

University of Washington  
Faculty Council on Academic Standards  
March 20th, 2015  
1:30pm – 3:00pm  
Gerberding 142

**Meeting Synopsis:**

- 1) Call to order
  - 2) Review of the Minutes from February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 & March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015
  - 3) FCTCP report on competitive status of UWS math major
  - 4) Review of revised course oversight document
  - 5) Review of guidelines for DL & ad hoc committee report
  - 6) Chair's report
  - 7) Good of the order
  - 8) Adjourn
- 

**1) Call to order**

Kramer called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

**2) Review of the Minutes from February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 & March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

The minutes from February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 were approved as amended. There was a small rewording of a member's comments for clarification. The minutes from March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 were approved as written.

**3) FCTCP report on competitive status of UWS math major**

Kramer noted FCTCP, as part of curriculum modification oversight, has communicated to FCAS that they felt the Math Department had not adequately addressed the concerns of a professor with regards to the department changing to a competitive status. However, FCTCP did indicate (by checking a box on a necessary form) that the request was ready to be sent on for approval - providing some uncertainty. Kramer asked the council if there was any objection to her forwarding on the request. It was noted that SCAP and FCAS had addressed the concerns of that individual thoroughly (regarding the status change of the department) but found the issue could not be handled at the department level. Both FCAS and SCAP agreed the concerns are justifiable and it is only a matter of who is to address the issue, because it should not be the department. It was noted the same concern applies to any competitive major.

Corbett stated, given that Math programs exist at UW Tacoma and UW Bothell, there are other routes for attaining a degree in Math from the University of Washington outside of UW Seattle.

**4) Review of revised course oversight document (Exhibit 1)**

Kramer noted the document "Oversight of courses" has been revised in accordance with requests made by the council in a previous meeting (Exhibit 1). There were two main revisions made:

1. The use of the word “unit” throughout the document as a replacement for other descriptions of academic bodies (departments, programs, etc.).
2. A slight wording change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guiding Principle regarding the registrar’s office.  
*\*Kramer noted there were no fundamental changes made to the document.*

A member noted the document does not include information on the process by which FCAS would arbitrate disagreement between units. Kramer replied the process would be developed through application and would include FCAS reading the details of the disagreement while in session, holding discussion, and deciding whether or not the new course meets the criteria for approval. Kramer added that no procedure currently exists to process course overlap disagreements, and this document will be the singular resource for quarantining the growing issue, once passed by the council. She explained when the document is approved, it is likely a handful of disputed requests will immediately come to the council for arbitration.

Janssen noted there are number of words in the document that are undefined and may require definitions in the future given his personal experience with some of the issues. Some examples of these words are “lecture,” “quiz section,” and “lab section.” Kramer noted the course creation and course change documents are going to be altered and reposted electronically, and there is opportunity for defining these terms when that time comes.

As there was no more discussion, the council held a vote to approve the document as an official FCAS Guideline. The vote was approved unanimously by the council.

There was some discussion over course quiz sections meeting in the same room at the same time, this may or may not be a melding of different quiz sections, and it is not known if it being done for pedagogical or fiscal reasons. A member volunteered to look into this and report back.

##### **5) Review of guidelines for DL & ad hoc committee report (Exhibit 2)**

Kramer noted she would like to vote on approving the guidelines from Distance Learning (DL) Subcommittee in this meeting (Exhibit 2).

##### *General Overview of Revisions to Guidelines*

Pengra noted there were three recommendations in the document prior to the revisions - in the new version, only one of the recommendations survives. He explained the document now defines a DL course as one where almost all instruction happens off-campus; thus, if a course has regular in-person meetings, it will not be defined as a DL course. The document clarifies that courses which fall outside of the above DL designation, but conduct more than 50% of their teaching through online distance learning tools, may still need to be reported to the state. The reporting can, however be handled through a strictly clerical approach, during the creation of the time schedule.

Pengra explained the \$350 course fee requires additional investigation. Pengra noted though there is no formal recommendation to eliminate the course fee, but the subcommittee does have concerns. Pengra also noted the document still makes clear that the subcommittee does not know what purpose the residency limitation with DL serves.

# Faculty Council on Academic Standards Policy on Oversight of Courses

In order to make the process of course approval transparent, this set of guidelines and principles was created by the Faculty Council on Academic Standards (FCAS) in consultation with the Office of the University Registrar. The aim is to document current practice, place that practice within the existing faculty governance structure, and provide a pathway toward course approval upon which University units (which includes departments, programs, and any other group of faculty that offers courses for University credit) can depend.

The University of Washington Curriculum Committee (UWCC) is a semi-independent committee composed of individuals whose primary missions are to represent the Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell faculties; the Graduate School; Undergraduate Affairs; FCAS, and the Office of the University Registrar. In terms of faculty governance, UWCC reports to FCAS, as FCAS is charged with “...inter-institutional academic standards.” In terms of administrative oversight, it is housed within the Office of the Provost. It is (semi-) independent in that most of the business of UWCC can be conducted without consultation with either the Provost’s office or FCAS. These matters include routine approvals for course creations and changes. It is only semi-independent in that the FCAS members of UWCC (with support from the Office of the University Registrar ) will provide a monthly summary to FCAS for notification purposes and will bring any courses about which questions arise to FCAS for review. This semi-independence allows the committee to maintain its largely administrative function, but also clearly to establish faculty governance over curricular matters. As with all issues of concern to academic standards, FCAS will consult other councils, committees, offices and units on an as needed basis.

## Guiding principles:

1. Curricular content—what is included in a course and how that course is taught—is best established by the unit that “owns” the course (i.e., “owns” the prefix, course number, and title). Ownership here refers to the unit that originally proposed the course and can usually be established by the prefix, e.g., ANTH belongs to the Department of Anthropology and ENGL belongs to the Department of English (but see below for more information). The Faculty in a unit are the subject matter experts and are best able to assess the appropriateness of the materials and methods associated with the course, especially given that pedagogy and content need to be aligned with trends particular to disciplines.
2. Just as departmental Faculty members are knowledgeable about course content and pedagogical concerns, so too are the Registrars subject matter experts on curriculum management (e.g. registration, transcripts, etc.). While a Faculty member’s relationship with a course often ends when the course grade is submitted, the Office of the University Registrar maintains records indefinitely. The office interacts with students, some of whom are currently enrolled while others were enrolled decades ago. Transcripts are the record of a student’s University work and

are often read and assessed by agencies with no affiliation to the University of Washington, such as potential employers or graduate schools. Frequently, course prefixes, numbers and titles are the only information available to these outside entities when attempting to establish the educational attainment of our students, because the instructor of record is not available or no longer can provide a relevant syllabus. Consequently, course prefixes, numbers and titles are critical curriculum management elements and the Registrar's perspective is, of necessity, long-term—with an emphasis on stability and clarity. While faculty may have insight into transcript elements, it must be recognized that transcript/student record elements are not inherently pedagogical and thus the Registrar's long-term perspective is of great benefit and is not an attempt to influence pedagogical content.

3. In the past, disciplinary boundaries were more easily defined, but more recent trends have focused on the value of inter/transdisciplinarity in approaching academic content. While offering much insight into the academic content and delivery side of the University, such intersection can cause questions of ownership to arise among units on the curriculum management side. For instance, does the Department of Statistics “own” all introductory course(s) in statistical analysis?

**Ownership:** the unit that initially proposes a course and obtains approval owns the course. Ownership implies rights to change all aspects of it, including credit hours, course description, and delivery methods, via the course change process. Owners can also eliminate courses. With the rights of ownership come the responsibility of notifying units that depend on the course for such things as prerequisites and requirements of admission to, and graduation from, the major. In some cases, these dependent units may be obvious, while in other cases, the course might be so broadly utilized that a general announcement to the University is appropriate. The Office of the University Registrar can be of help in determining which other units should be contacted.

4. Beyond ownership of courses, other issues have arisen more recently among the campuses that can be sorted into two basic issues: equivalency and overlap.
  - a. **Equivalency:** University of Washington courses are deemed “equivalent” when the content is sufficiently alike that one course can substitute for another in all instances (e.g., as prerequisites, as transfer articulated courses, or as major/degree requirements). Equivalency is established at the discretion of the units that own the courses. A unit is not required to accept an equivalency proposal from another unit. If one course is changed, equivalency is broken, although it can be restored if all affected units agree. Equivalency needs to be established in the curriculum management system, but is encoded into the Degree Audit (DARS) and, therefore, equivalent courses automatically count as prerequisites and admission or graduation requirements throughout the University. Units that use, but do not own, courses cannot refuse to accept the judgment of equivalency made by the courses' owners. Equivalency is not applicable to courses offered by units on the same campus; in these cases, joint-listing is appropriate.

- b. **Overlap:** courses that share some content, but are not sufficiently alike to be equivalent, can have overlap. Like equivalency, overlap is determined by the units that own the courses. Courses with overlap are established so that students do not receive “double-credit” for the same content. Overlap acknowledges that courses can be substantially similar without being equivalent.

While FCAS and the Office of the University Registrar can facilitate conversations among affected units regarding equivalency or overlap, the decision rests with units. In the situation where units cannot agree on equivalency or overlap, the courses are deemed to be different (not equivalent and with no overlap) and coded appropriately. These different courses, then, do not automatically count as prerequisites or for admission or graduation requirements. Even if courses are deemed non-equivalent by the units which own them, other units can establish courses as satisfying their own prerequisites and requirements.

5. Courses offered by different units on the UWS campus should not overlap in content to the extent that the units determine that students should not get credit for both courses, with acknowledgement that the extent of the overlap is often not fixed for courses, but rather variable and specific to each offering of the courses. If multiple UWS units want to collaborate to offer courses that use interdisciplinary methods or examples, joint-listing is appropriate. Generally, UWS units should not offer the same content under a different course number and name, but rather should seek joint status.
6. Courses are approved for units to offer, not for individual faculty to teach. Thus, a UWS unit proposing a new course should provide to the UW Curriculum Committee a complete new course application including detailed analysis of a) how the new course fits into the pedagogical mission of the unit, b) how the new course is similar to, and different from, other courses within the unit and across the Seattle campus, and c) how the unit has interacted with other potentially affected units with regard to course development. Signatures from the chairs/directors of all affected units and, when affected units are in different Colleges or Schools, the appropriate deans are required and indicate concurrence of all affected units. The Office of the University Registrar, because it is experienced in managing the curriculum of the University, can be an invaluable source of advice about potential other units with similar curricular interests. The responsibility for contact and negotiation rests, however, with the initiating unit. When there is substantial course content overlap, or use of words/phrases that might imply content ownership by a different unit, the proposing unit is required to share course development ideas with the potentially impacted unit and to seek agreement from the potentially affected unit and Dean’s office about the new course. Submission of course creation paperwork without evidence of collaboration with other affected units in the form of signatures will be returned to the initiating unit.

7. In cases where an agreement among affected units cannot be made, the UW Curriculum Committee will refer the application to FCAS, which will make a binding ruling. FCAS looks unfavorably on units which do not fully participate in pedagogical discussions centered on student learning. Defending historical turf or perceived ownership of words is not adequate reason to deny creation of new courses, nor should a unit propose creation of a course for non-pedagogical reasons.
8. In order to facilitate communication among units regarding courses, the Office of the University Registrar will maintain a database of courses that are currently in the approval pipeline. The initiating unit will enter the course into the database after approval by the unit and other units will be able to review the proposed courses. If a unit encounters a newly proposed course with which they believe an existing course overlaps substantially, then the overlapped unit should contact the initiating unit. If conflict over ownership and/or overlap cannot be worked out among affected units, as a **last** resort, FCAS, in consultation with the Office of the Provost, will make a binding decision.
9. In addition to the elements of approval described above, the University has established basic standards for courses for which the UWCC checks as part of its review. These are generally University level requirements and so are germane to all units on all campuses. These include:
  - a. **Required credits** (also called General Education requirements): Established by the University in the Student Regulations (Chapter 114.2.B), the requirement to earn credits in these courses is applicable to all UW students seeking baccalaureate degrees. Consequently, maintaining accurate designations is a critical function of the Registrar's office.
  - b. **Course numbering**: Because course numbers may be the only indication of the level of academic content of a course long after it is taught and because some units have admission and graduation requirements that specify the number of credits students may or must have at certain levels, consistency across the University is necessary. In other words, a 100-level course (1xx) indicates introductory material described in the course title, while a 400-level designation with the same title indicates advanced undergraduate content. What content is characterized by "introductory" or "advanced" is often discipline specific, but general consistency across the university is important.
  - c. **Learning goals and learning assessments**: University policy requires learning goals and learning assessments to be clear, appropriate to the course level, and provided to students who are registered for the course.
  - d. **Attendance/participation**: Unless required for accreditation purposes, University policy does not allow attendance to count toward or against the final grade. Participation may count in the calculation of the course grade,

but if faculty intend for it to contribute >15% of the total course grade, the method of assessing participation needs to be clearly delineated.

- e. **Interaction:** Although how instructors interact with students and students with other students may vary substantively among disciplines, interaction among students and between instructors and students is an essential component of course design. Originally raised in the context of distance learning, the issue of assuring that the framework for appropriate interactions exists has become a relevant University requirement for all courses.

10. The questions and wording on the forms used for course creation and change are managed by UWCC in consultation with FCAS, FCTL, and the Office of the University Registrar. Changes to those forms must be approved by FCAS.

*Approved by the Faculty Council on Academic Standards on March 20, 2015*

FCAS/FCTL AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE  
CONCERNING DL (DISTANCE LEARNING) DESIGNATION  
RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORT  
20 MARCH 2015

Subcommittee members:

Phil Brock	Tina Miller
David Canfield-Budde	David Pengra (chair)
Robert Corbett	Jennifer Taggart
Don Janssen	Thaïsa Way
Jeff Wilkes	

## Recommendations

The subcommittee believes that the DL designation is necessary and worthwhile, however the simple division of courses into “DL” and “on-campus” ignores the variety of distance-learning teaching modes used in all courses, and it elides significant differences that may exist among DL-designated courses.

We recommend that the definition of a DL course be clarified to emphasize the fact that a student participating in a “distance learning” course means that student will rarely (perhaps never) need to visit campus in order to complete the course. However, because of State reporting rules, other courses that make extensive use of online learning tools but do not allow the student to complete the course without regular in-person on-campus meetings do need to declare their use of this technology, even though they would not be classified as a DL course.

We thus recommend the following specific guidelines be used to define a DL course:

A course or section of a course in which students can participate fully without being physically present on campus must be designated as a “DL” course or section. This includes courses in which some, but not necessarily all, offerings of the course are online, such as courses that are offered with different technologies in different quarters (i.e., one quarter on campus and another quarter online) and courses where, in a quarter, one section of the course is on campus and another section is online. A DL course may have *occasional* meetings on campus for the purposes of organization, evaluation, or group presentations.

However, courses that make extensive use of online teaching tools but also have *regular recurring* meetings (i.e., weekly), such as labs, discussion sections, studios or other on campus offerings, do not typically require the DL designation, even if these meetings are for shorter duration than those traditionally encountered in on campus courses. In such situations, departments may designate the course as DL, but they are not required to do so.

The DL designation is obtained via the course creation/change process. Courses designated DL do not count for residency and must be re-approved after 3 years, in accordance with Student Regulations Chapter 115.1.I.

The above guidelines are consistent with earlier FCAS policies, as enumerated in a memorandum from the committee to University Deans, Directors and Chairs in 2005 (see Appendix 1).

In addition, we also recommend that

1. Courses which fall outside of the strict DL designation but conduct more than half of their instruction through distance learning tools, such as online videos or email/chat sessions must declare the extent of this practice in their course application or renewal in order to satisfy State reporting requirements.
2. The appropriate bodies should review the typical \$350 course fee that is added to DL courses. The near universal application of this fee has led to inequities: for example, among tuition-based program students (in-residence) who must take a DL section of a course because the on-campus sections are full.
3. The criteria and procedures for approval of DL courses should be updated to include current best practices concerning online learning, after a review is conducted of our current practices and the approval process used by our sister campuses in Tacoma and Bothell.

## **Background and Rationale**

Under current regulations, any course in which a preponderance of the instruction occurs when the student and teacher are separated by a significant physical distance must be declared as a “distance learning” or “DL” course. While DL courses are as a matter of policy considered to be equivalent to on-campus courses in terms of academic quality, additional restrictions have been placed on DL courses that affect the way they are approved and reviewed by the University, and on how many such courses can be taken by regular program students.

Since these rules were established, recent developments have transformed online learning technology mostly for the better: interactions among students and instructors are easier with newer chat tools, widespread availability of video recording and conferencing, and ubiquitous wireless broadband. Online homework systems have grown in sophistication and provide automated grading that may be more consistent and accurate than grading done by a human being.

Because of these improvements, the use of online technology has now nearly completely supplanted other traditional modes of “distance learning” such as videotaped lectures or mail correspondence. At the same time, the use of online tools is now pervasive throughout traditional on-campus courses. Indeed, there are some courses that have “flipped”: the “homework” consists of watching recorded lectures online, and the “lecture” time is used for in-class problem solving or group discussions. The question naturally arises: “Is there still any important distinction between a DL course and an on-campus course? Have the rules concerning DL courses outlived their usefulness?”

The impetus for a review of the DL rules has also arisen from the following concerns:

- There has been explosive growth in DL offerings. Among undergraduate courses alone, in the last 4 quarters there were over 15,000 enrollments scattered over 470 separate DL sections. DL courses were offered at all levels (1xx, 2xx, 3xx, and 4xx) by over 60 departments or programs. Most of these courses are less than three years old. (See Appendix 2 for a detailed listing.)

- The criteria concerning DL course operation in the current course application form do not adequately capture the variety of ways that a DL course can be run.
- Many courses make extensive use of online teaching tools, such as posting video lectures, conducting online chat sessions, and employing online homework systems. Such courses may technically fall under the current rules for requiring a DL designation wherein more than 50% of instruction happens via a distance learning channel but are more properly termed “hybrid” courses, because students in them attend weekly meetings on campus for labs, exams, and other group work.
- Declaring a course as “DL” brings with it the consequence that a student who takes it forfeits a residency credit. It is not clear that the residency restriction fairly serves students in the regular program who need a DL course to complete their degree but are in danger of hitting the out-of-residency limit and students whose visas prevent them from taking a UW-offered DL course even though they live on campus.
- The quality of education is a primary factor that distinguishes UW from the many other for-profit and non-profit organizations offering distance-learning courses. Maintaining UW’s reputation for quality is of primary concern for all faculty, and indeed this concern was one of the primary reasons why the current DL rules were instituted.
- Prospective students have a right to know unambiguously whether a course is intended as a DL offering where participation is conducted mainly off campus or has a substantial on-campus component even though there may be significant online instruction.
- The current practice of routing the majority of distance learning courses through the offices of Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) has led to inequities among fees paid by students in tuition-based programs.

Distance learning technology continues to evolve. The ways in which distance learning has happened and may happen in the future are much wider than the typical modes of instruction that occur in rooms on campus among live students and instructors. Thus, we believe there should continue to be policies to ensure additional oversight of distance learning.

## Open Questions

As the subcommittee worked through the issues surrounding the DL policy and its current practice, we encountered a number of questions for which we could not yet provide an answer. Some of these fall outside of the portfolio of FCAS and FCTL, but they are still of concern to us as faculty members of the University.

### *Review criteria and procedures concerning DL courses*

In spite of the variety among distance learning modes that is possible, the growth of distance learning courses has given instructors at the UW and elsewhere considerable experience, expertise and even wisdom concerning what works and what does not in the online world. Yet, oversight of the distance learning courses fails to adequately capitalize on this hard-won knowledge. The rules

were written at a time when online learning was in relative infancy, and when the extent of distance learning courses was small and restricted to a few mainly graduate-level programs.

The approval process for the creation of True-DL courses should be reviewed and probably enhanced. We recommend a study of the procedures used by our sister campuses at UW-Tacoma and UW-Bothell which are based on certain known best-practices such as those laid out by the organization *Quality Matters*.<sup>[1]</sup>

On the Seattle campus much of the technical work and quality control of technical and instructional materials is handled by PCE.

### *International students and DL courses*

According to the Registrar and international student services, students here on F1 and J1 visas can take as many online learning courses as they wish, but only one per quarter can be used toward the 12-registered-credits-per-quarter eligibility requirement. So an “international” student so registered in all-online classes for a quarter would be out of compliance.

This restriction may complicate the designation of courses as “DL”, since the apparent reason for the visa restriction has to do with keeping track of where such students are living. A course that could really be taken in its entirety off campus should not be called “hybrid” and thereby not show up as a DL course for these students. On the other hand, a student living on campus and taking a DL section because that is what is available should not have to face the consequences of over-enrolling in DL courses.

### *Questions about residency*

The residency requirement, which is that students must take at least 45 of the last 60 credits either on-campus or via UW approved study-abroad programs is put in place to prevent students from finishing their UW degree via transfer credits. For many students, a loss of residency in a few courses will have no measurable impact.

However, given typical course credits and loads, the restriction amounts to about one 4-credit course per term over the last four terms of a student’s time at UW. Given the growth of undergraduate DL courses being taken by students otherwise in residence, we foresee that there may be many petitions to waive the restriction in the future. It is not uncommon for students to wait on certain requirements for graduation until late in their college career, and thus face the possibility of needing multiple DL courses that would ordinarily be considered “gateway” courses (such as introductory calculus).

Moreover, it is not clear what good is being served by refusing residency to students otherwise in residence who wish to take DL courses offered by our own departments. Do we or do we not consider as a matter of policy that DL courses should be indistinguishable from on-campus courses in terms of their quality?

## *Course fees and the role of PCE*

Although the committee believes that the typical course fee of \$350 that is levied by PCE should be dropped for regular students enrolled in tuition-based programs, there remains the larger question of how PCE interacts with the operation of tuition-based programs. As of this report nearly all undergraduate DL courses available to regular program students are hosted through PCE. They provide valuable services and expertise to departments entering the world of online education. As a consequence, it appears that the course fee is applied to nearly every such DL course.

The FCTL members of our subcommittee have talked with PCE representatives and report that much of this fee is used to pay for software licensing and for work done by curriculum specialists. For a DL course that runs over many terms, the cost of PCE's work declines and the remaining funds revert back to the offering units.

It is not clear where this money goes after it gets back to the departments, and there is a lot of it flowing in the system. For example in Mathematics over the past year nearly 1500 students took DL calculus, and the surcharge represents an additional \$525,000 coming out of students' pockets for this group alone. Since most DL courses are operated through PCE and the \$350 is a standard charge applied to all such courses, this adds up to millions of dollars of extra cost to students.

There have been rumors that the course fee will be dropped for certain DL courses, but little further information concerning the fee was available at the time of this report.

But in a larger sense there arises the question: Does the University want to continue to consign the development and operation of undergraduate courses to Professional and Continuing Education? Should we not be developing the expertise to run such courses within our Departments and Schools?

## **Appendix 1: History and Background of the DL designation**

### *History*

On 2 November 2001 the Faculty Senate passed Class-B legislation number 167 concerning revisions to the code concerning distance learning [2]. It established the "DL" designation to be added to courses which had a significant "distance learning" component, somewhat variously interpreted, but formally meaning that at least 51% of the instruction occurred via channels or methods other than students meeting in classrooms on a UW campus.

The 51% rule comes from a definition of distance learning promulgated by the HEC Board:

**Definitions of Distance Education.** There are many ways to define distance education. The Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board has adopted the following definition of distance learning for the 2000 Master Plan for Higher Education:

Distance learning takes place when teachers and students are separated by physical distance for most of the instructional delivery. The term "distance learning" course or program should only be used if:

- Teachers and students are separated for a predominance of the instructional contact hours;

- The content has been specifically designed as a course of study to increase and assess student knowledge or skills; and
- An education institution provides the course content and is responsible for assessment of student achievement through credits, certification, or degrees.

Prior to the legislation, distance learning courses could be offered by departments or through UW Educational Outreach, and these courses were not subject to the same regulations concerning course review as those offered on campus. In addition, distance learning courses through UWEO were tagged with a “C” prefix and were not used in calculating a student’s GPA (even though credits accrued and the grades were retained on the transcript). In addition was the condition that the final 45 credits of study *must* be taken in residence.

The legislation established that distance learning courses be subject to the same rules of oversight that all other UW courses comply with. In addition, it created the tag “DL” to be applied to such courses. It required that departments offering courses take responsibility for their content and instruction, assure that students taking such courses satisfy the same prerequisites, receive equal credit and recognition for taking such courses, and require that the same grading practices be applied. In other words, DL courses should be in every important way academically equivalent to regular in-residence courses.

In addition to requiring equivalency to regular course, the legislation also established the following additional requirements:

- DL courses must be reviewed by the appropriate curriculum committee separately from any other courses, even if the course in question is the same (content, syllabus, instructor, etc.) as another course offered in residence.
- All DL courses must be reviewed again in the third year before it may be considered a “permanent” course.
- Distance learning courses offered through UWEO must also satisfy the requirements of the legislation and be designated “DL”. However, the existing distance learning courses were grandfathered in until July 1, 2005.
- Students could only count a maximum of 90 DL credits towards their degree, and still needed to have a minimum of 45 credits in residence in order to graduate, but the requirement that these 45 credits be taken at the end of their study was relaxed.
- Further stipulations concerning withdrawals and completion were created concerning DL courses offered asynchronously with the academic calendar.

Following passage of this legislation, additional sections were added to the New Course Application form (and other related forms) specifying additional criteria for DL courses to satisfy, such as stating the number of hours in distance-learning format, the types of technology or methods used, how the course differs from any in-residence versions, and how students would receive feedback, communicate with their peers, and take examinations securely. For the three-year review, DL-offering units must document any changes in the course since inception, and provide evidence that the course succeeds in terms of learning outcomes and completion rates.

Within the minutes of Senate and FCAS meetings, a persistent question has been. “What defines a DL course?” Given the rapid evolution of teaching technology, especially seen in recent trends such as “flipped” classrooms (where students watch lectures online and use class meetings to work on projects, homework, or discussion) and the use of other online tools like automated homework systems, paper submission, etc., the distinction between distance learning and in-residence courses has indeed blurred further.

Because of the requirement that existing DL courses which were grandfathered in by the 2001 legislation become fully “DL compliant” in 2005, a memorandum was crafted by FCAS that more clearly spelled out what DL meant. A copy of this memo was recorded in the minutes of the FCAS meeting of 11 February 2005 [3]. The memo reads, in part

Following are examples of courses that would need to be approved and offered as DL courses, whether offered directly by departments or through UWEO.

- Courses in which the class meets with the instructor physically present only a few times for organizational, instructional, or evaluation purposes (other than independent-study courses).

- Courses in which the bulk of instructional activities take place over the web, by email, by televised or recorded lectures, or by other instructional methods that don’t involve face-to-face contact between student and instructor.

- If a faculty member or department creates a distance-learning version of an existing classroom course, the distance-learning version must be approved and offered as a DL course.

- If a faculty member or department creates both distance-learning and classroom versions of a new course, both versions must be submitted for approval and offered with the respective designations.

With the increasing use of web-based resources for instruction, activities, and evaluation in what began as traditional classroom-oriented courses, there is a growing class of hybrid courses that have both classroom and distance-learning components. Common sense and truth-in-advertising should guide the classification and offering of these hybrid courses.

- If course instruction is primarily classroom-based, the course should be approved and offered as a regular on-site course.

- If course instruction is primarily not classroom based, the course should be approved and offered as a DL course.

- If a predominantly classroom course evolves into a predominantly distance-learning course, the latter should be approved and offered as a DL course.

In any case, a guiding principle should be full disclosure to students of the mode in instruction, setting, and requirements of a course prior to registration.

The above sets out a common-sense definition of distance-learning courses that avoids haggling over the “51% rule” mandated by the (now defunct) HEC Board.

In 2007 FCAS and FCEO put forth an amendment to the DL rules to exclude the “DL” (distance learning) designation from official student transcripts. The legislation cited the following justifications:[4].

1. DL designated courses may be evaluated differently by external organizations/universities who may question why UW distinguishes these courses from our regular courses;
2. Other universities do not make a distinction between their classroom-based and DL courses;
3. It is the responsibility for each program, department and/or school to ensure that academic quality standards are met regardless of the form of delivery of their courses; and
4. The distinction between DL courses and classroom-based courses is becoming very blurred as faculty use many different technologies and teaching strategies within their individual courses

### *Current status of DL courses and review procedures*

DL courses among the undergraduate course numbers are extensive. In the quarters from Winter 2014 through Winter 2015, there were 15,342 enrollments among a total of 474 DL sections. These break down as follows: 7782 enrollments in 1xx, 2540 in 2xx, 3663 in 3xx, and 1357 in 4xx courses. See Appendix 2 for a full listing.

Regarding the importance of DL courses in the 10-year reviews conducted for programs through the Graduate School, according to David Canfield-Budde,

...DL is not called out specifically in the guidelines, although when the unit views DL as significant (either as a challenge or success, or as part of plans for the future) it will appear in the body of the self-study as part of the response to the boilerplate questions or in the unit-defined questions. No course-specific review is mandated, but review committees do look at the curriculum and in that context sometimes request course syllabi. For online programs—these have all been at the graduate level—there is more attention given to the DL nature of the degree and its delivery, including discussion with students about mentoring and support. But there is no distinction between units with significant DL presence and those without—they are all given equal attention in the review, and each academic program in the unit should be fully considered.

The three-year reviews of DL courses are enforced through the Registrar's office. The Registrar does a survey of DL listed courses, and notifies units when they are due for a review. If a review is not completed, the course will not be listed in the Time Schedule.

Many undergraduate DL courses are still too new to have been reviewed, but their deadlines are approaching. The DL courses that have gone through the three-year review are mostly from the Graduate Programs (numbered 500 and above).

Communications with the Registrar (Jennifer Payne and Tina Miller), the College of Built Environments (Construction Management, Bill Bender) and College of Engineering (Brad Holt) confirm that the administrative and paperwork costs associated with DL courses are not overly burdensome for them.

## *References*

- [1] <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-technology/offering-online-course-uw>
- [2] [http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/05/class\\_b167.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/05/class_b167.pdf)
- [3] [http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/06/fcasmin\\_021105.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/06/fcasmin_021105.pdf)
- [4] [http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/05/class\\_b173.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/05/class_b173.pdf)

## Appendix 2: Listing of Undergraduate DL courses & Enrollments

Course Prefix	Total Students enrolled by course level			
	1XX	2XX	3XX	4XX
Grand Total	7782	2540	3663	1357
ESRM	1590			
MATH	1475			
MUSIC	1377		217	
DANCE	947			
GEOG	344			
PSYCH	330	892		
DRAMA	317			
ASTR	263			
TMATH	253			
PHIL	151		62	
ESS	139			
TPSYCH	102	37		
JSIS	64			
T WOMN	59	250		
SPAN	56			
T UNIV	41			
Q SCI	40	84	361	
T SOC	37			
TSPAN	37			
FRENCH	34			
T HIST	29			23
G H	29			
OCEAN	23			
T URB	21	71		
JSIS E	15			
BIOL	7			
JSIS B	2			37
BSE		297		
LING		210		14
POL S		111	214	67
SCAND		100		
COM		87	386	242
ENGL		77	69	26
ACCTG		71		
T SUD		62		
ECON		55		
TESC		50	25	
GRDSCH		31		
T CRIM		29	188	66
TWRT		17	10	
JSIS C		9	4	
STAT			521	
ECFS			303	291
ISS			272	
TRELIG			147	

Course Prefix	Total Students enrolled by course level			
	1XX	2XX	3XX	4XX
T NURS			142	
TSOCWF			133	15
SOC			104	
BIS			93	
NUTR			84	76
EDUC			65	
GWSS			55	6
AES			51	7
EDPSY			48	66
ITA			47	
ANTH			42	
CM			18	76
CHID			2	
EDSPE				123
CFRM				89
NSG				48
T HLTH				38
CLAS				13
UCONJ				13
INFO				8
HSTAA				7
JSIS A				6

<b>Course Prefix</b>	<b>Total Enrollment in UG DL Sections</b>
MUSIC	1594
ESRM	1590
MATH	1475
PSYCH	1222
DANCE	947
COM	715
ECFS	594
STAT	521
Q SCI	485
POL S	392
GEOG	344
DRAMA	317
T WOMN	309
BSE	297
T CRIM	283
ISS	272
ASTR	263
TMATH	253
LING	224
PHIL	213
ENGL	172
NUTR	160
TSOCWF	148
TRELIG	147
T NURS	142
ESS	139
TPSYCH	139
EDSPE	123
EDPSY	114
SOC	104
SCAND	100
CM	94
BIS	93
T URB	92
CFRM	89
TESC	75
ACCTG	71
EDUC	65
JSIS	64
T SUD	62
GWSS	61
AES	58
SPAN	56
ECON	55
T HIST	52

<b>Course Prefix</b>	<b>Total Enrollment in UG DL Sections</b>
NSG	48
ITA	47
ANTH	42
T UNIV	41
JSIS B	39
T HLTH	38
T SOC	37
TSPAN	37
FRENCH	34
GRDSCH	31
G H	29
TWRT	27
OCEAN	23
JSIS E	15
CLAS	13
JSIS C	13
UCONJ	13
INFO	8
BIOL	7
HSTAA	7
JSIS A	6
CHID	2
Grand Total	15342

Course Prefix	Total UG DL Sections Offered	1XX	2XX	3XX	4XX
COM	44		11	19	14
ENGL	40		16	20	4
PSYCH	25	3	22		
TMATH	22	22			
POL S	20		2	10	8
MATH	19	19			
FRENCH	15	15			
MUSIC	15	11		4	
SPAN	14	14			
T CRIM	13		2	8	3
ECFS	13			6	7
NUTR	13			6	7
T WOMN	11	3	8		
DANCE	9	9			
PHIL	9	4		5	
Q SCI	8	2	3	3	
ACCTG	8		8		
SOC	8			8	
AES	8			7	1
TPSYCH	7	5	2		
JSIS B	7	1			6
LING	7		5		2
GWSS	7			6	1
CM	7			1	6
GEOG	6	6			
OCEAN	6	6			
T NURS	6			6	
TSOCWF	6			5	1
CFRM	6				6
DRAMA	5	5			
ESRM	5	5			
STAT	5			5	
ASTR	4	4			
T URB	4	1	3		
ECON	4		4		
JSIS C	4		3	1	
TRELIG	4			4	
CLAS	4				4
HSTAA	4				4
UCONJ	4				4
JSIS	3	3			
TSPAN	3	3			
BSE	3		3		
TESC	3		2	1	
BIS	3			3	

<b>Course Prefix</b>	<b>Total UG DL Sections Offered</b>	<b>1XX</b>	<b>2XX</b>	<b>3XX</b>	<b>4XX</b>
ISS	3			3	
ITA	3			3	
T SOC	2	2			
T HIST	2	1			1
T SUD	2		2		
TWRT	2		1	1	
ANTH	2			2	
EDPSY	2			1	1
EDSPE	2				2
BIOL	1	1			
ESS	1	1			
G H	1	1			
JSIS E	1	1			
T UNIV	1	1			
GRDSCH	1		1		
SCAND	1		1		
CHID	1			1	
EDUC	1			1	
INFO	1				1
JSIS A	1				1
NSG	1				1
T HLTH	1				1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>86</b>

Kramer explained to the council that the recommendation represent a huge change in the course approval policy. The new guideline would remove the 50% or more DL designation and define DL as courses taught essentially 100% off campus. Kramer noted she spoke with UW Tacoma and Bothell and they did not express concern over this.

Stroup noted she had a problem with defining the DL course as near-100% taught online, because the document no longer accounts for the “middle ground” courses that still incorporate significant distance learning. Kramer explained the singular designation is an attempt to give more power to the department to decide for themselves the distance learning nature of their courses.

Pengra explained that there are two effects of defining a course as DL: it will not count toward the residency requirement and a three year review is required. After some discussion the sentence: “In such situations, departments may designate the course as DL, but they are not required to do so” was removed. The motion was approved unanimously by the council. FCTL has expressed their desire to jointly endorse the DL Subcommittee’s report and recommendations, which Kramer welcomed.

#### *Additional Recommendations*

The document also includes three additional recommendations. The council took up discussion on the additional recommendations.

Kramer noted the first recommendation was included for the intention of meeting state reporting requirements in a more efficient way. She noted the percentage of a course taught online will be determined when the course is offered. There was discussion over if FCAS should recommend transparency of courses which are taught, in part, through the use of online tools. The council questioned if there is currently transparency over this, with the answer not known.

There was a note that FCAS should communicate with PCE for further details over the \$350 course fee. The council expressed interest in designating a member or guest to locate more information on PCE and the course fee. It was explained Jeffrey Wilkes, chair of Faculty Council on Teaching & Learning (FCTL), had provided a large amount of insight into the course fee for the DL subcommittee. There was question if FCAS has the jurisdiction to tackle the issue, and the council expressed interest in communicating with the SEC and Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB) chair, Jack Lee, over the issue.

Kramer noted she would like SCPB to investigate the \$350 course fee. She asked the council if there were any objections to her talking to SCPB about this, to which there were none. Janssen moved, and the motion was seconded, to direct Kramer to bring the \$350 course fee topic to SCPB due to FCAS concerns over the issue. The motion passed by a majority vote.

#### **6) Chair’s report**

Kramer brought up the use of “add-codes” by professors to pick which students they will allow to take their courses. Discussion ensued. The council agreed that all students should be allowed equal access to courses that they are eligible to take. Kramer will bring to the council in a future meeting a guideline document regarding the use of add codes. It was noted there should be a fair and transparent process for the admission of students to courses.

#### **7) Good of the order**

Nothing substantive was addressed in the good of the order.

## 8) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Kramer at 3:00 p.m.

---

*Minutes by Joey Burgess, jmbg@uw.edu, council support analyst*

**Present:** **Faculty:** Phil Brock, John Deehr, Peter Hoff, Don Janssen, Richard Keil, Patricia Kramer (chair), David Pengra, Sarah Stroup (SCAP chair)

**Ex-Officio Reps:** Robin Chin Roemer, Hailey Badger, LeAnne Jones Wiles

**President's Designee:** Philip Ballinger

**Guests:** Janice DeCosmo, Robert Corbett, Emily Leggio, Tina Miller

**Absent:** **Faculty:** Robert Harrison, Dan Ratner, D. Shores, Thaisa Way

### Exhibits

Exhibit 1 – Oversight of courses

Exhibit 2 – SCDL Recommendations and Report