



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020  
FSU ZOOM  
2:00 P.M.

**I. Regular Session**

A special session of the 2020-21 Faculty Senate was held on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. Faculty Senate President Eric Chicken presided.

The following members attended the Senate meeting:

T. Adams, S. Aggarwal, A. Ai, P. Aluffi, E. Alvarez, A. Askew, J. Atkins, J. Bahorski, E. Bangi, A. Barbu, H. Bass, B. Birmingham, D. Bish, M. Blaber, J. Brown Speights, M. Buchler, G. Burnett, E. Cecil, E. Chicken, R. Duarte, M. Duncan, D. Eccles, V. Fleury, R. Goodman, T. Graban, S. Grant, E. Hilinksi, P. Hoeflich, C. Hofacker, P. Hollis, A. Huber, P. Iatarola, J. Ingram, E. Jakubowski, K. Jones, C. Kelley, H. Kern, D. Kim, E. Kim, E. Klassen, S. Lester, V. Lewis, I. MacDonald, C. Madsen, P. Marty, C. Marzen, C. McClive, M. McFarland, C. Moore, R. Morris, A. Muntendam, I. Padavic, C. Patrick, E. Peters, D. Peterson, J. Proffitt, N. Rogers, L. Rinaman, N. Rogers, E. Ryan, A. Semykina, S. Stagg, J. Standley, R. Stilling, B. Stults, P. Sura, M. Swanbrow Becker, G. Tyson, T. Van Lith, A. Vanli, and I. Zanini-Cordi.

The following members were absent. Alternates are listed in parenthesis:

I. Alabugin, P. Andrei, J. Ang, J. Appelbaum, P. Beerli, M. Bourassa, R. Brower, M. Carrasco, I. Chiorescu, T. Chiricos, P. Doan, J. Du, F. Dupuigrenet, S. Foo, H. Gazelle, A. Gunjan, K. Harris, K. Hinchman, M. Hurdal, T. Lee, T. Mariano, J. Munn, J. Palmer, K. Reynolds, A. Rhine, G. Salazar, R. Singleton, J. Sobanjo, L. Stepina, M. Ye, Q. Yin.

**II. Approval of the Minutes, June 16, 2020 meeting**

The minutes were approved as distributed.

**III. Approval of the agenda, August 12, 2020 meeting**

The agenda was amended to have the report of the steering committee follow announcements by President Thrasher. The agenda was approved as amended.

**IV. Special Order: Announcements by President Thrasher**

- Students are returning to campus and being tested for COVID-19. The university's testing system is able to return results in less than 24 hours.

- Thanked Maxine Montgomery for working on the anti-racism, equity, and inclusion task force. There will be a meeting on August 19, 2020 at 1:30pm. This meeting will be open to the public and establish organizational procedures.
- The task force will be divided into subcommittees focused on recruitment, retention and diversity; campus climate; and the historical legacy of FSU.
- Acknowledged recommendations by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee about Westcott awards. The Senate recommended Myra Hurt and Sandy D'Alemberte to receive Westcott awards, and those recommendations have been approved.
- Andy Jhanji has taken over the duties of FSU Foundation president since Tom Jennings left the position. The search for a replacement for Tom Jennings has been put on hold until later in the fall when the situation may allow for more potential candidates to be available.
- The construction of a residence hall at the Panama City Campus has been approved and construction will be underway soon.
- Meetings have continued between presidents within the SUS system and Florida's Surgeon General, Dr. Scott A. Rivkees, to refine the university opening plans. Adjustments to the reopening plan will continue as the situation develops.
- Senate President Eric Chicken inquired generally about football to President Thrasher. The President summarized the current situation which has led to the Board of Directors reviewing the current protocols set up by the ACC. The Big-10 and Pac-12 organizations have voted to not conduct fall sports leagues. The governor has requested a joint press conference with FSU to express support of having sports occur in the Fall.
- The president concluded by thanking the Faculty and expressing continued solidarity and support.

**V. Report of the Steering Committee, Professor Erin Ryan**

- The Steering Committee has met seven times since the last meeting of the Faculty Senate. A majority of the Steering Committee's work has been on the subjects that will be discussed in today's meeting including pandemic response, academic continuity, and institutional responses to racial problems.
- The Faculty Senate standing committees have been filled for the year, including the new ad-hoc committee to address faculty concerns with ACA accommodation changes.
- The unanimously approved resolution passed in the last session calling for the Florida Legislature to allow FSU to change the name of the main Law School building will be presented to the Board of Trustees. Upon their approval the resolution will be sent to the Legislature.
- In the last session, proposals to suspend traditional distance learning policies and waive GRE/GMAT requirements were discussed and will be discussed more in today's session.
- The Steering Committee engaged on the immigration issue that became raised last month before passionate advocacy from institutions of higher learning across the nation led to changes at the federal level to resolve these issues.
- Meetings took place with campus Chief of Police Terri Brown, who has postponed retirement in order to assist the University with the challenges this semester pertaining to pandemic response and racial justice.

- Members of the Steering Committee attended the last Board of Governors meeting and will participate in the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting and Advisory Council of Senates meetings.
- Today's Faculty Senate meeting includes many of the institutional leaders who have led the reopening effort, including President Thrasher, Terri Brown, Sally McRorie, Janet Kistner, and Registrar Kim Barber; Erin Ryan offered thanks on behalf of the faculty for their hard work and effort to include the faculty.

## VI. Old Business

### a. FSU Constitution

- Postponed to September 16, 2020.

## VII. New Business

### a. GPC – Extension of GRE and GMAT waivers (See addendum 1)

- **Mark Riley, Dean, Graduate School** – Thanked the Senate for passing the initial waiver of the GRE and GMAT. There was unanimous approval to extend the waiver to Fall 2021.
- **Samuel Grant, Engineering** – Inquired as to whether the waiver would apply to doctoral programs. Dean Riley responded that colleges each have different routes that they can already go through to get waivers for doctoral programs, such as their dean or GPC.
- **Patrice Iatarola, Education** – Inquired about removing the GRE requirement altogether. Dean Riley responded that there has been some discussion, and faculty members are free to share their support of such a possibility.
- **The proposal to extend the GRE and GMAT waivers passed.**

### b. DLC – Policy Suspension, Stacy Sirmans (See addendum 2)

- The proposal from the Distance Learning Committee recommends that committee approval requirements be set aside temporarily for the creation of new remote classes. In a time where an unprecedented amount of new remote classes is being established, the need for committee approval is proving difficult.
- This recommendation would only apply for the classes being transitioned from in-person to remote instruction.
- **The proposed policy suspension passed.**

## VIII. Special Order: Reopening Plans – Provost McRorie

- Thanked the steering committee, faculty, and everyone for their hard work and additional effort to prepare for remote instruction.
- FSU has tried to maintain the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students.
- Provost McRorie has worked with deans to ensure that as many people as possible can have a form of instruction available to them that they are comfortable with.
- President Thrasher has expressed a desire to have a minimum of one person in each department physically on campus.
- FSU is expecting the COVID-19 cases to rise in Tallahassee. Many students come from south Florida where there have been high case numbers.

- Provost McRorie has been meeting with deans three to four times a week in preparation for reopening the campus and the start of the fall semester.
- Thanked Vice President Janet Kistner and the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement for their efforts to welcome new faculty.
- There are virtual plans for students, mostly through the Office of Student Affairs, to keep them engaged in activities.
- All classes will be remote after the Thanksgiving break. It is important that faculty plan accordingly and keep in mind the FSU testing center will not be available for final exams.
- The University will likely report an upwards of 73% four-year graduation rate and a 94% retention rate for the previous year.
- Less than 25% of classes will be face-to-face for the fall 2020 semester. A large number of the remote classes this semester have a class size of under 19 students.
- There is a new search for the director of CARE following Tadarayl Starke's leave.
- **Kim Barber, University Registrar** – Noted that many students are part-time face-to-face, meaning they are also partly remote/online learning.
- **Kathryn Jones, Arts & Sciences** – Inquired about access to testing and support for frontline workers, such as custodial staff and dining hall workers. Provost McRorie responded that the administration is cognizant of the importance of the presence of these workers and the increased risk they have of exposure. Health insurance companies should cover the first COVID-19 test, but options are being explored to get the costs of tests covered for those whose health insurance does not cover it.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts & Sciences** – Asked if there will be limitations or parameters put on student gatherings and Greek life. Provost McRorie responded that Vice President of Student Affairs Amy Hecht recently put out a guideline for students that imposes limitations on student gatherings. Greek life will have additional guidelines, including doing recruitment virtually. A follow-up question was posed about testing in the Spring 2021 semester and Provost McRorie responded that at this time there will be no plans made for Spring 2021 until more data from the Fall semester and progress on vaccinations is available.
- **Robin Goodman, Arts & Sciences** – Questioned why the repopulation plan dictates that returning faculty only be tested once upon arrival given the CDC's suggestion of repeat testing and the need to control the spread of the virus should it enter the campus population. Provost McRorie responded that there is no mandate that faculty only be tested once; however, there has been difficulty in negotiating which party pays for additional tests. Until these negotiations come to fruition, the University is using the contact tracing system known as SAFER to manage the potential spread of the virus, which has so far proven effective. Janet Kistner also reiterated that the university is following guidelines from both local experts and the CDC.
- **Michael Blaber, Medicine** – Asked if data from testing such as rate of infection and positive test thresholds will affect operating procedures. Provost McRorie responded that the university has chosen not to identify infection thresholds at this time, instead opting to make decisions holistically.

- **Philip Sura, Arts & Sciences** – Inquired about special regulations for student athletes. Provost McRorie responded that student athletes are tested frequently, especially members of the football team.
- **Michael McFarland, Sociology** – Inquired about the residence halls set aside for quarantine and the potential contingency plans if the number of students requiring quarantine exceeds capacity. Provost McRorie responded that there are about 450 available quarantine beds, and the hope is to reach around 500 beds.
- **Ian MacDonald, Arts & Sciences** – Sought information about contact tracing. Provost McRorie responded that positive tests will be reported to the contact tracing team, who will reach out to those in contact with the positive individual. The classrooms that held students who tested positive will be deeply sanitized and go unused for up to 3 days. Kim Barber added that the contact tracing team will not always contact faculty instructors if a student in one of their classes has tested positive. Senator MacDonald inquired about information shared with the FSU community and whether a collective information dashboard similar to those put out by the state would be publicly available. Provost McRorie responded that FSU is included in Leon County rates and that an FSU-centric system would have to be completely aggregate in order to not violate HIPAA.
- **Erdem Bangi, Arts & Sciences** – Sought information about an estimate of the number of students returning to Tallahassee. Provost McRorie responded that it is likely a large number of students returning to Tallahassee even with only 10% of classes being in-person. Kim Barber responded that some reasons for this may be that students have year-long leases or desire isolation from their family household, but such data is anecdotal. Many families that at a time earlier in the year insisted that their student be present on campus in the fall have changed their position given the recent developments of the pandemic.
- **Jessica Ingram, Fine Arts** – Inquired about support for students who live off campus and get sick. Provost McRorie responded that although the quarantine residence halls are designated only for students living on-campus, the university is prepared to offer and deliver food, medicine, and supplies to off-campus students that engage in self-quarantine.
- **Michael McFarland, Sociology** – Inquired about the measures taken to limit large social gatherings. Chief Terri Brown responded that FSUPD is working closely with the Tallahassee Police department and Leon County Sheriff's department. However, there is no ordinance currently in place to grant an authority to disperse crowds. Special patrols will be deployed to identify and discourage potential gatherings.
- **Michael Buchler, Music** – Inquired if the university's telecommuting agreement was updated so that the large amount of faculty remaining in remote-work positions will be able to care for their children while doing so. Provost McRorie responded that FSU has tried to be generous with their policy of telecommuting in order to accommodate the changing positions many of the faculty find themselves in while fulfilling their assignment of responsibility.
- **Bridgett Birmingham, Libraries** – Inquired about privacy concerns among the faculty about contact tracing and whether participation in the contact tracing system is mandatory. Provost McRorie responded that contact tracing is HIPPA protected. More information will be provided in a town hall meeting for faculty.

- **Samuel Grant, Engineering** – Inquired about the spring 2021 semester and the possibility of a plan similar to that of the fall’s Thanksgiving break applying to spring break. Provost McRorie stated that there are not yet any concrete plans for the Spring until more information about the landscape of the Fall semester becomes available.
- **Irene Padavic, Social Science & Public Policy** – Mentioned that faculty were asked to staff reception desks, which is not part of their assignment of responsibility, in order to staff offices. Provost McRorie responded that she has not heard of such actions taking place and that the matter will be looked into.
- **Eric Chicken, Arts & Sciences** – Mentioned a past discussion with Provost McRorie about academic freedoms. Provost McRorie stated that faculty are responsible for their own course content and have the freedom to design their courses as they wish as long as course objectives are met. However, university committees are responsible for approving the curriculum.
- **Nancy Rogers, Music** – Questioned whether it is an overstep for a department chair to ask that their faculty submit syllabi with revisions of how diversity has since been included along with a copy of their original syllabus for comparison. Provost McRorie responded that the request should likely have come from a university-wide committee so as not to be top-down. However, syllabi are public record, meaning that a department chair is able to request access to any syllabi same as any Florida citizen.

**IX. University Welfare**

**a. United Faculty of Florida, Florida State University Chapter, Matthew Lata**

- The United Faculty has engaged in two levels of bargaining: regular contract negotiations and impact bargaining involving issues related to the pandemic.
- **Scott Hannahs** – Spoke on how negotiations between the Board of Trustees and Union negotiators took some steps backwards in their most recent meeting. Progress has been substantially slowed by a procedural need to discuss regular contract negotiations and impact negotiations at completely separate meetings, leading to stalls in agreement. However, in earlier talks a proposal to make last year’s bonus will now become a permanent raise to base salary.
- **Irene Padavic** – Questioned the mistrust in the faculty that the Board of Trustees negotiators seem to express in the negotiations for impact bargaining.

**X. Announcements by Deans and other Administrative Officers**

- **Kim Barber, University Registrar** – Encouraged faculty to review the attendance policy for the fall semester.

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

**Eric Chicken**

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Eric Chicken  
Faculty Senate President

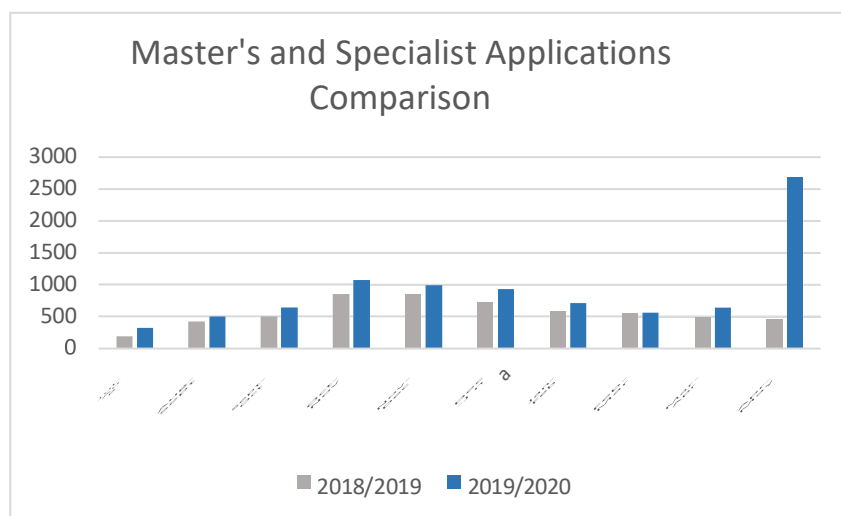
### GRE and GMAT Waiver Continuation Proposal: Updated July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the FSU Graduate School continued to monitor trends within our own graduate enrollment in March and April. Additionally the Graduate School participated in national teleconferences with organizations and a testing agency. After extensive research on online entrance exams and the competitive admissions landscape, the Graduate School developed a policy for the waiver of the GRE and GMAT for Master's and Specialist applicants and sought the approval of the Graduate Policy Committee and the Faculty Senate. The policy was approved by both entities in April 2020, and went into effect on April 22, 2020.

While many states have begun to reopen various industries, in-person testing sites are still in the process of opening and are not readily accessible to Florida residents, and many students may still be reluctant to enter a testing location due to the risk of exposure to COVID-19. According to ETS's website search for testing sites and dates, only Georgia and Alabama results show for Tallahassee and Pensacola. No in-person testing sites were listed for Jacksonville, Gainesville, Orlando, or Miami. Additionally, since entrance exams went to at-home versions the graduate community has experienced issues they are still causing at-home tests to have various attributes that make the test cumbersome for test takers. While ETS has found a solution to allow for Macs to be used, other requirements may still be barriers for students such as the exclusion of tablets. Items like the GMAT's whiteboard feature (to do the required math calculations) have been a source of confusion and frustration for the test takers as a Matt Symonds (2020, April 24) *Forbes'* article stated because the math has to be done with your finger on touch screen computers as you are not allowed to have paper.

In the month following the GPC and Faculty Senate approval (April 22-May 21), the Graduate School saw the following statistics for Master's and Specialist Applications.

As Figure 1 illustrates for last year, typically we see an arc of applications peaking towards the middle of the cycle with our biggest period of Master's and Specialist applications between October and January. With the passing of the testing waiver, our intake in the later part of the cycle changed significantly over the one month period since the waiver.



**Figure 1: Master's and Specialist applications from the 22<sup>nd</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup> of each month in 2018/2019 vs 2019-2020.**

## Proposal for Consideration:

***Extend the current GRE and GMAT waiver for Master's and Specialist applicants to the Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Fall 2021 application cycles. This will allow applicants to get through the pandemic, and the associated Phase restrictions, without having to be hindered by an online entrance exam. This will also allow programs that have only Spring or Summer cycles, along with the 67 program plans that had deadlines prior to the waiver being enacted, to take advantage of the waiver. As was the case for Fall 2020 applications, departments may continue to advise certain applicants that they want to use the GRE or GMAT as an evaluation tool, and ask that they submit it as part of the Optional Documents in the student's application checklist.***

***\* The College of Business asked to be excluded from the GRE/GMAT waiver extension, per the request of the Academic Dean. Dr. Hartline cited a number of reasons for this which included, the increased availability of the GMAT test and that it does not limit usable technology like the GRE; that the GMAT does provide a strong measure of potential performance his faculty deem useful and that GMAT scores are used in almost all ranking methodologies; that the fall waiver had increased their applications by 400% and they had already increased their online MBA admissions from 95 to 430 students this fall, plus their part-time on-campus MBA has doubled in size. Thus, as a college, they are simply over capacity right now and cannot effectively support additional students in spring or summer.***

This extension proposal has been discussed with the Provost. She is supportive and in favor of us moving forward. It has also been discussed with the Deans who voted unanimously in its favor, however subsequently, on July 9<sup>th</sup> just before the GPC vote, Dean Hartline requested the College of Business be excluded for the reasons given above, see \*.

**July 27<sup>th</sup> Update:** It was realized that it would be prudent, given the trajectory of the COVID-19 statistics and continued restrictions associated with the testing centers, that "Fall 2021" be added into the above proposal language. On July 24<sup>th</sup>, the Provost and the Deans voted unanimously in favor of this addition.

## References:

Symonds, M. (2020, April 24). *What MBA candidates need to know about the online GMAT*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattsymonds/2020/04/24/what-mba-candidates-need-to-know-about-the-online-gmat/#52b1b16b37c5>

GRE General Test at Home (2020, June 17). <https://www.ets.org/s/cv/gre/at-home/>

GRE Find Test Centers and Dates (2020, June 17). <https://ereg.ets.org/ereg/public/workflowmanager/workflow?workflowItemId=tcAvailability>



To: FSU Faculty Senate Steering Committee

From: FSU Distance Learning Committee

RE: Partial Suspension of Online Instruction Rules for Fall Semester 2020

Date: July 1, 2020

Traditionally, Florida State University has had a clearly defined distance learning policy and implementation process. As a part of that process, the appropriate FSU Faculty Senate Committees have been and continue to be responsible for approval of online courses and programs offered by the university. Both undergraduate and graduate courses are subject to established university criteria after receiving approval from within the sponsoring department and/or college. Once courses are established, the faculty assume primary responsibility for exercising oversight, through their respective committees, of distance learning courses. Online courses and programs are subject to the same institutional effectiveness practices as traditional course offerings. In typical times these policies and practices have served FSU and the faculty well. However, with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we are currently operating in an environment that certainly cannot be described as typical. As the University moved from in-person instruction to remote learning (often referred to as “online” teaching) this past spring, faculty were subjected to a host of challenges as they valiantly worked to reconfigure classes to a remote-teaching structure. At the outset, the typical perception was that the university was moving to “online” teaching. This created an environment where following the traditional rules and guidelines became impractical relative to the timeline for conversion and the process became overwhelming and confusing for both faculty and administrators. As we move through the summer and into the fall semester, our already confusing and uncertain teaching environment will continue to evolve at an accelerated pace. Because of this, the FSU Distance Learning Committee (DLC) recommends a partial suspension of a portion of the **Distance Learning Policy and Process (DLPP)** manual, effective upon approval by the Faculty Senate, through the end of fall semester 2020. This suspension would be re-evaluated by the faculty and administration in fall semester 2020 for possible extension into spring 2021.

Specifically, the DLC is recommending that the following portion of the DLPP manual be suspended regarding “remote” courses (versus “online” courses):

#### **Governance and Curriculum**

**The appropriate Faculty Senate Committee is responsible for approval of courses and programs offered by the university. Both undergraduate and graduate courses are subject to criteria established by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (FSCC) after receiving approval from within the sponsoring department and/or college. All new courses are subject to review, approval, and recommendation by either the undergraduate or graduate policy committees. The FSCC must approve all new courses. Both courses and programs, especially those offered by distance learning, must comply with the criteria established by SACSCOC.**

The DLC is recommending that this review requirement be waived for fall semester 2020 for courses intended for face-to-face delivery but are temporarily offered remotely due to the current emergency situation. Essentially, this means that courses converted from in-person courses to remote courses will not be subject to approval by the appropriate university committees. Approval would rest inside each department/college. This waiver would not apply to any new courses in the fall being proposed as “online” or distance learning courses. These courses would still be subject to the usual review requirements.

For clarification, the University Registrar’s Office offers the following definitions and distinction between online courses and remote courses.

**Distance learning or online courses designed and intended exclusively for online delivery. These courses often have an additional charge (distance learning fee) to offset the costs of designing and delivering the course. These costs include things that are not typically associated with traditional classroom instruction, such as instructional designers, specialized training, media production services, lab software, and teaching assistants trained to support students in an online environment.**

**Remote courses are courses that are traditionally offered face-to-face. This is not something we normally do or offer and these only came into existence as a result of COVID -19. We have done much smaller variations on this in response to hurricanes but nothing on this scale. FSU does not assess a distance learning fee for remote courses. Although additional expenses have been incurred to deliver these courses remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, FSU is absorbing these costs in order to prevent students from paying additional, unexpected fees for courses that would not typically have them.**

The DLC recognizes that this partial suspension raises several questions and issues that should be addressed and clarified.

(1) With this partial policy suspension, it is important to make a clear distinction between distance learning (“online”) courses (which are approved by the UCC and coded as DL) and "remote" courses, which are courses intended for face-to-face delivery but are temporarily offered remotely due to the current emergency situation. For in-person courses that have moved or are moving temporarily to a remote format, the DLC recommends that they not be required to go through the normal UCC and Liberal Studies review process. Courses developed and submitted as “true” Distance Learning courses would remain subject to the normal UCC and Liberal Studies review process.

(2) The DLC would highlight the importance of carefully maintaining traditional course coding. This would minimize confusion and could help protect students that are required to have a certain number of in-person courses, such as international students. It is the DLC’s understanding that the registrar's office has made a distinction between DL and remote courses in its system.

(3) Given the health environment in March 2020, the DLC recognized that the University had no choice in going to remote teaching in the spring and summer semesters and continuing into fall semester 2020. However, the DLC would emphasize that this action is temporary, was done with implicit faculty approval, and as the health crisis subsides, expects the process to return to strict faculty control. The DLC recognizes that faculty have primary control over curriculum, including the extent to which instruction is delivered in-person in the traditional fashion versus online or remote.

(4) The DLC would remind departments/colleges, per the **Distance Learning Policy and Process** manual: “It is the responsibility of the peer review curriculum committees at department/school/college level to determine the appropriate and academically justified number of contact hour equivalents assigned to each element of the proposed alternate delivery variant of a class.”

(5) The DLC would recommend that departments review their courses that are temporarily being taught in a remote format to ensure that they are at the usual level of rigor, engagement, etc. Also, the DLC would remind departments that all online courses, whether permanent or temporary, or formally or informally approved, must still comply with all accreditation requirements.

(6) For anyone desiring to review the **Distance Learning Policy and Process** manual, the link is:

[https://odl.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2391/files/media/PDFs/FSU%20Distance%20Learning%20Policy\\_April2019.pdf](https://odl.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2391/files/media/PDFs/FSU%20Distance%20Learning%20Policy_April2019.pdf).

The general link to ODL is: <https://odl.fsu.edu/about-odl>.

Respectively submitted,

G. Stacy Sirmans, Chair  
FSU Distance Learning Committee