary for a student to fully participate in the course is provided to the student prior to the time that such knowledge is required in the course.

D. Assessment

1. The course contains assessment components that measure student performance appropriate to the content of the course.
2. The assessment components consider any limitations of the delivery method such as security graphics resolution, audio difficulties, etc. Site-specific testing may be necessary to accommodate different types of assessment.
3. Students will be given the opportunity to assess the course content, the course management, and the efficiency of the delivery method at the end of the course.
4. The assessment of the course content and management will be done using standardized assessment tools developed by the department, while the assessment of the course delivery will be done using a standardized assessment tool developed by the Faculty Senate appropriate for the delivery method. It is strongly recommended that students also be given the opportunity to assess course management and delivery during the course.