I. CALL TO ORDER

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

IV. APPROVAL OF THE **FEBRUARY 22, 2019** MINUTES – Pages 2-5

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Review Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit
   [APPM Section III, Item 23](#) and [Approved Review Process](#) – Pages 6-8

   Establish a plan for addressing topics/themes/considerations from survey data in our review of the current policy

   Review guidelines for online courses carrying graduate credit offered by NIU
   [APPM Section II, Item 22](#) – Page 9

   Review policies from other institutions

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT
MINUTES
University Council Academic Policy Committee
Thursday, February 22, 2019, 10:30 a.m.
Altgeld Hall 125
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Bateni (for Newman), Block, Burton, Chen, Chmaissem, Collins, Ghrayeb, Mershon, Miller (for Ledgerwood), Penrod (for Staikidis), Zamora

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Ledgerwood, Newman, Staikidis, Stephen

I. CALL TO ORDER

University Council Academic Policy Committee Chair V. Collins called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was established.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

O. Chmaissem moved to approve the agenda, seconded by H. Bateni. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 4, 2018 MINUTES

B. Penrod moved to approve the minutes, seconded by J. Chen. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Review Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit

APPM Section III, Item 23 and Proposed Process

Review survey data for pertinent themes/considerations

V. Collins presented a brief recap of the committee’s work on this project to date. The task for today is to review the survey data and identify themes or topics to be considered by the committee members at its next meeting. The following topics/themes/considerations identified during V. Collins’ preliminary review of the data were shared and discussed.
Part 1: Information Before Instructor Considerations

- Language regarding technology – update
- Definition of distance education courses – difference between HLC and NIU percentages; new definition needed; clarify language used in HLC and NIU definitions – regular, substantive, significant
- Online and hybrid courses treated as equal to F2F courses; suggestions for improving language offered; general guidelines for making online versions of F2F course comparable
- Statement of how distance education and hybrid courses differ; further define hybrid courses

Part 2: Instructor Considerations

- Expectations for student engagement/interaction – 1st sentence
- Language pertaining to interactions – remove chat lines
- Evaluating online teaching effectiveness – 2nd sentence
- Ownership/intellectual property of the course
- Accessibility – for students with disabilities and other special needs, for all students; accessible education needs to be defined; does it pertain to students with disabilities?

Part 3: Unit/College Considerations

- Sentence pertaining to contact hours
- Include HLC policy regarding fees or costs associated with courses
- Introduce the notion of adhering to institutionally-adopted quality standards for online courses; provide definition of quality expected – perhaps using QM, course design standards; minimum qualities, characteristics, processes for online courses
- Whether or not there is sufficient commitment

Part 4: University Administration Considerations

- Broaden who can take NIU online courses
- Adherence to academic calendar
- Expand to include how to handle students who never come to campus but need resources (OneCard) that are only available if come to campus; reference to on-campus/online and off-campus/online
- University commitment to provide resources and support needed to do online programming well; commitment to hire staff who can find out in advance what might go wrong for students accessing course remotely and who can fix problems as soon as they arise
- Increasing faculty knowledge of how to design pedagogically appropriate instruction via online methods; course development support for instructors
- Faculty training on how to make courses accessible
- Increase student knowledge of how to be successful in online programs – provide online tutorials
- Clarify identity verification
Part 5: Review Period

- Consider reviewing more frequently

Other (Topics/considerations that were broader or did not fit neatly into the above categories)

- Undergraduate and graduate level policies governing distance education courses – info needed under part 4; needs to address graduate education
- Extra compensation to the department and instructors
- Enrollment limits
- Dealing with situations when there are technical issues during an examination or submission deadline; add explicit language for addressing potential technology failures due to weather or beyond; anticipating problems with technology and correcting problems ASAP
- Creativity; entrepreneurial activity
- Clarify who is in charge
- Language – “germane” in part 3, “should” in various places, “all”
- Should we consider reviewing policies from other institutions?
- Clarify question of simulcast courses, with students F2F and online at same time
- Cautions (keep the document flexible and inclusive)
- Consider requiring some synchronized sessions as a baseline

The committee agreed on the following next steps:

1. The list of survey observations shared in today’s meeting will be sent with the committee members, who will consider the observations and come to the March 18 meeting prepared to discuss how each point should be addressed in relationship to the policy review.

2. There was consensus that it is worthwhile to consider recommending one policy to address distance education for both undergraduate and graduate courses (currently there are two separate policies). V. Collins will contact Dean of the Graduate School Brad Bond to get his thoughts on this topic. There also was consensus for us to compare the two policy documents.

3. Online education vs. distance education – There was discussion about whether the outcome should represent a policy for online education or a policy for distance education. It was noted that all online education is distance education, but not all distance education is online education. There was consensus that the policy should address the broader category of distance education.

4. Policies from other institutions – O. Ghrayeb will provide the committee with benchmarking based on data from other institutions, provided by Jason Rhode, Executive Director, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center.
VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

O. Chmaissem moved to adjourn, seconded by J. Burton. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.
Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit Offered by Northern Illinois University

Section III. Item 23.

In conformity with federal guidelines, the Higher Learning Commission defines distance learning or distance education as:

Education that delivers instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and that supports regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously using one or more of the following technologies: the Internet; one-way and two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed-circuit cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio-conferencing; or videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs used in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

The Higher Learning Commission further defines a distance education course as one in which 75% or more of the instruction is offered by distance education. Courses that include some distance education component, but less than 75%, are referred to as hybrid or blended courses.

Except for those aspects noted below, distance education courses and hybrid courses are expected to be treated as equal to face-to-face courses. To ensure that distance education courses are equivalent in student outcomes, the following considerations should be given particular attention.

Instructor Considerations

Distance education courses must be accessible to all NIU students and should include significant interaction (e.g., email, discussion boards, chat lines, etc.) between students and instructor, and among students, when such opportunities would normally be part of the course if offered in traditional on-campus mode.

Instructors should pay particular attention to and provide explicit plans for assessing the effectiveness of teaching the course online and communicate these plans and the results of their implementation when requested to do so.

Ownership and use of online material is governed by the university intellectual property policy.

Unit/College Considerations

Because the usual criterion of "contact hours" may not be germane, proposals for undergraduate-level courses intended to be offered via distance education should include a rationale as to how the number of credit hours for each proposed course has been determined. This rationale must comply with the credit hour policies articulated in APPM Section III, Item 2.

The course status of distance education courses will be clearly indicated in the online course finder. Any special requirements, including limitations regarding who may enroll in a course in a given term, should also be announced.
The determination of the mode of delivery for a given course rests with the unit.

**University Administrative Considerations**

Persons receiving undergraduate academic credit for an online course must be admitted to NIU just as would be required for any other course for undergraduate credit.

All online courses carrying undergraduate credit must be assigned an official instructor of record.

HLC requires institutions to verify the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance education.

Undergraduate distance education courses need not conform to the standard calendar defined in the Course Finder. However, they will be assigned to an academic term for purposes of drop/add, withdrawal, refund policies, etc.

**Periodic Review:** These Policies shall be reviewed every five years by the Academic Policy Committee of the University Council.

Approved by the University Council April 30, 2014

Editorial Modification, October 16, 2017
Process for Reviewing Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit Offered by Northern Illinois University

1. Prepare questions to guide the review process.
   - In what ways (if any) do the policies need to change?
   - What is missing (if anything)?
   - What no longer is relevant (if anything)?
   - What is unclear (if anything)?
   - Additional comments?

2. Establish a pertinent database to facilitate decision making.
   - We’ll need to decide who to gather data from.
   - We’ll need to determine our method for gathering data (e.g., survey)

3. Determine changes needed (if any) based on analysis of the data collected.

4. Share findings at University Council meeting.

Approved by the UC Academic Policy Committee on October 4, 2018
Guidelines for Online Courses Carrying Graduate Credit Offered by Northern Illinois University

Section III. Item 22.

1. An online course carrying graduate credit must have an official instructor of record, just as any other course offered for graduate credit.

2. Persons receiving graduate academic credit for an online course must be admitted to the NIU Graduate School or to the status of student-at-large, just as would be required for any other course for graduate credit.

3. Limitations, regarding who may enroll in a course in a given term, should be published in the same fashion as the availability of that course is publicized. For example, the fact that the delivery system for a course is the World Wide Web/Internet should be indicated.

4. If a new graduate-level course is created that is intended to be offered primarily or exclusively online, its submission to the curricular-approved process must include providing the curricular committees a rationale as to how the number of credit hours has been determined. This may be done in a variety of ways and is necessary because "contact hours" may not be a germane criterion.

5. Online graduate courses should not be identified differently on NIU transcripts.

6. Acceptance of a graduate student's transfer of credit from online courses should be subject to the established limits on transfer of course credit. Similarly, there should be no special limitations on the amount of credit from online courses that maybe applied toward an NIU graduate degree.

7. Graduate courses and programs offered online should be subject to the same approval processes as for other graduate courses and programs. It should be left up to individual departments and colleges by what mechanism courses gain their approval for online delivery. There should not be any special curricular approval mechanism for an existing degree program to be offered entirely online. As nothing special is recommended for online course approval, then when there are sufficient courses online, there will be a degree program online.

8. Current rules regarding number of hours of credit that a graduate-level student can take in an academic term should apply to online courses as well. That is, these courses will count in the student's course load.

9. Online graduate courses should adhere to the same academic calendar and related rules (drop/add, withdrawal, refund policies, etc.) as traditional graduate courses. The use of the boundaries of the existing academic terms is sound both academically and administratively.

10. Delivery of graduate courses by remote electronic means can be important and appropriate but such courses ought not become the electronic equivalent of correspondence courses. Therefore, courses delivered by these means must include significant interaction between students and instructor, and among students, when such opportunities would normally be part of the course if offered in traditional on-campus mode.

Approved by the Graduate Council, October 5, 1998
Last Updated: October 5, 1998
Revisions approved by the Graduate Council December 1, 2014