

## **Distance Education (5/06/08)**

1.0 Distance education shall be defined as a formal educational process in which most of the instructional interaction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may include correspondence, audio, video, or computer technologies. This policy shall apply to all credit-bearing courses and programs offered through distance education by San Diego State University, including those offered through the College of Extended Studies.

2.0 The following guidelines shall apply to new distance education courses and programs and to existing courses and programs in which the method of delivery has changed significantly from that approved in the original curriculum proposal leading to that course, certificate, or degree. A department, school, or faculty group offering distance education programs (i.e., in which more than half

24 of the courses are offered through distance education) shall meet Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) requirements and shall be guided by university policy. In its selfstudies or proposals for institutional change, an academic unit or faculty group shall address the following expectations, which shall be reviewed by the university and perhaps by the regional accrediting commission. (Cf. WASC guidelines [March 8, 2000].)

### **3.0 Principles**

3.1 The faculty also shall ensure the academic quality and integrity of courses, programs, and degrees, including those offered through distance education.

3.2 Faculty and students shall be informed of the modes of delivery and technological requirements of each course, program, and degree offered by the university. Students shall have access to this information before enrolling in a course or program.

3.3 Distance education programs and courses shall be consistent with the educational mission of the college and the university.

**3.4 Web-based programs and courses shall be consistent with university policy on Universal Access to Information Technology.**

3.5 Each program shall provide the opportunity for substantial, personal, and timely interactions between faculty and students and among students.

3.6 The proportion of tenured and probationary faculty teaching in a distance education program shall approximate that of the campus-based program.

3.7 Admissions criteria shall be comparable for students on and off campus.

3.8 Financial plans for program delivery and student participation shall be preapproved.

3.9 Students shall have adequate access to library and student services.

3.10 The university shall offer training and support services to faculty who teach distance education courses and programs.

3.11 Distance education shall be an optional but not a preferred or required mode of instruction.

### **4.0 Implementation**

#### **4.1 Curriculum and Instruction**

4.11 In the curricular review process, distance education programs shall demonstrate that they provide the opportunity for substantial, personal, and timely interactions between faculty and students and among students.

4.12 Individual mentoring with a tenured or probationary faculty member associated with the program shall be required for a graduate culminating experience.

4.13 The faculty of a department, school, or program shall oversee the distance education program, ensuring both the rigor of the courses and program and the quality of instruction. The responsibility and oversight shall include the following:

- a. The selection and evaluation of formally approved adjunct or part-time faculty,
- b. Maintaining approximately the same ratio of tenured or probationary faculty to adjunct or part-time faculty as in the campus-based program.
- c. Ensuring that technology suits the nature and objectives of the courses and program,
- d. Ensuring that technology is accessible to students with a variety of visual, hearing, motor and learning impairments.
- e. Ensuring the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits that the university awards, and ensuring reasonable safeguards of academic honesty.

4.14 Ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products shall be agreed upon by the faculty and the university (in accordance with the Intellectual Property Policy) before the initial offering of a course or program.

4.15 No faculty member, program, department, or school shall agree in a contract with a private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs on behalf of the university without prior approval from the Office of Graduate and Research Affairs.

4.16 The university shall not agree in a contract with a private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs without the prior approval of the relevant department, school, or program.

4.17 Agencies providing funding for special certificates or degree programs or courses shall not acquire privileges regarding the admission standards, academic continuation standards or degree requirements for students or faculty attached to a university-approved academic program.

#### 5.1 Evaluation and Assessment

5.11 The Graduate Council Curriculum Committee or the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee shall review all distance education courses and programs, even if the curriculum is largely derived from existing campus-based courses or programs. When distance education proposals are to be considered by either committee, it shall be expanded to include three nonvoting, ex officio experts in distance education selected by the Committee on Committees: one from the faculty, one from the instructional technology staff, and one from the administration. Distance education programs shall also be reviewed by the committees charged by policy with curricular program review.

5.12 The method of delivery for new courses and programs shall become part of each curriculum proposal, to be reviewed under the normal curricular process.

5.13 A significant change in the method of delivery for existing courses or programs shall be submitted as a course change proposal, to be reviewed by the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee or the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. When such a proposal is to be considered by either committee, the committee shall be expanded as in sec. 5.11.

5.14 The Academic Review process shall be used to evaluate the educational effectiveness of distance education courses and programs (including assessments of student based learning outcomes,

student retention, and student satisfaction), and when appropriate, determine comparability to campus-based programs. This shall assure the  
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conformity of distance education courses and programs to prevailing quality standards in distance education.

5.15 A review and approval of distance education courses and programs, including those initially approved by their colleges, shall begin immediately and conclude within two years of the implementation of this policy.

5.2 Library and Learning Resources: The program administrators shall provide evidence in the curricular proposal that

a. Students have adequate access to and support in the use of appropriate library resources and

b. Students have access to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

5.3 Student Services and Admissions: The program administrators shall provide evidence in the curricular proposal that

a. Students are provided adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support the program, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of accessible course materials, assistive technology, and placement and counseling,

b. Students are provided with an adequate means for resolving student complaints,

c. Students are provided advertising, recruiting, and admissions information that adequately and accurately represents the program's requirements and services,

d. Students who are admitted possess the knowledge and equipment necessary to use the technology employed by the program, and

e. Technical advice is available to students to resolve hardware and software problems.

5.4 Facilities and Finances: The program administrators shall provide evidence in the curricular proposal that

a. University standards are followed in setting courseloads per instructor or academic unit,

b. The program, department, or school possesses or has access to the equipment and technical expertise required to deliver distance education courses and programs,

c. The long-range planning, budgeting, and policy development reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment, and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education course or program, and

d. The distance education program has received resource approval before operation.