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Dear Colleagues:

The University of Washington is considered a leader in the use of technology in teaching. It has hundreds of hybrid classes, and 15 degrees and 42 certificate programs delivered completely online. It has successfully offered dozens of online classes to regular matriculated students and has been at the head of the free course movement, first with a dozen free courses designed in collaboration with Prentice Hall and more recently with Coursera. A few months ago, the UW received a prestigious Next Generation Educause grant for the development of a low-cost online undergraduate degree completion program. The UW also leads two online national consortia, R1edu and ASG, the latter of which has created online certificate programs offered jointly by member organizations.

The Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning has been following these developments, and would like to express our excitement for these accomplishments. At the same time, the Council has concerns about the University's ability to maintain this level of innovation and the quality of our educational offerings. In June of 2011, the Council developed a position statement regarding maintaining quality and faculty effort in online learning efforts of the university. This statement was based on an extensive literature review and has been revised with the addition of literature more recently published. A copy of this document accompanies this letter.

Members of the Council request the opportunity to discuss with you the issues outlined in the position statement and methods to implement the following requests. We request that the University

- Provide supplementary funding to support the development of hybrid courses that include meaningful interactions with faculty and peers as well as online modalities, such as podcasting or self-paced modules, as a preferred method for course delivery.
- Ensure that student teacher ratios in hybrid and online courses are consistent with current in-person courses and best practices. Anticipated increases in enrollment with online courses must be supported by funding additional teaching staff.

- Provide faculty support in effective use of technology for online learning in the following areas:
 - In-depth training in use of software and hardware and in the pedagogical basis for use of technology
 - Technicians available for problem solving, preferably within each department
 - Adequate support for development of courses
- Recognize innovations in teaching and learning in hybrid and online courses in promotion and merit decisions in terms of the following:
 - Scholarly work regarding pedagogic innovations
 - Effects of changes in the practices of University colleagues
 - Impact of innovations and courses on the public reputation of the University
- Centrally identify and disseminate best practices in online education and provide pedagogic support to educators in implementing best practices within their courses
- Provide the technology, hardware, and software, needed to support these innovations in classrooms, studios, and offices
- Coordinate development efforts in hybrid and online learning between all three campuses to ensure that best practices are made known to all faculty.

We look forward to these discussions.

Yours,

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Chair of the Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
Professor and Director of Educational Evaluation