Proposed Hybrid Course Policy [New draft – May, 2015]

Guiding Principles

1) Exploring novel teaching methods is an important tradition in higher education. Online communications provide enhanced opportunities for communication among instructors and students, and instructors have been using them for over a quarter century. However, using them to replace traditional classroom instruction is relatively new. Vigilance is necessary to ensure learning outcomes continue to be met.

2) Academic freedom is an important right that is affirmed by both campus policies and the Board of Regents. However, faculty have both the right and responsibility to oversee instruction. Such oversight is consistent with established definitions of academic freedom as expressed by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

3) In response to abuses at other institutions, the Federal Government has mandated that institutions clearly label courses that involve a significant amount of online content in place of traditional classroom instruction.

This policy document defines hybrid courses containing a mixture of traditional and non-traditional instruction methods and establishes practices for approving and monitoring application of these methods.

Definitions

1) Traditional, synchronous course: any course with regularly scheduled physical face-to-face class meetings. Course content may be delivered in a variety of ways including classroom lectures, laboratories, and discussion sessions or some synchronous and/or asynchronous online learning. [Assumption: online learning is less than 12% of entire course].

2) Distance course: a course that consists of synchronous and/or asynchronous online learning or print-based/correspondence learning.

a) Online course: distance course in which at least 80% of the content is delivered electronically. Typically there are no physical face-to-face meetings.

b) Print-based/correspondence course: distance course that is completed via interaction (postal mail, electronic mail) with an assigned instructor within a 12 month time frame. Students receive a course manual that details assigned readings, papers, and projects, as well as instructions for submitting them and requesting exams. Most courses have proctored exams.

3) Hybrid (blended) course: a course for which at least 20% and up to 80% of the standard scheduled physical face-to-face class meeting time has been replaced by synchronous and/or asynchronous online learning. A hybrid (blended) section is a section of a course that meets this criterion.
4} Flipped (inverted) course: a course that “flips” the in-class and out-of-class activities, often by moving the lecture content before class and working on homework and hands-on activities during class time. A flipped course may be traditional, web-facilitated, streaming video or hybrid.

5} Web facilitated course: a course that follows the criteria of a traditional course with the noted exception that 12% to 19% of the standard scheduled physical face-to-face class meeting time has been replaced by synchronous and/or asynchronous online learning.

6} Streaming video course: a course with regularly scheduled physical face-to-face class meetings that also include synchronous and/or asynchronous transmission of the physical class meeting for the section of the course designated streaming video. Some streaming video course components may include physical face-to-face contact with an instructor or assistant. It is possible that a streaming video student will not have any physical face-to-face meetings with the primary instructor. [e.g. Collaborative, Adult Education, etc.]

Hybrid Course and Section Policies

1} Approval

a} Each hybrid section or course offering must have written documentation (not necessarily a syllabus) outlining the use of asynchronous delivery methods. At a minimum, the documentation must address the following:

i) The percentage of face-to-face meeting time that is being replaced by asynchronous delivery methods.

ii) The pattern of face-to-face meetings (such as a given number of times each week).

iii) What asynchronous resources will be used and how they will be used.

iv) The qualifications of the instructor to employ the specified asynchronous methods and how the instructor will be trained if necessary.

Not all sections in a course need to follow the same asynchronous delivery method. In particular, courses may include both hybrid and traditional sections.

b} If the offering department or administrative unit has a curriculum committee, the offering must be approved by that committee. Otherwise, the offering must be approved by the department (unit) as a whole. All such offerings must be forwarded to the college curriculum committee for informational purposes.

c} UUCC is requested to develop forms and reporting standards for the approval of hybrid offerings. However, approval of offerings can proceed without such forms until they become available.

d} UUCC is requested to set standards for how often and under what circumstances hybrid offerings will need to be re-reviewed and when instructor retraining is necessary.
e) Hybrid offerings following a model developed by the Teaching and Learning Center need only be approved at the departmental level. Offerings that significantly deviate from one of these models must also be approved by the college curriculum committee.

f) As of spring, 2013, all hybrid offerings must be approved as described in this policy. It is understood that these offerings will already be listed in schedules, but it is expected that approval for existing offerings can be expedited.

2) Administration

a) A course or section that is offered as a hybrid (by the above definition) must have a notation in the course schedule indicating that the particular course or section is hybrid.

b) The Teaching and Learning Center is requested to develop a set of models for hybrid courses as suggestions for instructors. Since innovation is important in this area, there is no requirement that each course use one of these models, but they should facilitate hybrid course construction.

c) With rare exceptions, on-campus students may not enroll in hybrid sections until they have earned at least 15 credits. Exceptions must be granted by the dean or designee of the college in which the student is a major.

d) Resources for training instructors on hybrid course techniques are to be provided by the university.

3) Assessment

a) Departments that offer hybrid courses must revise their DRB procedures to address how instructors will be evaluated for hybrid course offerings.

b) All hybrid courses or sections must include student evaluations of technology and delivery method each time the course is offered. In addition to the instructor, the evaluation results must be provided to the department chair or designee. At the discretion of the department, these evaluations may be incorporated into teaching evaluations as a part of the Review, Salary, and Tenure (RST) process.