

## **General University Policy on Distance Learning**

### **Preamble**

The experience of the CSU campuses that have successfully developed substantive distance learning offerings provides a context and a valuable resource for the efforts currently underway at HSU. Distance learning is a feature of the university's strategic plan in its current form. Distance learning can be seen as a valuable asset to a regional institution set in a remote location and in need of reaching divergent populations spread thinly across a broad region. However, as the experiences of other CSU campuses illustrate, piecemeal, voluntary efforts by early adopters and advocates of distance learning (DL) are unlikely to result in the substantive growth of these offerings in ways that can support the strategic needs of the university.

The common experience of successful CSU campuses is that a policy environment that includes incentives, stable ground rules, and broad support are essential to expanding DL offerings to a meaningful level. In order for a distance education program to have the best opportunity for success, it is essential that it has top level administrative involvement. The potential for a successful distance education program is enhanced when the President and Provost demonstrate their long-term commitment to ongoing financial and technical support and to the continuation of DL programs that may be developed for a period sufficient to enable students to complete a degree/certificate. The following policies are intended to create an environment that will encourage growth in DL offerings, while insuring that all parties interests are protected.

This Policy for the development of distance learning courses pertains only to courses in which the majority of the course is to be delivered through distance learning technology.

**The Academic Senate of Humboldt State University recommends the following policy document for the development and support of a distance learning component at HSU.**

#### **1. Policies related to policy procedures and the management of university resources.**

A university committee will be constituted that includes faculty, administration, staff, and student representation, and will be responsible for:

- a. Developing DL policies and procedures for encouraging and facilitating DL course development and offerings
- b. Providing advisory input to faculty proposing new DL courses
- c. Prioritizing the use of personnel and facilities in DL course development and implementation.

#### **2. Policies related to the process of proposing and implementing new DL courses.**

In addition to established curriculum approval procedures related to course proposals, DL course proposals must meet the following criteria:

- a. When proposing a distance learning course, the faculty member shall submit a budget delineating resources that will be supplied by the University to support the course. The University retains the right to refuse a budget that it feels does not accurately reflect the costs of the course development or that exceeds funding levels deemed appropriate or available for the project.
- b. All proposals for distance learning courses will include a plan that ensures academic integrity.

- c. Course proposals will address the following issues specific to DL: student access to learning resources and course materials, extent and manner of student-faculty and student-student interaction, and a class size consistent with course objectives and expected student outcomes.
- d. Course proposals will include a plan for review of the technological aspects of the course by a qualified evaluator to be selected by the faculty member and the academic unit. This evaluation will occur before the course is offered for the first time.
- e. Course evaluation plans will have the option of using either an online evaluation process, or a traditional paper and pencil evaluation, at the discretion of the department and instructor.
- f. Until such time as an intellectual property policy is adopted by HSU covering the use of copy written materials created for DL courses, proposals will include an explicit agreement covering the use of the DL materials for purposes beyond teaching the course at HSU.

### **3. Policies to develop an equitable agreement for the university and faculty.**

These policies do not apply to situations where persons have been paid to specifically create materials for the university with the explicit understanding that the materials are the sole property of the institution upon completion of the contract.

- a. When development of a course requires extraordinary institutional support the University and the faculty member will share ownership of the course materials as they relate to teaching the course.

Extraordinary institutional support is defined by situations wherein the institution incurs actual resource costs associated with the creation or delivery of a DL course that go above and beyond the normal costs of mounting traditional courses delivered without DL. Extraordinary support includes, but is not limited to, release time for the development of the course, time invested by other HSU employees, and equipment purchased exclusively to support the course in question. Extraordinary support does not include support that would be given towards traditional classes in the normal course of university business, for example: use of Blackboard or Moodle, technical support and equipment for smart classrooms, or the use of campus computer labs to write papers or perform calculations.

- b. Where course development requires extraordinary institutional support and the faculty member is subsequently separated from the University, the University and the faculty member both retain the right to use the materials developed for the teaching of the course.
- c. The originator retains all intellectual property rights to DL materials created without extraordinary institutional support.
- d. Intellectual property rights for further exploitation of the copyrighted materials created with extraordinary institutional support will be assigned according to the intellectual rights policies currently being negotiated by others within the university and the CSU. Until such policies are developed, an explicit intellectual property agreement covering exploitation of the materials for books, or other outside purposes will be a standard part of proposing DL courses that require support.

- e. The originator of the distance learning course material will have a “right of first refusal” to teach the DL course provided that the instructor is still employed by the University in the department where the course was developed. If the instructor chooses not to teach the course, the department will be free to choose another instructor to teach the course. This condition exists as long as the course remains substantially the intellectual work of the originator as it is delivered.
- f. Within the terms of the appointment of the faculty member or instructor, and within the teaching assignments made within departments, a faculty member that receives extraordinary institutional support to develop a DL course agrees to teach that course at least twice when scheduled by the department.
- g. The University will not sell, rent, or otherwise knowingly permit another organization to use a distance learning class without a written agreement with the originator to that effect. In the case of an agreement to exploit the course through outside sales, the proceeds of a course created at HSU without extraordinary support will belong solely to the originator. For courses that received extraordinary support the net profits will be distributed as follows until such time as the institution is fully compensated for its investment. After that, the proceeds will be the property of the originator.
  - i. 50% to the originator of the course
  - ii. 25% to the originator’s college, department, or University division
  - iii. 25% to the university
- h. While this set of guidelines reflects a standard of agreement between the University and a faculty member, alterations in the agreement can be negotiated. For example, it may be necessary to reflect rights already possessed by other entities, such as rights to some materials which are owned by a publisher with whom the faculty member has a preexisting contract. Any such differences must be explicitly stated in the project’s proposal. The University retains right of refusal to accept such an altered proposal.

#### **4. Required support and training for DL**

The Academic Senate of Humboldt State University considers on-going faculty support services specifically related to teaching via an electronic system and professional development for support staff to insure fluency and currency regarding distance education development issues as essential ingredients for a successful campus effort to develop a substantive DL program.

#### **5. Marketing guidelines**

- a. Advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials should clearly and accurately represent distance learning offerings, and be widely distributed via multiple methods of delivery, i.e. print media and online advertising that are easily accessible from HSU’s main web page in order to increase the likelihood of success of these courses.
- b. An online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page on costs, transferability, timing, and equipment, as well as information about online programs and how to contact an informed University representative who will answer any additional questions related to online and other distance learning offerings should be developed and maintained to improve the efficiency of DL offerings.

**6. Student services support guidelines**

- a. A method shall be developed to ensure that students enrolled in each distance learning course understand the requirements regarding the basic technological skills needed to undertake the program, and that they may need to access computer equipment with an internet connection, a television, or other equipment as required by the content delivery system. The schedule of classes shall indicate the technology and skill level necessary for the course.
- b. Offering DL courses requires the development and maintenance of a university infrastructure including on-line Admission, Registration, and Financial Aid, access to the Library resources, Help Desk support, tutoring and academic counseling, and the ability to purchase textbooks and other course materials.

***RATIONALES by section:***

1. *An evolving policy will be needed to address the distribution and prioritization of DL resources. A committee with broad representation including all of the key stakeholders should be formed to develop a process to prioritize the use of personnel and facilities in DL course development and to create a standard process for evaluating DL course development proposals.*
2. *While the process of proposing and evaluating courses at Humboldt State University is clearly set out in the Faculty Handbook, distance Learning courses present some unique challenges these areas as evidenced by surveys of distance learning practices in sister CSU institutions. Planning for success in addressing these issues is critical to the success of distance learning courses on the Humboldt State University campus.*
3. *The University, having invested resources to help create and support a distance learning course should retain a right to teach said course after its initial development. The University recognizes that protection of faculty intellectual property is necessary to encourage creative works. The University also recognizes that incentives are required to promote distance learning. The faculty, in turn, recognize that provision of additional resources for distance learning results in costs result in certain negotiated rights to these materials by the university.*
4. *It is important for instructors to develop new skills and roles with technology, but also to learn how to integrate these skills into their curriculum. Instructors often rely upon the technological currency of IT staff for both production services and software training as they engage in the courseware development process. Technology changes at such a rapid pace that it is imperative for faculty and staff alike to be offered regular professional development opportunities.*
5. *Distance education courses can be designed to adhere to the highest available standards and assessment rubrics, yet still fall short of reaching their enrollment goals without a comprehensive marketing strategy.*
6. *Providing effective services and resources to off-campus learners is a critical component of a distance education program. Since distance learning courses are expected to be held to the same excellent pedagogical practices found within the classroom, then it follows that every attempt should be made to insure that all traditional on-campus student services be made available to off-campus students as well.*