

MSU Distance Education Committee Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2018

DEC Meeting Minutes from September 13, 2018, were approved.

Report – Current numbers of stipend applicants and courses in development

At this time, there are 33 online course stipend applicants developing 35 courses for a total of 103 credit hours. There are four developers who have completed development (for a total of 16 credit hours) and are approved for stipend budget transfers in January 2019.

Distance Education Policy Handbook:

The Handbook update is ready for committee review. Lacey gave a brief overview of title page changes and updated sections. It meets accessibility requirements, and hyperlinks are inserted as the actual IP address. A PDF copy will be emailed to DEC members for review this week. Any suggestions or requests for additional items to add to the Handbook should be sent to Lacey Geiger by November 1. On November 8, the Handbook will be presented to the committee for a final approval vote.

Adobe Connect:

The Adobe Connect contract will not be renewed for FY20. Few faculty are actively using the program, and other resources, such as Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate, are superior tools. There have been several preliminary rounds of eliminating inactive users. The information regarding the end of Adobe Connect and timeline for data retrieval will be shared by email to listed users and will be posted repeatedly in university communications, including Inside Missouri State newsletters and Blackboard Online Faculty Community. Options to facilitate closing out course materials stored in the Adobe Connect included emailing listed users to ask if they wanted to retrieve and save their data. Faculty would need permissions changed in order to access and download their materials. An alternative would be packaging the data and sending it to faculty for their review and disposal.

Student Survey Development Committee:

The online student survey was reviewed with consideration of standardizing response sequences, adding a “Not Applicable” column, and meeting accessibility standards. The questions did not change, and the response selection numbers remain as 1 = worst score, 5 = best score. Handouts were given to the committee of the survey samples ordered *question, columns ranked 1 to 5, Not Applicable, and question, columns ranked 5 to 1, Not Applicable*. A screenshot of a mobile device display of a survey question was shared, noting that all selections and header titles were viewable with each question.

Eleven of the sixteen committee members were present. Committee co-chair called for voice vote on adding “Not Applicable” to the online student survey response categories.

The committee voted unanimously to add the Not Applicable response category to the answer scale.

Committee co-chair called for voice vote on adopting a standardized sequence to use in surveys of placing response scoring in numerical order of five to one and Not Applicable.

The committee voted unanimously to adopt the format with the 5 = best score column placed immediately after the question, followed by 4, 3, 2, 1, and Not Applicable as the last column on the right.

The Student Survey Development Committee was charged with reviewing response category headers and placing the complete text description with each number. Current choice shows: Completely Agree (5), 4, 3, 2, Do Not Agree at All (1), Not Applicable. Example of label change: “5 - Strongly Agree” replacing “Completely Agree (5).” A selection of score header text descriptions will be presented for discussion and vote in November.

DEC Agenda Development Advisory Committee:

This committee met on October 3 and presented a bullet list of discussion topics to the Office of the Provost. The list was reviewed, and items were prioritized and returned for committee discussion. An outlined prioritized list was handed out to committee members. Items that were given top priority were: 1) updating the DEC web site, and 2) updating the Distance Education Policy Handbook. These were already in progress, with the web site review and updates approximately 75% complete, and the Handbook revisions completed and ready for committee review.

Priority list continued:

- 3) Develop and implement effective communication strategies for sharing information about online courses and online program development efforts with the university community. Inside Missouri State newsletters and Blackboard Online Faculty Community are standard avenues for sharing information. DEC members were encouraged to actively share information with the deans and department heads in their colleges by whatever manner was most effective for their units.
- 4) Review the online course evaluation surveys. The Student Survey Development Committee continues with assigned tasks. A pilot program using EvaluationKIT surveys for seated courses is in progress within CNAS. The Provost would like to have data sets for comparison for online, blended and seated courses.
- 5) Continue review and discussion of potential changes in stipend funding structure to include course re-development and building more online programs at the departmental level. One suggestion is to offer stipend funds to faculty when existing online courses are re-developed to utilize newer technology and improve the quality of course content, with the stipulated interval of no less than three years between redevelopment cycles. The committee is asked to consider developing protocol for distribution of a development stipend across multiple developers.

The FCTL has funding for grant proposals, with award funds to be split equally between faculty and their department. NOFA and application forms will be available soon.

- 6) The Provost has asked for the development of a template with standardized criteria based in HLC Accreditation Standards for use during departmental reviews of online programs. Deans and department heads will be part of the process to create a standard format and assessment questions for use across all colleges. This work could be initiated through the Assessment Committee. A suggestion was made to contact Keri Franklin as a first step.
- 7) Develop a best practices or Distance Education policy regarding synchronous class time requirements for online courses.

The FCTL is conducting a survey of faculty and students regarding technologies used to offer online courses and perceptions of the level of support service required to achieve quality standards for teaching or taking online classes. An older survey exists to provide comparison data.

Marketing of Missouri State online programs continues. It was suggested to focus more marketing efforts in the Hospitality Leadership online program. Another focus could be a more internal marketing approach, and eventually have every department offer one online program, with external marketing pushed as programs are developed.

Discussion: Registration for online courses:

The current registration process requires manually coding students as 100% online in order to register for courses offered only online. In the current system, reserve seating rules and wait listing cannot be applied to online course sections at the same time. The goal is to offer sufficient access for on-campus students to take some online courses and provide full access for distance students. Implementing the Core42 with 100% online completion will require a capacity to expand and contract the number of sections offered as enrollment numbers change. It was suggested a research committee be formed to review and assess options for changing registration policies and procedures.

Some research will be needed to assess major infrastructure components required to deliver and receive online class content, such as the bandwidth capacity of the university and bandwidth availability in rural areas. The Blackboard SaaS expanded the capacity for more online courses. Research of newer technology and software programs for distance education delivery is an ongoing process.

Additional information and sub-committee reports will be shared in the DEC November meeting.

Attendees: Jessica Bennett, Ching-Wen Chang, Lacey Geiger, Stephanie Hein, Chuck Hermans, Richard Johnson, Krista Lair, Jeff Morrissey, Joye Norris, Christi Sudbrock, David White