

**Responses to Questions and Comments regarding
the January 2011 Distance Education Restructuring Plan**

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General

These are academic issues and offerings, everything about distance education courses and programs should report to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, not the Associate Provost for Academic Administration.

The administration of the distance education program has been assigned to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration. This assignment to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration is in line with other responsibilities assigned to this position (i.e. the administration of the business operations of distance education such as the finances and support services).

The academic matters such as review and approval of new programs and revision of programs will be handled the same as with on campus courses. The Office of Assessment and Program Review will oversee these matters with the assistance of support staff from the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs office.

The current plan appears to rely heavily on the Committee and sub-committees of the Distance Education Council – what is the composition of these committees? Are they all volunteers with other positions/responsibilities? Are the sub-committees permanent?

The initial composition of the committees and sub-committees was made by appointment. The Distance Education Council is made up of representatives from each college as well as the units that provide support services for our teaching mission. They were selected by their unit and serve as part of their assigned duties. A listing of the current Council members will be available on the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs new website.

In the future, the represented groups may recommend alternate members to the committees and sub-committees. At this time, we feel the sub-committees should remain in place until we feel we have worked out the majority of details. We should have a better understanding of the long-term need for the sub-committees within a year or so after implementation of the changes.

Assessment needs to be watched regarding NCA requirements. Distance education needs to be monitored in effective way to assure quality higher education including a focus on learning outcomes. There should be some clarification of responsibilities between the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs and the Distance Education Academic Assessment Committee.

The Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs will provide administrative oversight of the whole distance education initiative.

The plan outlines a process for ensuring that assessment is tied to our on campus efforts. The Distance Education Council's Academic Assessment Committee, in conjunction with

the Office of Assessment and Program Review, will be responsible for development of the assessment process for distance education courses, and will work with the Campus-Wide Assessment Committee. As with on campus assessment, the “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate.

The greatest weakness of distance education may be securing identity management and computer lockdown products to assure that enrolled students are the ones completing work and taking tests.

The issue will be studied with a recommendation due in the fall semester of 2011.

Clarification is needed on what constitutes a program. It is our understanding that current procedures in relation to designing new courses or programs will apply, including the FS overview of programmatic changes, as now.

Programs and courses will go through the same review procedures as on campus programs and courses. The start-up funds may be awarded for degree programs as well as certificate programs. We would also consider funding for course development when those courses complete an online program.

Programs are emphasized over courses – is this intentional? If departments are many courses/years from developing a full-fledged program, is the administration discouraging/not supporting the development of individual courses at this time? That is how the document reads.

The University is focusing on the development of programs, but does not intend to discourage development of courses. We recognize the value of individual courses to students and to the University through increased enrollment, and will continue to offer individual courses as well. The start-up funding program is designed to provide monetary assistance to colleges wishing to develop programs they might otherwise not have the resources to develop.

We feel that the most significant increase in enrollment will occur by providing complete programs (either degree programs or certificate programs) rather than by offering individual courses that may not be tied to a particular degree or certificate that can be obtained completely through distance education. The development of complete programs is intended to attract a different type of student than our on campus students. It is intended to attract potential students that, for whatever reason, would not otherwise come to our campus, including but not limited to active military personnel, students in remote locations or with physical mobility issues, and non-traditional students.

How will we handle the issue of on campus students registering for online courses rather than on campus courses?

We currently manage this by restricting enrollment in distance education courses. The student’s address is verified in Banner and the restriction must be waived by staff to allow the registration.

It is unclear what will happen with ILP courses, which currently serve important needs for some students who like the self-paced learning and are a large portion of distance courses offered. In particular, they provide a mechanism for a student to take courses that are otherwise offered rarely because of low enrollments. We see low enrollments will continue to be a problem for distance education course offered in a non-ILP format.

The Distance Education Council spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the current status of the ILP program, and ultimately recommended that we make no changes to the current structure until there is a full analysis of the program. The ILP program as it currently exists will be organizationally moved under the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs, but no other changes will take place at this time. The cost structure for these courses will not change during this time. It should be noted that as long as this program remains in the cost-recovery model, the credit hours generated cannot be reported as part of the cost-study. Further, the 70.5% revenue distribution to the college cannot apply to this program unless it moves to the cost-study model. Revenue from this program must be held in a central account, with costs (salaries and other) to be paid from that central account. During the fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters, the program will undergo a thorough review with recommendations to be finalized by the end of the spring 2012 semester.

Interactive video exists at area high schools. Dual credit should be considered.

This is currently being considered by Enrollment Management.

Improve/enhance our relationship with the Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market and the community colleges.

This is currently being considered by Enrollment Management.

Could you develop a glossary of terms to accompany this policy? For example, many of us are not clear about the distinctions between ILP v. web based seminar.

We will consider developing a glossary. ILP (Individualized Learning Program) courses are designed as correspondence courses. Courses are offered either in the traditional print based or online format. These courses do not follow the 16 week format. The Division of Continuing Education used "online semester based" to differentiate between independent learning (web-based) and online learning that is instructor driven and interactive.

The document needs to have a preamble/vision statement outlining the educational values of distance learning and its compatibility with the SIUC mission. There was concern that the initiative was entrepreneurial in nature.

We agree there should be a vision/mission statement and it is currently being developed. The Distance Education Restructuring Plan is more of a "how to get it done" document that outlines the issues that need to be addressed in order to transition distance education from the Division of Continuing Education. We are developing a website for distance education and the mission/vision will be a part of that website. As stated above, the primary interest is in high quality distance education offerings that will serve a different population than our on

campus programs serve. We felt it was important to provide incentives to faculty, departments, and colleges in order to encourage growth in the distance education program.

Implementation Timeline

Deadlines appear remarkably unrealistic. Pushing for the creation of online programs without adequate support staff, structure, or faculty buy-in on course development is a recipe for low-quality distance education and poor pedagogy.

The Distance Education Council was charged to move forward quickly with implementation of a new model for distance education. The deadlines were determined in an effort to ensure that we do not lose momentum on this initiative. Some of the items are critical to the initial move, while others are less critical and can be adjusted if necessary.

Distance education courses and programs have been evolving on campus for over 10 years with the support structure we currently have in place. Staff members from the Division of Continuing Education who have supported distance education activities will continue to support these activities. We will not decrease this support, but rather, we will increase the support services as the needs increase through the development of new programs and courses. Additional staffing for support activities will likely come from reassignment of other staff within the University who may be underutilized in their current assignments as well as the addition of other staff through newly generated revenue.

The new revenue distribution model is designed to generate funds for additional support services centrally, and to provide additional funds within the colleges as well. Until the programs increase, there will not be a need for additional staff, nor will there be funding to support additional staff. In the Plan it is stated that we must be prepared to make changes quickly to address additional needs. We intend to do this. Sound pedagogy is stressed in the Plan, and will be monitored through assessment as outlined in the Plan.

Rather than knowing how much money other institutions, such as UI Springfield are receiving, it would be far more informative to know exactly what they are doing in distance education, how many courses/programs, what format and style, and at what quality. Distance education is not a magic bullet to solve our enrollment and revenue problems, and it requires a lot of time and effort to do it well and to offer quality. We need a model drawn from what others have done but developed to assure that SIUC is as good as the best and better than our neighbors in our delivery of distance education, not just one of the ravenous pack offering poor quality.

On page 3 of the Plan, we identify an expert in distance education from UIS as a consultant that we would bring on campus to assess our current capabilities and future needs for support services for distance education. We mentioned the grant funding received by UIS only as one indicator of their success in distance education.

The Distance Education Council and an earlier group that studied distance education looked at a number of institutions that provide distance education in order to craft the best fit for our institution. Offering high quality distance education to attract students for whom traditional classroom instruction is not a viable option is the goal. In the Plan, we have

indicated that decisions on what programs and courses to offer would be determined by the academic units, as with on campus programs and courses. We have also stressed assessment as with on campus programs and courses. We have stressed the need to provide appropriate support services to support distance education. All of these are meant to ensure high quality distance education offerings. We feel that the best way to ensure high quality offerings is to place the responsibility on the academic units to determine what should be offered.

The likely switch from Blackboard in the near future will compound the difficulties of meeting a tight schedule. Will there be adequate time for staff to learn the next learning management system?

The Learning Management Systems Task Force has recommended that we run Blackboard and any new system concurrently for a year to assure a smooth transition. The process for obtaining a new LMS will take a considerable amount of time as we must go through the procurement process, including development and posting of a Request for Proposals. The review of proposals and ultimate awarding of a contract may take as long as a year to complete. After this time, the two systems would run concurrently. It would not be practical or prudent to wait for this process to be completed before we move forward with the distance education changes outlined.

The Faculty Status and Welfare Committee voiced concerns that their comments from November 5, 2010 had not been addressed by the Distance Education Committee.

The Distance Education Committee did review and consider the input from the Senate and made changes in the Plan where it felt appropriate. Throughout this document we have responded to the items addressed in the February 25, 2011 comments submitted to the Senate by the Faculty Status and Welfare Committee.

Military and Site Based Programs

Does this Plan refer to all distributed learning programs including military and other site-based programs? There should be some differentiation between unique programs and their special circumstances.

Further study is necessary for off-campus, site based programs. We will make no changes to existing arrangements until this has been completed. Any changes to the tuition and fee structures will be discussed with the colleges before any changes are made.

The role of the Office of Military Programs should be re-evaluated.

This is underway.

Tuition and Fees

Non-resident tuition requirements may kill distance education at the start. However, resident tuition may encourage on-campus non-Illinois students to take distance education courses rather than brick-and-mortar classes.

This issue is very complex and must be studied thoroughly before we make changes to existing programs. There has been considerable discussion of resident v. out of state tuition rates, as well as considerable discussion of the tuition and fee structure for off campus/site based courses (military programs). The Distance Education Council has looked at a number of institutions – both peer and non-peer institutions – that have substantial distance education programs and found there are successful programs using each model.

We have rates set for existing courses and programs, with students in these programs and will continue to use the current rates for existing students. We will also use current rates for existing programs until we can comfortably predict the fiscal viability of out of state tuition for non-resident students, as well as for off campus military and non-military site based programs until we can analyze the impact of imposing the tuition and fee structure for distance education that was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Some programs have much higher tuition and fee rates because of the expense to deliver the program. For example, some courses have very expensive equipment requirements that have been calculated into the cost to deliver these courses. Also, we have conducted market analyses for off campus programs, and the resulting tuition and fee rates are sometimes higher and sometimes lower than the Board authorized rates for distance education. Each unit offering existing programs will do a comparison of the existing structure and the new structure and make a recommendation based on the analysis.

When distance education courses were cost recovery and part of the Division of Continuing Education, the Chancellor had the authority to determine tuition and fees. Now that they will not be cost recovery, but rather part of the cost study, we will have to get Board approval for any rate other than the current tuition rate." (See table below.)

<u>Tuition Rates for FY2012 (New/Transfer Students)</u>	
Undergraduate	
Resident	\$243.00
Non-Resident	\$607.50
Graduate	
Resident	\$328.00
Non-Resident	\$820.00

Until the analysis is complete, these programs will remain cost recovery programs. This review and decision process will be completed by June 30, 2012.

We were concerned about the differential fee structures for in state and out of state tuitions and wonder why when these fees were being brought in line for our regular students these were being introduced for online students. An increase such as this not only goes against our mission to serve underserved populations it will severely undercut existing programs, as in healthcare in CASA. It also impacts international enrollment.

See the responses above. Also, if we do incorporate out of state tuition for distance education students, it will be in line with the current arrangements for adjacent state students who enroll in the on campus program.

Distribution of Revenue

Discussion of revenue distribution is not as clear and transparent as it could and should be. Need to clarify and codify in final version.

For new programs and courses, the revenue will be distributed as outlined in the *Financial Management* section of the Plan. 70.5% of the revenue generated will be directed to the college. The Dean will work with the department(s) to determine how the revenue will be managed within the college and departments. Revenue distribution for existing programs will not change initially. These programs, both off campus and online, will be reviewed and recommendations will be made by the end of the spring 2012 semester.

There has been considerable discussion about how pricing was determined, and there is concern that the current distance learning fee structure might negatively impact enrollment by increasing costs to the students. As previously indicated, the 70.5% revenue distribution to the college cannot apply to the programs that do not move to the cost-study model. Revenue from these programs must be held in a central account, with costs (salaries and other) to be paid from that central account. Existing agreements between the Division of Continuing Education and the units will be reviewed and evaluated during this transition time, and recommendations for any changes will be due by the end of the spring 2012 semester.

Both revenue and credit generation as outlined in the policy should go to the department or program unit that generates these credits and revenue (not to the college).

We have proposed that tuition and fee revenues for distance education programs and courses be distributed from the central administration to the dean, just as with on campus programs and courses. Deans should work with the department or program unit to determine equitable distribution within the college, based on the overall mission of the college and departments.

It is not clear how or if faculty will be compensated for course development. If it is through “borrowing” from a fund that must be repaid by departments, then departments may become very leery and reluctant to approve course development for faculty, particularly for higher level courses or courses outside the core (where enrollments cannot be guaranteed). Course/program development may stall out.

Faculty compensation for development of courses and programs is addressed in Addendum D of the SIUC Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement for tenure/tenure track faculty. We will abide by this agreement for members of this bargaining unit until and unless some other agreement is reached. Further, the start-up funding program is designed to provide departments and colleges with funding for the development of programs. This

program is not intended to replace any initiatives that departments may put in place to compensate faculty for development. That is, if departments wish to fund course development through their own funding sources, the start-up funding program requirements would not apply.

Forcing reserves above a certain amount to be sent back to the central income fund will force wasteful year-end spending and not allow programs to save for large purchases.

Legislative Audit Commission guidelines prohibit the establishment of reserves above a certain amount.

Start-Up Funding

The start-up funding section says that DCE existing cash will be used as start-up funds for all colleges. Existing cash in the DCE account is being held for our college (and others). This money should be returned to us (and others) rather than distributed to others. Paying back start-up funding after three years is essentially paying back funds that already belong to the colleges and would mean we get funding from money we already generated and then have to pay it back when it should have been ours from the start.

We are reviewing the agreements and arrangements set up by the Division of Continuing Education and will make a final decision in the near future, hopefully by the start of the fall 2011 semester. For the spring 2012 semester, we will offer a smaller fund for development of courses that could lead to a complete program or certificate. \$100,000 from a central DCE fund will be used for this program, not from the college or program accounts in question.

Over the course of several years, each of these programs have had positive and negative cash balances at the end of fiscal years. The programs have from time to time supported each other as needed as all funding was accounted through Continuing Education. Additionally, there has been support from the central administration from time to time to help maintain the programs in lean times. Consideration will be given to these facts as we make decisions about the distribution of cash.

The \$59/credit hour distance learning fee will be used to partially cover start-up funding. Shouldn't this money be used to offset the amount of start-up money that needs to be paid back since it is revenue that will be generated annually by the colleges' distance education efforts? Shouldn't the payback amount be the amount of funding received minus the money generated from the credit hours?

The distance education fee is designed to flow into a central fund for distribution across the colleges. This is the same approach that is used for the technology fee that is currently charged. The central administration must maintain some flexibility to fund initiatives based on the overall needs of the university.

A certain amount of funds should be made available for innovative use of online technologies in education that may not necessarily generate income but would be of value as education – for

example, extending to underserved minorities or global education or in research. These might later on become profitable but should be supported for their educational value. Also, given SIU's high profile role in serving military populations, how will this project contribute to this aspect of the university mission?

The distance education initiative falls within the overall mission of the University. The institution has a long, strong history of serving underserved populations, and the distance education initiative supports continues that. Global education is at the heart of the distance education initiative. Colleges and departments have the responsibility of determining courses and programs to be offered.

The start-up funding program is designed to provide support for new program development in cases when the colleges and departments can provide a plan for fiscal solvency. Colleges and departments can decide to offer programs or courses that they don't feel will produce revenue but are considered appropriate for their curriculum. There are distance education (either online or off campus) programs that have run a negative balance for several years.

The Office of Military Programs is now organizationally relocated under the Associate Provost for Academic Administration. Staff in the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs will work closely with the staff in the Office of Military Programs. The programs and courses offered on military bases are part of the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs. The Office of Military Programs ensures compliance with licensure and accreditation requirements at off campus locations.

Technology Funding

There needs to be a fixed percentage of the income generated from distance education allocated to Library Affairs to fund its distance education responsibilities. Ongoing funding for technology enhancement/replacement should be directly allocated to Library Affairs.

The distance education fee of \$59 per credit hour was designed to provide the University with a source of funds for technology and infrastructure needs as well as start-up funding for program development. This includes the resources maintained by Instructional Support Services. This fund will be managed by the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Administration. We will work with Library Affairs to determine short-term and long-term needs and priorities and develop a plan for maintenance, replacement, and new purchase needs.

If any substantial addition of server hardware for the library's data center is needed, we will need to upgrade the uninterrupted power supply equipment.

As stated above, we will work with Library Affairs to determine and prioritize needs. Distance education fee funds and the technology fee (for on campus courses) can be used for this if necessary.

The network infrastructure in some areas of the building is at or getting close to full port capacity. If large numbers of staff are moved into Morris, then additional network switches may be needed. How (who) would support these expenses?

As with the data center, network enhancement would be funded by the distance education or technology fees. Short-term and long-term plans should be developed so that the University can be ready to address needs as they arise.

Increased use of video conferencing would likely require higher number of licenses, additional network hardware, and classroom enhancements as well as ongoing maintenance of existing equipment. Alternatives should also be considered and implemented (e.g. PANOPTO).

This will be part of the consultant's recommendations. Additionally, ISS staff should be evaluating the trends in video conferencing and alternatives.

Pedagogy

What is the role of online learning – is it intended to be the same, different but equivalent, or sub-par compared to standard pedagogy?

It is our intention to provide a high quality educational experience, tied to sound pedagogy, for distance education students that would provide an equivalent experience to on campus courses. Guidelines from The Higher Learning Commission address this by recommending an institutional infrastructure that assures consistent quality regardless of whether students are enrolled in distance education or traditional on-campus courses. The development of the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs, as noted in the Restructuring Plan for Distance Education, is intended to follow the HLC's recommendations for institutional infrastructure. The Distance Education Council has also identified areas of concern, particularly with regard to the Individualized Learning Program courses, which should be resolved when academic units are given curriculum oversight and responsibility.

We appreciate the centralizing of teaching support and hope that it will lead to better management and maintenance of infrastructure. We also appreciate that the proposed Center for Teaching Excellence does not separate distance learning from our regular teaching; that it will support both; and we can see this as helping build innovative hybrids as well as develop each area.

The proposed Center for Teaching Excellence would support all types of teaching, on campus and off campus. ISS in Library Affairs currently supports both on and off campus teaching.

Instructional design will be central to the new distance education initiative and should be the starting point to course/program development. Standards for design and accessibility must be established and used as guidelines across campus to help meet Higher Learning Commission requirements and to establish appropriate consistency across all distance education course/program offerings.

Agreed. This is addressed within the *Instructional Design and Faculty and Student Support* section of the Plan. It is important to note that guidelines are just that – guidelines. Decisions

about curriculum design will ultimately be decisions made by the faculty. These decisions must be consistent with any absolute requirements for ADA compliance and requirements of the Higher Learning Commission.

Guidelines for consistency in course development and delivery are worrisome. Not all models work well for all purposes and courses. If there are mandatory measures for student posting, faculty/student interaction, etc., we may mandate ways that are less than effective for particular courses, mandate lower quality in some subjects, or that become quickly outdated.

There are best practices for instructional design that address various types of courses and disciplines as well as methods of delivery. There is no “one size fits all” in face-to-face, online, or off campus courses. Faculty members who develop programs and courses will be ultimately responsible for determining the appropriate structure of these programs and courses. Guidelines are just that – guidelines. They are not intended to be mandates.

Adherence to ADA needs must be addressed. How do we ensure web sites and technologies within them adhere to the ADA requirements?

Campus standards for ADA compliance currently exist. Faculty can find these standards at http://webstandards.siuc.edu/?page_id=35.

Intellectual Property and Workload

There is a need to clarify ownership and licensure of material created for online courses – this is a critical issue for faculty involvement. Faculty members are not going to simply hand over a distance learning/ILP class they have developed to a GA or another faculty member to deliver, since preparation time is substantial.

Ownership of the intellectual property is addressed in Addendum C and Addendum D of the SIUC Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement for the tenured/tenure track faculty. Additionally, Addendum C concerning intellectual property is the current policy for the campus and applies to all employees. We will abide by these agreements until and unless some other agreements are reached with the tenured/tenure track faculty and the non-tenure track faculty bargaining units.

There are concerns about workload and compensation. Is distance education more demanding than face-to-face education for the faculty member? There is concern about differential workload in departments. It might be appropriate to fund faculty members for course development.

Workload and compensation are addressed in the collective bargaining agreements for faculty. Workload varies across campus regardless of whether assigned courses are on campus or distance education courses.

Distance Education Staff Support

Staff for the technical side is grossly insufficient at present – not enough people in ISS. How will the staff from Continuing Education be utilized? Do we have staff with the expertise/credentials, etc.?

We are currently evaluating the services and resources offered through ISS and other areas and will receive a report from the consultant by the end of April. This report will include recommendations for what is needed to provide services in the short term (right away, as we are moving forward), mid-term (as new programs are being developed – within the next 1-2 years), and long term (once we have a mature distance education program – 2 years and beyond). For the short term, ISS staff will continue to provide the services they currently provide at the same level. This includes instructional design as well as other support services (graphics, web development, etc.). Additionally, several staff members from the Division of Continuing Education will be transferred to the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs. These staff members will continue to provide the same support they have provided in the past. We will also be re-training some staff members to handle other support services for course development in order to augment the services provided by ISS.

We are also looking at other areas within the University where staff may be underutilized and could be transferred to work on distance education. Decisions about these possible transfers will be made before the end of June 2011. Further, the report from the consultant will help us determine where additional resources are necessary, and where changes in existing resources and services could result in greater support for distance education.

It seems very ambitious for all of the proposed changes to be in place and operating smoothly by fall 2011. In addition to the technical, budgetary, and training challenges, there may be cultural issues as well. Personality types, skill sets, willingness to learn new things, willingness to change, union rules, buy-in are concerns. Some attention should be given toward team building for staff to learn to work together. Orientation and technical training will also need to be identified and provided for new staff introduced into ISS.

Agreed. These issues should be part of the consultant's recommendations. Additionally, these issues exist with the current arrangement within ISS, and should be being addressed in an ongoing way within ISS and Library Affairs. It should be noted that the increase in demand will be gradual, and we will address the needs as growth occurs. We will move forward with existing staff within ISS and those currently within the Division of Continuing Education as described above.

Current staffing level within ISS is inadequate to take on additional growth in distance education. There needs to be greater integration/collaboration between the various specialists within ISS. Some staff may struggle with new responsibilities that may be currently outside their current position descriptions.

Agreed. This will be addressed in the consultant's recommendations.

Staff to support multimedia development is inadequate. Some support exists within departments. There is duplication of effort. Multimedia support should be centralized.

This will be addressed in the consultant's recommendations.

The amount of distance education technology and disability support services questions will increase as distance education increases. Additional student work hours would be needed for this.

There are a number of positions currently within the Division of Continuing Education that provide technical support for distance education. These positions will continue to be used for this purpose. Collaboration between Library Affairs staff and other units on campus will be addressed within the recommendations from the consultant.

Since the demand for developing online courses will increase, there will likely need to be a protocol for managing incoming requests and determining priorities. Strong leadership is needed in ISS.

Agreed. This will be addressed in the consultant's recommendations.

Guidelines will also need to be established regarding what services ISS will continue to provide. The amount of custom programming expected is a concern.

This should be addressed within the consultant's recommendations as well as through ongoing strategic decision making within ISS.

As staffing increases in ISS, the configuration of the physical space will need to be analyzed and adapted to accommodate the new staff. This includes telecommunication as well as workstation space.

Agreed. This will be addressed in the consultant's recommendations as well as an ongoing review of increase needs as distance education grows.