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DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of the October 6, 2010 Meeting

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Meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

Attendees: Art Spisak (late), Neal Callahan, Deanne Camp, Chantal Levesque-Bristol, Betty Evans, Pam Trewatha, Rose Utley, Jeff Morrissey, Steve Robinette (left early), Bill Piston, Gary Rader, John Bourhis
Absent: David White
Guests: Nancy Gordon, Chuck Busby

Website Discussion (Chuck Busby)

The DEC website was discussed. A link to the FCTL website on the homepage, along with a FAQ link was suggested. A FAQs list will be provided at a later meeting for discussion. An opportunity for faculty to provide feedback on the website will be provided in the future. A change of text on the home page to signify that distance education was not necessarily viewed as an alternative form of education anymore was suggested. It was also suggested to add a blog to the website that would alert subscribers to news in the distance education arena.

Review of the "Readiness Checklist"/suggestions (handout)

Several wording changes were recommended. The committee felt the current draft was good and ready to move forward to the Provost.

There was considerable discussion after approval of the checklist to identify what entity would be using the checklist and how feedback to faculty developers would be used and provided, whether for a new course offering or in reviewing an existing online course. After discussion, it was concluded that direct evaluation and feedback should not be done by FCTL, other than as part of the development process. The final checklist evaluation after development, prior to payment would probably best rest with Dr. Rader. There was concern about timeliness; being able to evaluate the courses via the checklist before payment requires that the courses be ready prior to the start of the semester. It was mentioned that in time, the whole checklist process could be done online via Banner. When requirements have been met, the course will be processed for instructor payment. Inversely, if requirements are not met, the instructor will be directed to gain assistance from FCTL. The main purpose of the guidelines for online education is to assure uniformity. It was suggested that courses that are not ready, or do not meet all the requirements prior to the deadline not be allowed to be offered/taught that semester.

In terms of reviewing existing online courses, it was suggested that a peer review group be developed that would be available to evaluate courses per departmental request. Additional suggestions were made that positive evaluations would be provided to the faculty member, while reviews that indicated checklist requirements were not being met would be provided to the department head as well as the faculty member.

Letter of Agreement regarding Online and Blended Course Development and Redevelopment (handout)

The new draft of the letter of agreement for faculty requesting to develop or redevelop an online or blended course was discussed. In light of today's discussion, the wording needs amending in regards to the Quality Review process, and will be provided at the next meeting. It was suggested that in addition to the review issues, that the stipend text be revised to indicate that the payment is $2400 for 3 credit-hours, and is pro-rated for courses with more or fewer credit-hours. It was also suggested that wording might be included to indicate that courses will not be taught if they do not meet the checklist requirements. It was suggested that the one-year or two-year development time should not always be required, particularly for new faculty who may have taught a quality online course elsewhere, and wish to continue to do so here.

Future Business

The revised Letter of Agreement and possible list of FAQs for the DEC website will be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Pamela B. Trewatha, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Agriculture