

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY
University Senate

Resolution on Adopting a University Policy on eLearning

09-16/17-APC - February 7, 2017 – Second Reading

RESOLVED: That the University Senate adopts the eLearning Quality Assurance policy and appendices.

RESOLVED: That the University Senate via the Provost will direct the College of eLearning and Extended Education to develop with faculty and administrative consultation standardized rates for eLearning course development and deliver the standardized rate schedule to the University Senate by March 30, 2017.

RATIONALE

The eLearning functions and services have substantially expanded without formal University Senate approved policy in place. On September 29, 2015, the Senate received for a first reading an eLearning policy and voted to “postpone” the supporting resolution and related documents. The Senate minutes reflect concerns about definitions of intellectual property, appropriate instructor compensation, clear review guidelines, advisory committee membership and language around “right of first refusal.”

Since that time, the College of eLearning and Extended Education (CEEE) modified the policy documents to address Senate concerns. On October 4, 2016, APC began review of the latest eLearning policy documents provided by CEEE. APC further and substantially changed the eLearning policy documents to address University Senate concerns of September 2015 and additional concerns brought forward by APC members during the course of deliberations. This policy reflects the outcomes of those discussions, as well as input from the Integrated Curriculum Committee (11-15-16) and the University Senate upon first reading (12-6-15). The APC also reviewed the recommendations for “campus policies related to online education” from the Commission of Online Education to the CSU Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs (6-22-16). The APC found that the eLearning Quality Assurance policy and this resolution address the recommendations in that memo.

POLICY LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE AMENDMENTS

During the course of soliciting feedback on the proposed eLearning policy, the APC received many requests for changes. The below issues were among the requests that remain unaddressed in the current policy. Without further substantial delay of an eLearning policy, we could not fully address the below concerns. The APC recommends continued work on amending the policy and related practices assuming some version of the currently proposed policy receives University Senate approval.

Budget: The APC notes with concern the self support (self contained) revenue stream of the CEEE, while the provision of services and some support for CEEE functions (e.g. student services, program assessment data and reporting) is financed through the stateside budget of the University. The budgetary framework and related agreements for financing those services are outside of the policy reach of the APC. By default or renegotiation, the University administration will set the budgetary policy that guides the future fiscal relationship between CEEE and state-side support units.

Student Conduct: Faculty members expressed interest in an eLearning policy clause that permits an instructor to temporarily block a disruptive student from participating in an online forum. Given concerns about freedom of speech, this topic will be further discussed later this term by the CEEE, the Dean of Students office and the APC.

Restricting Online and Hybrid Course Taking: Faculty members expressed interest in restricting access to online and hybrid course taking based on student readiness (total units earned threshold and academic standing) for the independent work structure of these modes of instruction. The APC decided that any such restrictions should be informed by student success empirical data and deliberated through the Department Chairs and the ICC given the broad-reaching impact of any such amendment to this policy. At present, individual departments may impose unit minimums for their courses across mode of instruction. The APC decided at this time not to further address this issue.

Academic Honesty: Faculty members expressed concern about the particular challenges for academic honesty in online and hybrid courses. One suggestion was to require F2F finals. Yet others suggested this requirement could be a substantial barrier for those at geographic distance. The APC decided at this time not to further address this issue leaving departments to decide on the structures of their own courses.