

**Report to the FSU Faculty Senate  
From the  
FSU Distance Learning Committee  
For the Academic Year 2016-2017**

**The University Distance Learning Committee (DLC) consists of the following members (with their terms):**

2013-2016: G. Stacy Sirmans, Business, Chair

2014-2017: Charles Hinnant, College of Information

2015-2018: Chris Lacher, Arts and Sciences

**Other Members:**

Eric Chicken, Arts and Sciences, UPC Chair

Lee Stepina, GPC Chair

Liz Jakubowski, Education, UCC Chair

**Ex officio Members:**

Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee (TBA, Associate VP for Academic Affairs)

Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement or designee

Director, Office of Distance Learning

**The Charge of the Distance Learning Committee:**

The Distance Learning Committee shall provide policy development, oversight, and academic advice specific to the design and implementation of Distance Learning courses and degree programs. In particular, the committee will have the following responsibilities.

- i. To propose to the Senate procedures and standards for authorization to offer courses and programs by delivery methods other than standard classroom delivery, and for enduring quality control of such course and program offerings.
  - ii. To monitor the effectiveness with which the procedures and standards and standards adopted are being implemented.
  - iii. To propose to the Senate modifications to existing standards and procedures as appropriate.
- This committee will supplement, not supplant, the functions of other existing committees.

After a very busy 2015-2016 academic year, the Distance Learning Committee did not hold any formal meetings over the academic year 2016-2017. However, ODL has been busy working on several major projects that relate to previous DLC discussions: (1) the transition to Canvas that was discussed by the DLC within the BOG Strategic Plan for Online Education and voted on by the LMS Feasibility Workgroup and (2) the policy review and possible transition to fully online evaluations. One possible upcoming discussion topic for the DLC is the possibility of offering online proctoring services as an alternative to the testing center.

The DLC stands ready to meet if the need arises and we will be working with the faculty senate president to set an agenda and determine discussion items for the coming year. If the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, faculty senators, faculty members at large, or others have issues that they feel should be brought before the DLC, please send them to me.

The DLC met twice over the academic year 2015-2016 and addressed a number of issues and proposals, some of which are ongoing and are currently being implemented. The DLC stands ready to meet if problems arise that should be resolved by the committee. The list of the topics that we addressed include:

A. Review of the DL Policy Handbook adopted by the faculty senate in 2012.

Committee members reviewed the DL Policy Handbook and offered revisions.

a. Contact Hour Requirements.

The Committee agreed to expand the section of the DL Policy Handbook to further define the contact hour requirement and to develop an appendix containing examples of appropriate methods for achieving online contact hours. The Curriculum Request Application (CRA) was updated to include a drop-down selection of appropriate contact hour methods.

b. Three-year Course Review/Renewal Requirement.

The Committee agreed to maintain the current 3-year renewal requirement for online course review of methods of instruction (formerly Form 2, now CRA).

c. Evaluation of Online Courses

ODL has purchased an application called “Evaluation Kit” to replace the legacy system for distributing and collecting SPCI. Currently, two course evaluation instruments are available to accommodate either paper or electronic administration:

Paper-based: Student Perception of Courses and Instructors (SPCI)

Electronic: electronic Student Perception of Courses and Instructors (eSPCI)

The ODL Assessment & Testing Unit will continue to support the paper-based option through 2016 but will transition to the new electronic distribution strategy replacing the failing legacy system that is built on antiquated technology.

There was discussion about concerns regarding low response rates and the possibility of offering student incentives for completion of online evaluations – extra credit and/or entry for a prize drawing were suggested.

It was also suggested that the FS Evaluation Committee take up this topic when (if) they meet. Meanwhile, ODL is proceeding with installing and configuring the new application, is running a pilot and will keep this Committee informed. ODL will also keep all FSU instructors advised as to any new options and Bb integrations associated with the new evaluation tool.

B. Online course tuition.

The committee consensus was for ODL to put on its Webpage an explanation of why tuition is different from in-person classes and why fees are charged for online classes. The following language was added to the ODL Website at <http://distance.fsu.edu>.

C. QER and Online Classes.

Lee Stepina agreed to send ODL and the Committee members the list of metrics for evaluating online graduate programs, as per the QER Committee. There was discussion regarding current methods of course quality evaluation across the SUS and as described in the SUS 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education.

D. Review of SUS 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education.

Committee Members reviewed the plan and discussed the current methods of course quality evaluation across the SUS and as described in the Plan. The committee also discussed the data collection metrics in the plan that requires tracking online student “success” in the workplace as well as planned comparisons of online to face-to-face course successful completion rates.

E. Restriction on online recruiting and marketing.

A list of restrictions by state is updated continually and is available on the ODL website at <https://distance.fsu.edu/students/state-authorization-status>.

F. Awareness issue.

Students who are in arrears with Student Business Services previously were blocked from Blackboard access per Registrar’s Office policy, causing concern with instructors who could no longer see that student’s registration and activity in the course. The ODL Bb Unit has programmed the system to notify instructors when their students’ status changes and instructors can still access that student’s activity prior to and after the access is again granted. This was discussed and the issue is resolved within the Blackboard LMS.

Thanks to all the members of this committee for their willingness to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

G. Stacy Sirmans

J. Harold and Barbara M. Chastain Eminent Scholar in Real Estate