MEMORANDUM

DATE:	July 14, 2015
TO:	Deans, Department Chairs, and School Directors
FROM:	Gary Perry, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
SUBJECT:	Distance Learning Scope and Policies **(Supersedes all prior memoranda and policies)**

Introduction

Distance learning policies at Florida Atlantic University must recognize the variety of distance learning modes and the respective stages of development of each mode. Therefore, the following policies are couched in terms of the delivery mode, as well as the stage of development of that mode and the instructor's experience and level of involvement. Policies are provided for designation of course type, reuse of materials and software, intellectual property rights, and registrar interfaces. Policies herein apply existing University regulations and policies, and applicable collective bargaining agreement requirements to Distance Learning (DL) teaching and learning environments.

Mission

- The program or courses are consistent with the institution's role and mission.
- Review and approval processes ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet program or course objectives.

Distance Learning Delivery Modes*

FAU is a leader in the use of digital media in instruction. The nature of our distributed campuses requires extensive support from state-of-the art digital technologies. Students should be advised that any course may require access to the internet using a device with a screen large enough to view instructional materials and to interact with classmates and instructors, or other digital resources and support software and these requirements are not necessarily in the course schedule.

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The principal delivery modes of distance learning courses at FAU and their respective class schedule descriptions are:

BP   Regular class some web activities
BT   Fully online class (no face-to-face meetings required)
BTL Fully online class with live lecture (no face-to-face meeting required)
BM   Mostly online class (at least 80% delivered online)
CT   Videotaped class
VSW Video Conference Alternating Sites with Web
VSW Video Conference Send Site with Web
VXW Video Conference Receive Site with Web
CTW Videotaped Class with Web
STR Video Stream: Attendance Optional

Principles of Good Practice

FAU adheres to *The Principles of Good Practice* as defined by the Southern Regional Electronic Campus. They identify the expectations and requirements for participation in the Electronic Campus. The Principles are listed at
http://www.sreb.org/uploads/documents/2012/06/ 2012062709533155/Principles_of_Good_Practice_6.22.2012_Final.pdf

Best Practices for Distance Learning at FAU

The Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education provide guidance from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS/COC) on how distance education degrees and certificate programs should be offered at an accredited post-secondary institution. FAU acknowledges these principles by viewing online students, as all other FAU students, as we strive to provide identical services and support to online students as our campus students. Following the University curriculum governance process for the creation of new programs and certificates, University curriculum governance process ensures the accreditation standards of SACS/COC are met. This includes the use of identical processes for evaluation of online and on campus degrees and certificates. By following these procedures, FAU is able to participate in the Florida Virtual Campus and the SREB Electronic campus.

Institutional Responsibilities

FAU is responsible for ensuring the appropriate delivery systems and service is available for online students that is equal to that of on campus students. This includes the ability to access admission processes online, financial aid services, academic support, library resources, career and job counseling, advisement services and complaint resolution services. The Office of Information Technology will provide technology infrastructure (facilities, equipment, and technical expertise) to support the online students' access to instruction and support services. Infrastructure and procedures are in place to verify the students' identity and protect their

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privacy. The Center for eLearning coordinates with enrollment services and Undergraduate Studies and the Graduate College to ensure that online students have a range of support options to successfully complete their degree.

Department/School Responsibilities

The department/school is responsible for identifying the degree and certificate programs that would benefit from migration to an online delivery format or new programs that would support our local community, state workforce and/or the University mission. New online degree and certificate programs need to follow the curriculum proposal processes established by the University Faculty Senate. Migration of degree programs from on campus to distance delivery formats need to follow the approval processes as established by the Center for eLearning. The department must work with the Center for eLearning in migration of a program to ensure the department is meeting the state authorization requirements for out-of-state online students, meet SACS/COC requirements, and if the department desires, meets the requirement for Quality Matters online program certification.

The department is also responsible for identifying the courses required to support the students in meeting degree requirements for timely graduation. To achieve this goal, faculty should be properly trained to teach the distance learning courses and the courses have the same degree of rigor as the on campus courses. The courses once developed are offered at regular intervals.

Faculty Responsibility

The faculty member is the one that ensures the quality and rigor of the online courses and that course content is modified for the distance learning delivery mode to support student success in those courses. All on-line courses will include a course orientation, learning objectives, instructional material (must align with the learning objectives and be equal to what is provided in on campus classrooms), in-person or electronic teacher presence (interaction with the student), in-person or electronic student presence (interaction with classmates) assessments with feedback, and evaluation. The faculty member makes the decisions about the instructional strategies used in the distance learning courses based upon the considerations of course content, skills taught, available tools, student readiness, and primary instructional modality. They should seek support from the Center for eLearning and engage in professional development appropriate for the delivery method for the distance course.

Several delivery formats are available for distance learning. Each of those delivery methods is unique and offer the faculty member options for the utilizing the best tool for the content.
- Video conferencing classrooms allow the faculty member to connect to classrooms together at the same time from different locations.
- Video streaming classrooms allow the faculty member to deliver content in an on campus classroom with the options for students to view the class in real-time or to view a recording of the classroom.
- Software based video streaming classrooms allow the students to join the class using web collaboration tools so they are able to interact with the class.

- Web conferencing tools are available through the learning management system which allow the faculty member to teach their class from their office or other locations in real time and/or recordings of live online classes.
- Online delivery has no live components and offered through the learning management system or a variety of other tools.

Accessibility

All distance learning courses should be accessible by individuals with special needs. Courses developed with the support of the Center for eLearning use the principles of universal design to ensure that all students benefit from the instruction provided. The Center for eLearning offers guidance and support in ensuring that courses meet accessibility requirements for faculty that not using eDesign services from the Center. Those courses should be reviewed by an instructional designer to verify the courses are accessible. Of particular importance in meeting the requirements is providing transcripts for video and audio recordings. The Office of Students with Disabilities provides additional support as required.

Faculty Development

Well-trained, prepared and supported faculty is key to quality distance learning course delivery and student success. Therefore, the University provides faculty development opportunities to help faculty prepare to teach distance learning courses. Faculty members should reach out to the Center for eLearning for faculty development in teaching and pedagogy support in any course delivery modality.

Faculty selected to teach a distance learning course must complete training as appropriate for their delivery method. By accepting the assignment to teach a distance learning course, the faculty agree to participate as necessary in training sessions on the use of the instructional technology tools to promote student interaction, communication with students, and classroom management of distance education through the learning management system. Colleges may wish to designate faculty experienced with distance learning delivery methods as mentors for faculty interested in teaching these courses. Mentors should be faculty members that have received Quality Matters certification for at least one online course. It is strongly recommended that faculty continue to participate in professional development opportunities to stay current in the latest technology and best practices for distance learning.

Evaluation

Student evaluations (Student Perception of Teaching/SPOT) of instructors are conducted for all courses including distance learning modalities. Special institutional assessment of the impact of distance learning instruction and student learning is conducted for all distance learning courses. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis provides faculty support for assessing instructional effectiveness in distance learning courses and provides University administrators with data and information on the impact of distance learning on faculty and students.

Longitudinal research and data collection may include student demographics, withdrawal and retention rates, success rates, student and faculty satisfaction, and student learning styles. All SPOTS are administered on-line and faculty should encourage their students to participate.

General Policies on Intellectual Property Rights, Disclosure of Interest, Outside Employment or Conflict of Interest

All policies listed below stem from existing University regulations and policies, and provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement as they apply to distance learning.

Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual Property Rights are governed by FAU's Intellectual Property Policy (http://www.fau.edu/research/docs/policies/techtransfer/ip_policy.pdf) and the BOT/UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement, if applicable.

Video streamed or web-based courses developed with appreciable University Support as defined in Section 10.6.3.1 of the FAU Intellectual Property Policy are the property of FAU. The sale or licensing of these materials are governed by the FAU Intellectual Property Policy which complies with Florida Statute 1004.23 and Article 18.4 of the BOT/UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Sale or License Agreements

In accordance with the FAU Intellectual Property Policy, if the faculty member (creator) believes that the video stream or web-based courses developed with University Support has commercial potential or the FAU faculty member (creator), department or college wish to make the video stream or web-based courses available for use other than for FAU courses, the faculty member (creator) must disclose such video stream or web-based courses to FAU through the FAU Office of Technology Development per Sections 10.6.3.1, 10.6.3.3 and 10.6.4 of the FAU Intellectual Property Policy prior to taking any action to sell or license the materials.

Disclosure Process

University personnel are required to promptly disclose all copyrightable works as set forth in 10.6.4.2 of the FAU Intellectual Property Policy. Disclosure forms can be found online at http://www.fau.edu/research/docs/forms/techtransfer/invention_disclosure_form.pdf . Disclosures are to be submitted to the FAU Office of Technology Development. If a creator believes that a given invention or work described in a disclosure is not the property of FAU, the disclosure should indicate the reasons for this belief so FAU can make an assessment. Section 10.6.4.4 of the FAU Intellectual Property Policy states that the Office of Technology Development will assess the disclosure and make a recommendation to the Vice President for Research as to the ownership interest of FAU and FAU's legal rights. FAU can elect to 1.)

retain title of the disclosure and proceed with intellectual property protection and commercialization procedures; 2.) decide the work is premature and ask the creator to resubmit the disclosure when additional information is obtained; or 3) waive FAU's ownership rights and release the disclosure to the creator.

Outside Employment and Conflict of Interest Reporting Requirements

A FAU video streamed or web-based course may not be offered by a faculty member (creator) for use other than by FAU, such as another college, university, agency or private corporation, without disclosing the course to FAU through the FAU Office of Technology Development for appropriate approvals and procedure prior to engaging in such proposed activity. This process may include completing, as applicable, a FAU DISCLOSURE form found on line at http://www.fau.edu/research/docs/forms/techtransfer/invention_disclosure_form.pdf and/or REPORT OF OUTSIDE BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY form, the UNIVERSITY EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES AND SERVICES form, and the REPORT OF SPECIFIED INTEREST form, which are available on the Human Resources webpage at http://www.fau.edu/hr/HR_FORMS_INDEX.php.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

As stated in the Faculty Handbook and collective bargaining agreement, if applicable, academic freedom and responsibility applies to teaching, research and creative activities. Faculty shall have the freedom to present and discuss their own academic subjects, frankly and forthrightly, without fear of censorship, and to select instructional materials and determine grades in accordance with University policies. The implication of this is that faculty control the content of their courses subject to the above conditions, however the University exercises control of course offerings as described in the following section.

Distance Learning Course Scheduling Procedures

Approval Process

Credit courses must be listed in the FAU catalog before they may be submitted for consideration for delivery by distance learning unless approved as a Special Topics course.

The approval process for distance learning delivery of courses begins at the department level by submission of a request from the department chair to the college dean. Each college will establish a procedure for approval of courses for distance learning. FAU policy requires that a syllabus be on file for all courses regardless of delivery mode. For distance learning, the syllabus of the course and the strategies used to communicate the course content, testing or student evaluation procedures, i.e., the course format, will be examined against minimum standards established at the University level by a standards committee and any additional standards established by the college faculty.

Process for Listing Distance Learning Courses in the Class Schedule

The process for listing distance learning courses in the class schedule is initiated by department chairs/school directors in cooperation with the college distance learning coordinator or appropriate designee within each college. Distance learning courses will be developed and entered into the master class schedule with approval of the department chair/school director. The University Registrar or designee will review the master schedule in its first and subsequent edits to identify all distance learning courses proposed for offering by the colleges. The Center for eLearning monitors and facilitates the development of all distance learning courses in the official University schedule. The Registrar's office, Center for eLearning, and the professors will ensure that appropriate classrooms are scheduled for distance learning and mixed mode courses or that arrangements have been made to provide academic (e.g., testing or library access) and student support (e.g., registration, financial aid, advisement or orientation) to the distant learners.

It is important to make the distinction between determinations of course content and the decision that a course will be offered. The former decision rests with the faculty. The latter decision is made through the administrative approval process described in this section. In the event of a disagreement over whether the course will be offered, the final decision to offer any course at the University, regardless of delivery mode, is made by the Dean of the College in consultation with department chairs/school directors.

Course and Program Accreditation Standards Compliance

The University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges that has published a policy, *Distance and Correspondence Education* (http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Distance CorrespondenceEducation.pdf) and guidelines for distance education (http://www.sacscoc.org /pdf/081705/Guidelines%20for%20Addressing%20Distance%20and%20Correspondence%20Ed ucation.pdf) and for electronic degree and certificate programs (http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/ commadap.pdf). The Office of the Provost is responsible for determining that the guidelines are met. The general areas of the guidelines that must be addressed include: Curriculum and Instruction (rigor of program, appropriate technologies, currency of materials, interaction between student and faculty and among students), Evaluation and Assessment (assess student success, educational effectiveness, integrity), Library and Learning Resources (access to library resources and technology support), and Student Services (financial aid, academic advising, placement and counseling, student grievances, informational materials, student admission standards). Many of these support systems are in the process of development and testing. The responsibility of assuring that the overall systems are in place to support distance learning programs or courses rests with the Assistant Provost for eLearning.

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