Training Process for Online Teaching

The Distance Education Committee of the Academic Senate recognizes the need for training and mentoring process for current and future online instructors. This process will insure that effective teaching is taking place in all of our online courses.

Instructors who are already teaching online would use one or more of their existing online course shells to complete the training. Instructors new to online teaching would develop a new course shell as they proceed through the training process.

This training process will be supervised by the Online Coordinator, assisted by the Distance Education Committee.

Step 1: Departmental and Division Discussions

All course proposals for online instruction should begin with discussions among the faculty member’s departmental colleagues and Division Dean. Once a general agreement is achieved on at least the possibility of teaching a particular course online, the instructor can proceed to the next step.

Step 2: Completion of ecollege Training Course

Instructors new to online teaching will enroll in and complete a Distance Education approved introductory course such as the one provided by ecollege, “Developing Online Courses.” (Course tuition fee is covered by the existing ecollege contract.) A new course shell will be assigned to the instructor as part of the introductory course. This new course shell will be housed in the “Future Development” section of the ecollege server. This course shell will also be used to complete the skill exercises outlined in Steps 4 and 5 below.

For instructors who have taught at least two online courses, enrollment in the introductory course is optional, if proficiency in the skills outlined in Steps 4 & 5 can be demonstrated.

Step 3: Assignment of a Mentor

Each instructor preparing to teach online for the first time will designate a veteran online instructor as a mentor to assist them in the training process. Veteran online instructors will review their existing course shells with another veteran online instructor, in lieu of a mentor.*

A veteran online instructor is defined as someone who has taught online for at least four semesters.
Step 4: Achievement of Technical Competency

The online instructor will achieve competency in the following technical aspects of online teaching:

- Email (reply, forward, cc, bcc, folders, attachments, file types, viruses)
- Web navigation skills (URLs, following links, new windows, history, bookmarks)
- Using Basic Course Tools (document sharing, gradebook, course announcements, threaded discussions, drop box, webliography, etc.)
- Developing a course syllabus
- Constructing a unit structure and course schedule
- Developing Content Items of the following types: text, discussion, exams
- Basic multimedia (images, video clips, PowerPoint, pdf)

The mentor will assist new online instructors in developing these skills. Experienced online instructors will demonstrate that these skills have been mastered and are a part of their existing course. Flex-cal workshops covering these skills will also be offered.

Step 5: Introduction to Pedagogical Concepts

The online instructor will be introduced to the following pedagogical concepts of online teaching:

- Creating an interactive online learning environment
- Constructing effective online discussions
- Incorporating different learning styles
- Constructing effective examinations and other assessment tools
- Achieving a clear, understandable navigation structure
- Awareness of ADA issues. Ability to use accessibility evaluation tools and to make modifications to the web site as needed.
- Inclusion of regular effective instructor-initiated student contact (course announcements, email communication, grading comments, virtual office hours, video conferencing, etc.)

The mentor will assist new online instructors in developing these skills. Flex-cal workshops covering these skills will also be offered.

Step 6: Completion of the Training Process

A checklist of the skills listed in steps 4 and 5 will be developed to assist the instructor in accounting for the skills that have been mastered. When all of the skills have been mastered, the instructor will complete the checklist in consultation with the mentor and then submit it to the Distance Education Coordinator. The Distance Education Coordinator will maintain a list of the
instructors who have completed the training and give regular updates to the Distance Education Committee.

**Step 7: Class Assignments**

Under the supervision of the Academic Senate, the Distance Education Committee will submit to the Division Deans and the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the end of each semester an updated list of the instructors in each division who have successfully completed the Distance Education training process. Division Deans will make online and hybrid class assignments only to instructors who have completed the training process.

**Implementation Timeline**

Beginning with the fall semester, 2008, instructors developing their first online course would complete the training process before their class is taught for the first time.

Veteran online instructors would be given a one-year period in which to complete their training. They can continue to teach online during the 2008-2009 academic year while completing the training.

The first list of trained online instructors would be published by the Distance Education Committee in May, 2009.

**Future Changes to the Training Process**

Periodically, this process and the criteria for online training will be reviewed for completeness and appropriateness and will be evaluated for compatibility with the ever-changing technology.

**Support for this Training Process**

In order to implement this process for the entire campus, the following support from the College is needed:

1. Developmental course shells available to prospective online instructors.
2. A comprehensive Training Study Guide to be created by the Distance Education Committee.
3. Initial training of experienced online faculty willing to act as mentors for other faculty members.
   The mentor instructors are expected to demonstrate the same level of competency as is expected from faculty undergoing training.
4. Support for the mentor instructors in the form of optional flex-cal hours.
5. Offer opportunities during required Flex-Cal hours for mentoring.
Related Issues

Two processes are not addressed by this document:

1. The approval and evaluation of online courses.

   This task should be addressed in the regularly approved process for periodic departmental review of all courses and curricula.

2. The evaluation of faculty teaching online.

   This should be addressed in the established process for periodic evaluation of faculty as covered in the contract.

* It is understood that the mentoring component outlined in this training program does not constitute a peer review process. It is also understood that no information from this training/mentoring process is to be included in any instructor’s evaluation process or personnel files in any form.