UWIC March 3, 2016

UWIC met online this week.

I. Old Business:

a. Discussion of recommendations from online course committee (see attached). Committee endorses with some suggested modifications. 
   *Motion passed 16-0*

   *Minutes submitted by K. Stiver*

UWIC endorses the document with the following specifications/added recommendations (more info below in discussion notes):

  Highlighted the recommendation that we should mirror Charter oak and other state colleges, and perhaps ally with them for training.

  Training for faculty should be basic ADA best practices training for all faculty, and further online/hybrid specific training for those specific instructors.

  Student training should mirror existing “certification” training (e.g. sexual assault training), with the idea that it could be required to be shown as faculty choose on a course/program specific basis.

  The current document suggests transfer students be “encouraged” to complete training – UWIC recommends it be required on a course/program basis for all students.

Related topics/recommendations that arose from the more general discussion:

  Larger issue: there needs to be more support (staff and resources) for online/hybrid learning, and for technology accessibility generally. UWIC will likely take up this discussion and come up with specific recommendations to address this broader issue.

  Related, we feel there should be some sort of online “home” for the current language of mandatory and recommended syllabus statements
Purpose:

To ensure the quality of online offerings at Southern Connecticut State University by offering additional support and training for students and faculty while ensuring a streamlined approval process for new and existing online courses.

Definitions:

Southern Connecticut State University offers eLearning courses and/or sections as either online, hybrid, or on-ground according to the following definitions:

A.) An online course section is an eLearning section of a course in which 100% of the class instruction is conducted via the Internet. The instructor for such a section shall provide content via course management systems approved by the offering department, program, and University.

B.) A hybrid course section is an eLearning section of a course that combines on-ground and online sessions. A hybrid course section substitutes one or more on-ground contact hour(s) with online contact hours.

C.) A web-enhanced on-ground course is a section of a course that takes place on-ground but posts information and/or uses tools online. Web-enhanced courses are not governed by the policies and procedures outlined here.

D.) Programs (degree or certificates) in which 50% or more of the coursework in the program is available for students to take online are considered eLearning programs and, according to NEASC and Board of Regents guidelines, require separate approvals.

The current recommendations apply only to new and existing online course sections, although after future discussions and review, these recommendations may be expanded to hybrid courses.

In order to assure the quality and successful offering of online courses, the university adopts the following policy:

Online Courses

Online courses are subject to the same policies and procedures as stated in the university’s undergraduate and graduate catalogs. There is no distinct form or process for submitting online courses; they utilize and follow the same approval process as on-ground courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
Faculty and Student Training

Faculty
A training course will be developed by SCSU’s Teaching and Learning Technologies Group and reviewed by faculty who are experienced and/or have a special interest in online teaching. All faculty who have been selected and/or assigned to teach online will participate in a training course within the Learning Management System. This course will contain resources and information on best practices for teaching/learning within an online environment as well practice with the technology embedded within the Learning Management System. Faculty will be able to participate in the training course at their own pace based on their own learning needs. The training course will include an assessment at the end. The assessment is based on published standards related to assessing the quality of online course delivery (i.e. Quality Matters Rubric Standards). Faculty will be required to complete the assessment and will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the assessment. Since the course is self-paced, experienced online instructors may choose to skip portions of the course; however, all must successfully complete the assessment at the end of the course. Faculty will be required to submit the certificate to the Chairperson of his/her department before the course begins. Notification will also go to the UCF Office/Graduate Council and the respective Dean’s Office, which will ensure that those faculty teaching online courses have submitted a certificate.

Students
A training module will be developed by SCSU’s Teaching and Learning Technologies Group and reviewed by faculty who are experienced and/or have a special interest in online teaching. All first-year students will be required to participate in this online training module within the Learning Management System. This module may be embedded within a Tier 1 course (INQ or tech fluency to be determined). The module will contain necessary technical skills and factors that contribute to student success in online courses. Students will be responsible for knowing the relevant information contained within the module. Students will be able to print out a certificate upon successful completion of the module and will submit a copy of the certificate to their instructor as proof of satisfactory completion.

Transfer students, non-traditional age students, and graduate students will be strongly encouraged to participate in the online training module within the Learning Management System. Instructors of online courses may require their students to complete the training module. A certificate will be generated to demonstrate successful completion of this course. Instructors may require students to submit the certificate.

Ongoing Support
Faculty
The Teaching and Learning Technologies Group will continue to provide support for faculty through workshops, one-on-one tutorials and supporting documentation.

Students
A pre-registration self-reflection module will be made available to students independent of specific courses so they can decide if an online class is the right choice for them.

Course Access
Procedures to be followed for the evaluation of faculty teaching online courses, including administration of Student Opinion Surveys and peer observations should follow the guidelines set forth in the CBA, Senate documents and departmental bylaws in as close to the same manner as possible as on-ground courses. The DECs and Department Chairs should be permitted access to online classes in a manner that is comparable to the observation of faculty teaching on-ground classes. Additionally, department curriculum and assessment committees should be permitted access on a limited basis to ensure course quality. Departments should identify assessment procedures for online learning that are consistent with their mission. As with on-ground courses, each department will need to periodically review its courses to ensure that approved course learning outcomes are achieved.

Faculty Teaching Load Clarification
Faculty members teaching online and hybrid courses receive the same workload credit as faculty who teach on-ground courses. Class size limits are determined as per 5.17.2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Standardized Course Formats
No standardized format will be required except for programs in which a standardized format may be needed to meet accreditation requirements, as on-ground course syllabi and course designs are not standardized across disciplines, but reflect the learning needs of students within particular disciplines and courses. However, collaboration is highly encouraged within departments and programs in developing standardized formats.

Accessibility
As with on-ground courses, students enrolled in hybrid or online courses are required to contact the DRC (Disability Resource Center) for accommodations.

Faculty are responsible for ensuring that the current accommodations statement is
included in their syllabi as well as ensuring that the course is designed to be accessible to students with disabilities in compliance with ADA regulations. Faculty should adopt universal design principles and must provide accessible materials.

**Additional Recommendations**

- Obtain administration’s support for the technological resources required for current offerings and the future projected growth of online offerings at SCSU.
- Strategic planning should encompass planning for online initiatives to ensure the quality of online learning meets national standards.
- Expand hours of coverage offered by helpdesk to address login issues.
- Require communication of student support resources (e.g., Where to Go for Help) within all syllabi.
- Further investigate opportunities to improve student experiences online through technical fluency (e.g., tutorial centers, peer support services, RAs and OAs and so forth).
- Continue use of NFO (New Faculty Orientation) as a means to introduce faculty to teaching online.
- Develop a faculty module with self-reflection so faculty can decide if teaching an online class is the right choice for a specific course and their pedagogical style.
- Expand offerings in faculty development initiatives such as Teaching Academy, SummerTech, workshops, faculty learning communities, mentorships.
- Monitor and evaluate faculty and student training courses.
- Further investigate the utility and possibility of providing standardized course structures/templates for online and web-enhanced courses.
- Hire additional personnel in the following areas:
  - Instructional Design
  - Media Specialists
- Hire the Director of Online Teaching and Learning position as soon as possible. Leadership is needed for long term planning inclusive of planning for expansion of departmental offerings, new online programs and technological advances.
- Investigate further opportunities to partner with other State entities (universities and community colleges).

Submitted by Members of the ad hoc Committee:

1. Dr. Barbara Aronson, Nursing -- Committee Chair
2. Dr. Jean Breny, Public Health
3. Dr. Ilene Crawford, English
4. Dr. Bonnie Farley-Lucas, Communications/Faculty Development
5. Dr. Scott Graves, Science Education and Environmental Studies (UCF)
6. Dr. Jess Gregory, Educational Leadership (Graduate Council)
7. Dr. Rebecca Hedreen, Library Services / Distance Education (Faculty Senate)
8. Dr. Chang Suk Kim, Information and Library Science
10. Dr. Deborah Newton, Interim Dean, School of Education
11. Dr. Cynthia O’Sullivan, Nursing (UCF & Graduate Council)
12. Dr. Elizabeth Rhoades, Counseling & School Psychology (Graduate Council)
13. Dr. Jeffrey Webb, Chemistry
14. Mr. Bogdan Zamfir, OIT Teaching & Learning Technologies

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