

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 to 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. Ghayeb** 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.