

DATE: April 26, 2007

TO: Humboldt State University Curriculum Committee (UCC)

FROM: Nancy L. Hurlbut,  
Faculty Associate for Distance Education and Member UCC  
Convener, Distance Education Subcommittee

RE: Distance Education Subcommittee Annual Report

The Distance Education (DE) Subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) has functioned as advisory to the part-time DE Faculty Associate who chaired the meetings. The subcommittee meetings were open to any member of the HSU campus and met on a biweekly basis. In addition, committee members communicated through a DE moodle site developed and maintained by the DE Faculty Associate.

#### Members of the DE Subcommittee

The following faculty and staff attended the meetings and/or interacted on the moodle site on a regular basis:

*Sally Botzler*—Faculty Development Coordinator (Fall semester) & College of Professional Studies Associate Dean (Spring semester)  
*Chrisian Itin*—UCC (College of Professional Studies' faculty)  
*Mary Kay*—Library: Information Services  
*Sharon Tuttle*—Department of Computing Science (College of Natural Resources & Sciences' faculty)  
*Riley Quarles*—Interim Manager of Instructional Media Services (Information Technology Services Administration)  
*Eric Van Duzer*—UCC Chair (College of Professional Studies' faculty)  
*Joan Van Duzer*---College of Professional Studies Informational Technology Consultant  
*Jeanne Wielgus*—Academic Computing (Information Technology Services)

Others consistently received information about the work of the advisory group and/or attended the meetings occasionally. These included:

*Jená Burges*—Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Undergraduate Studies  
*Carl Hansen*---Director for Extended Education  
*Jeremy Ketelsen*---Media Production Specialist (Instructional Media Services)  
*Todd Stone*---Courseware Development Center (Instructional Media Services)

The DE Faculty Associate made numerous attempts to find a student member and to encourage a member of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences to attend the meetings but those interested could not fit the meeting times into their schedule. A goal for next year will be to have a faculty representative from each college as well as a student representative.

## Overview of Activities

The subcommittee under the leadership of the DE Faculty Associate has worked simultaneously on multiple components necessary for designing distance education degree and certificate programs. The committee members expanded the “Five Components of Good Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs” (WASC, 2005) into six components and used these six components as a guide to its work. The six components are:

1. Institutional Context and Commitment
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Faculty Support
4. Student Support
5. Evaluation and Assessment
6. [Marketing]

### *Institutional Context and Commitment*

A primary objective of the DE Faculty Associate was to facilitate the development of a DE infrastructure for Humboldt State University (HSU). We worked to get a picture of what is happening at HSU at present and to strengthen faculty and staff awareness/observance of present DE policies. One of the main challenges with the tasks was the continual need to “put out fires” due to the lack of infrastructure at HSU. As a result of these needs, the DE Faculty Associate in collaboration with the DE UCC Advisory Subcommittee, the Director of Extended Education, and the Vice Provost created a grid to guide the work of the Faculty Associate in relationship to resources. The working grid can be found in Appendix A. A goal for the next year is to use this grid as a guideline for work and to proceed to level two on the grid. In order to proceed beyond level one on the grid, a second goal must be to increase HSU commitment to Distance Education through more focused internal funding that supports faculty development, course transformation, the office of DE as well as through external grants.

A second task completed was a DE survey sent to department chairs to scan HSU department offerings in DE. A follow-up survey is presently being conducted to fully understand the data discovered in the first survey and to better define which courses are DE and which fall into another category. The survey questions can be found in Appendix B, the follow-up survey can be found in Appendix C, and the results can be found in Appendix D.

In order to develop the survey, lively discussion revolved around the multiple definitions of a distance education course. The following *definitions* were adapted from material in the WASC Substantive Change Manual (WASC, 2005, p. 11-16) and University of Wisconsin Distance Learning website [[http://distancelearning.wisconsin.edu/about\\_distance\\_learning.htm](http://distancelearning.wisconsin.edu/about_distance_learning.htm)] and were agreed upon by the DE Advisory Committee.

- ***Distance courses:*** Planned teaching/learning in which the instructor and students are separated by physical distance, using internet, video conference, satellite, other technology-mediated delivery modes, or print.

- **Type of course**
  - **Fully distance course:** Entire class through distance except the first class which may be face-to-face in order to instruct on course format, etcetera.
  - **Blended course:** Some combination of on-campus and distance delivery mode or on campus and off-campus (e.g., 20 % distance delivery mode and 80% face-to-face).
- **Type of delivery**
  - **Asynchronous distance courses:** No set class time or day; often specified time to complete work (e.g., within a week).
  - **Synchronous distance courses:** Classes (distance or face-to-face) meet at set time and day (e.g., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:00).
- **Off-campus courses:** Course is taught more than 25 miles from HSU home campus (This is a separate category from distance unless it uses technology as described in distance courses above; however, this category will likely need a substantive change application with WASC).
- **Technology enhanced face-to-face courses** in which the faculty meets the class for the entire seat time and uses internet, *PowerPoint*, moodle, etc. is **NOT** defined as a distance course.
- **Correspondence courses** in which the faculty send out materials for the student to complete and the student returns tests or other predetermined items and there is none/or little interaction between the faculty and the students. The course is not technology mediated. This is **NOT** defined as a distance course.

#### *Curriculum and Instruction*

Item 2 in HSU's General University Policy on Distance Education, an Academic Senate Resolution signed by HSU's president October, 2006, (<http://www.humboldt.edu/~acadsen/Resolution27-05-06-EXAttachment1APPROVED.doc>) proffers policies related to the process of proposing and implementing new DE courses. The policy requires that all new DE courses proceed through the existing curriculum new course/change curriculum process. The policy also requires that the Office of DE provide training in sound instructional design to the curriculum committees. As a result, the Faculty Associate prepared materials to present to the dean's council of chairs in the three colleges and the library in order to alert the faculty of the requirements for DE. She has presented to all colleges and has a time to present to the library. The Faculty Associate was also available for training and support to the college curriculum committees. She has worked with the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Services Curriculum Committee and is available for further work with all curriculum committees.

The DE advisory committee spent many hours working on criteria to share with the curriculum committees. These are close to being completed and are under the assessment component of this report.

The DE Faculty Associate in consultation with the DE Advisory Committee explored HSU DE programs with respect to whether they needed to be accredited by WASC. It was decided at this

time, we do not have any DE programs that need to be accredited by WASC; there is only one program for which the answer is still a bit unclear. The WASC accreditation criteria were determined through the substantive change criteria (WASC, 2005) and through numerous email interactions with the Christie Jones, Assistant Director for Research and Substantive Change for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

One issue that needs to be discussed in the UCC is “how to determine *seat-time*” in DE courses and how to determine the course unit load (i.e. the WTU and SCU). A suggestion discussed by the advisory group is to look at a course in terms of student learning outcomes as a way to determine course unit load instead of student seat time. A goal for next year is to work on the definition of “*seat time*” and unit load value for DE courses. It is important that we discuss, at the UCC and Academic Senate, how to determine what is a “WTU” or “SCU,” especially in DE courses.

#### *Faculty Support*

The support for faculty revolved mostly around four areas. The DE Faculty Associate organized and administered travel for six faculty to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Sloan-C International Conference on Online Learning in Orlando, Florida. Extended Education generously paid for the travel. Although the conference was worth attending, it is not recommended for future unless there is an increase in funding for DE. Since there is no administrative support for the DE Faculty Associate, the amount of time it took to organize the hotels, air, registration, and to deal with emergencies was not an effective use of the Faculty Associate’s release time. Also, the money for travel could be better spent on facilitating course development.

A second area of faculty support was created by offering opportunities for workshops. The workshops included one by Hurlbut (September, 2006) and one by Ragan (January, 2007). A third area was through trouble shooting and facilitating faculty needs upon their requests. One example is the School of Business’ request for webinars. The Faculty Associate worked with the chair of the School of Business and the Interim Manager of Instructional Media Services to facilitate the use of webinars for Business. During Spring 2007 and Summer 2007, the staff at the Instructional Media Services is testing webinars to determine the cost, quality, and feasibility of using webinars at HSU. One of the goals for next year will be to analyze the economic feasibility and the quality of webinars for HSU courses.

Another faculty support is the DE moodle site created by the Distance Education Faculty Associate. This site has numerous resources on Best Practices and Assessment, Workshops and presentations, HSU and CSU policies and resources, literature and reports, and external links to DE websites. The moodle site is used by the DE Advisory Committee as well as individual faculty who wanted information on DE. The material on this site will be moved to the DE website once the website is completed.

One important change that needs to be incorporated into any DE course is Accessible Technology so that DE conforms to the Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI). The DE Faculty Associate has worked on one of the ATI task forces in order to support accessible technology (AT) in all future DE. In fact, universal accessibility is one of the seven categories on the assessment guide under development by the DE advisory committee. As such, faculty development in the area of AT needs to be a high priority for DE next year and this development should be coordinated with the Faculty Associate for Professional Development and the ATI task force members.

Next year, the focus of the DE Advisory Committee and the Faculty Associate needs to focus more attention on faculty development opportunities. It is recommended that the DE Faculty Associate work with the Faculty Associate for Professional Development to offer faculty training. Also, there needs to be more HSU support to facilitate faculty and instructional course designers work to transform courses into distance technology.

#### *Student Support*

The advisory committee and Faculty Associate did not work directly on this component this year. It did continually use the guiding principle of “supporting students in a distance environment” when creating standards, best practices, policies, and best practices. Once DE courses and programs become more developed, the component of student support will move to the foreground.

#### *Evaluation and Assessment*

A guideline that can be used as a standard to assess sound instructional design is almost complete. The guideline was adapted from CSU, Chico’s Rubric for Online Instruction (2002) and Van Duzer’s (2004) Instructional Design Tips for Online Instruction. The working draft can be found in Appendix F. The criteria for sound instructional design are just a guideline that is designed around seven basic categories that represent criteria to guide assessment of DE courses. These criteria are followed by best practice tips that can be used to facilitate an understanding of what is meant by the categories and criteria. The seven basic categories are:

1. *Category 1* - Learner Support and Resources
2. *Category 2* – Online organization and design
3. *Category 3* – Instructional Design and Delivery
4. *Category 4* – Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning
5. *Category 5* - Appropriate and Effective Use of Technology
6. *Category 6* – Faculty Use of Student Feedback
7. *Category 7*– Universal accessibility

A goal for next year is to pilot these criteria with HSU faculty and curriculum committees and to revise as needed.

The DE advisory committee worked to increase the chances that HSU’s policies were followed and that standardized course evaluations for DE courses were used as some faculty were not approaching DE student evaluations in a way that was consistent with the requirements for RTP. The committee slightly revised the standardized set of course evaluations questions so that they could be used by those who teach fully distance courses. The procedures to complete these online course evaluations were reactivated and the policy related to online course evaluations was summarized in writing and shared with the Academic Senate and Provost and received approval to proceed. These were then shared with the deans and academic chairs at the council of dean’s meetings.

#### *Marketing*

HSU DE marketing is in its infancy. The DE Faculty Associate with support of the Courseware Development Center worked on a Website for HSU DE; however, it was not seen as a strong enough design for attracting students. As such, the provost is supporting a redesign of the website by HSU Web Office and graphics. The goal now is to have it complete and up before Fall 2007 semester begins. This is another top priority goal.

The other primary form of marketing is active outreach to local communities. The DE Faculty Associate has coordinated meetings with the Hoopa Public Schools, Crescent City, and the Hoopa Education Director.

The Vice Provost, Interim Manager of Instructional Media Services, and DE Faculty Associate met with Sarah Supanhan (with Hoopa Indian Education), Doug Oliveira (superintendent of the Hoopa public schools), and members from the Hoopa Tribe Professional Development Committee. The plan that resulted from this meeting was to offer the Hoopa area one American Indian Education (AIE) online course and possibly one online Child Development (CD) course for Fall 2007. These course areas were selected as these were the content areas the members of the Hoopa community indicated they needed. A follow-up meeting is in the process of being planned. This meeting will enroll students and discuss with the community what HSU can offer.

The DE Faculty Associate has also discussed DE possibilities with Gary R. Blatnick, Director Department of Health and Human Services in Crescent City. After talking with him, it was obvious that before working with Crescent City, HSU needed to coordinate our activities with the College of the Redwoods (CR) activities. As such, I am now working with a member of CR's administration on how to proceed. The potential for DE courses at Crescent will be quite complex. Over the next year, this relationship will need to be explored.

The Vice Provost and the DE Faculty Associate met with Marcellene Norton, Education Director for Hoopa Tribes, to learn about the possible Tribal College being considered by the Hoopa Nation. This meeting opened the communication among HSU and Hoopa Tribe about the Tribal College.

### Goals for Year Two

The following goals are suggested for the academic year 2007-2008.

1. Increase the membership on the DE advisory subcommittee to include a student representative and a faculty member from all three colleges.
2. Use the DE grid as a guideline for work and proceed to level two.  
A second goal must be to increase HSU commitment to Distance Education through more focused internal funding that supports faculty development, course transformation, and the office of DE as well as through external grants.
3. Continue monitoring HSU DE programs in terms of the requirements for WASC Substantive Change Accreditation.
4. Work on the definition of "seat time" and unit load value for DE courses.
5. Analyze the economic feasibility and the quality of webinars for HSU courses in order to determine if this technology is recommended for HSU.
6. Work with the Faculty Associate for Professional Development and the ATI task force members to provide faculty development in AT.
7. Work with the Faculty Associate for Professional Development to offer faculty training.
8. Pilot the Humboldt State University Criteria for Assessing Exemplary Online Courses and revise as needed.
9. Complete and load the DE website before Fall 2007 semester begins.
10. Continue the community partnership initiated in Year One.

## Resources

- CSU, Chico's Technology and Learning Program. *CSU, Chico's rubric for online instruction*. (2002). Retrieved August 20, 2006, from <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/onlineLearning/rubric/index.shtml>.
- Hurlbut, N. L. (September, 2006). *Distance education strategic planning workshop*. HSU: Sponsored by the Office of the Vice Provost.
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- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). (2005). *Substantive change manual: A guide to substantive change policies and procedures*. Retrieved August 20, 2006, from [http://www.wascenior.org/wasc/Doc\\_Lib/2005SCManual.pdf](http://www.wascenior.org/wasc/Doc_Lib/2005SCManual.pdf).
- Van Duzer, J. (2004). *Instructional design tips for online instruction*. Unpublished manuscript, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California.