Distance Education

POLICY STATEMENT

DSU supports distance education as a way of building, maintaining, and extending quality programs that complement the traditional work of the University. Distance education refers to courses delivered by electronically mediated formats.

DEFINITIONS

Asynchronous: In distance education, asynchronous refers to activities the learner may do independently with respect to the instructor and other class participants. Asynchronous activities allow for a non-sequential order for the learner to accomplish the goals or assignments of the course. Posting to an electronic bulletin board would be an example of an asynchronous activity.

Distance Education: Distance education consists of all arrangements for providing instruction through technology-based instruction to persons engaged in planned learning in a place or at a time different from that of the instructor or instructors. (see IHL Policy 503.0101)

On-Line Instruction: On-line instruction is defined by IHL as the delivery of education or training in which at least 50% of the content is online through a computer system to a student who is separated from the instructor. Students can take courses via the Internet, contact their tutors and peers, take tests, and put their own work up for discussion. Study is organized around fixed units of time. On-Line Courses at Delta State University have no regularly scheduled campus class meetings Instructors may schedule meetings with students that meet the student’s time schedule.

Hybrid Instruction: Although not recognized by IHL as a delivery type, the term hybrid instruction in this document is used to describe a course or program that combines an on-line segment with regularly scheduled face to face class meetings. The regularly scheduled class meetings are reduced in number and those segments are replaced by an on-line portion.

Synchronous: In terms of distance education, synchronous refers to activities that the learner needs to do either in a sequential order or in real time with other class participants. For example, students participating in a chat session are communicating in a synchronous manner.

Interactive Video Conference: occurs in real time and allows the instructor to communicate with remote site sections of the class via one or two-way video and two-way audio. Instructors and students speak to each other via microphones provided at each receive site.

PROCEDURES and RESPONSIBILITIES

While keeping within the established mission of the university, the distance education program will provide the following:

- Greater access for students to the academic credit and non-credit offerings of the university.
- Ensure high-quality teaching.
- Cooperative efforts with other IHL institutions, K-12 educational agencies, and community entities to provide opportunities for teaching, research, and public service efforts.

All distance education credit courses are taught by faculty, with all the same standards, prerequisites, and requirements as on-campus sections of identical courses. All DSU policies and procedures, standards, and guidelines for on-campus programs and instruction are applicable to distance education instruction, unless noted otherwise.

Distance Education Committee:
Committee members are appointed by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and includes representation from all colleges/schools and other units as determined by the Academic Council. The Director of Instructional Technology and the Director of Distance Education serve as Co-chairs of the Distance Education Committee for coordination and staff support. The DSU Distance Education Committee develops and recommends distance education policies and procedures to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who in turn, submits the recommended policies and procedures to Academic Council and then to Cabinet for approval.

Distance Education Delivery Coordination:
The Director of the Instructional Technology will facilitate working with cooperating institutions for delivery of interactive video courses as directed by the respective dean and department/division head. All use of the videoconferencing studio will be coordinated between the department heads, deans, the Academic Affairs Office, and OIT. The Director of Instructional Technology will be responsible for coordinating implementation, maintenance, and backup of all on-line courses.

Distance Education Approval:
Distance education courses will be recommended and approved through university review procedures following the path of Department, Dean, and Academic Council. Distance education programs will be recommended and approved through university review procedures, following the path of Department, Dean, Academic Council, Cabinet, IHL, and accreditation groups. For approved courses and programs, departments assign teaching faculty, determine quotas, and accrue student credit hours for courses taught.
The Technology Learning Center schedules courses in conjunction with academic departments, provides on-site support staff, and assists academic departments with evaluations.

**Enrollment:**
The enrollment process for students in distance education courses is equivalent to the procedures used for traditional classroom courses.

**Class Cancellations:**
Classes will be cancelled only in emergency situations and with as much advance notice as possible.

**Academic Standards for Distance Education:**
Distance education courses will meet all academic requirements and quality standards of Delta State University and of all accrediting bodies.

**Interactive Video Courses:**
Delta State University offers Interactive video classes in several formats. Not all courses are available at all remote sites or in every format.

**Syllabus or Study Guide Guidelines:**
1. In addition to the required elements of all DSU syllabi, those developed for distance learners should include:
   - Any resources required for each lesson;
   - Procedures for submitting course assignments;
   - Procedures for obtaining course handouts and support materials;
   - Procedures for dealing with technical problems and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ);
   - Appropriate descriptions and details of methods for distance education student interaction and participation; and
   - Processes for accessing library resources, student services, proctored examinations, and videotapes of classes, when appropriate.

2. Faculty should develop appropriate student study guides, handbooks or other instructional materials that support the delivery of instruction by distance. For the most part, students will be expected to act independently based on the instructions provided by the faculty.

**Exam Policies:**
Students in Live/Interactive sections of a course may be required to take proctored exams at their remote sites. Instructors may require on-line students to take a proctored exam. Picture IDs will be checked at the exam sites. Students may be allowed to take proctored tests at a local college or university testing center. In any case of proctored exams, instructors will provide test dates for the semester to the Director of Distance Education approximately two months prior to the start of the semester a course is to be taught and assist the Director of Distance Education in arranging for exams.

**Liability Issues:**
1. Faculty members should ensure that all materials transmitted or displayed over distance education networks (e.g. Internet, interactive video, broadcast TV) are properly licensed, and that the necessary transmitting rights have been secured. DSU requires compliance with all applicable copyright laws concerning the reproduction of printed materials and the use of transmission of film, videotapes, recordings, performances or other protected works. (See "Copyright Permission" under Faculty Issues)
2. The faculty member will observe all Federal Education Right to Privacy Act regulations governing information or material transmitted over distance education networks.
3. Faculty members will comply with University and FERPA rules and regulations when reporting grades and other sensitive information to students over distance education networks.

**Contractual Agreements**
1. No individual, program, or department may agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs on behalf of DSU without prior university approval.
2. The university should not agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs without the prior approval of the relevant department or program.
3. Agencies providing funding for special certificates or degree programs or courses will not acquire any privileges regarding the admission standards, academic continuation standards or degree requirements for students or faculty attached to a university-approved academic program.

**Course Quotas:**
Quotas for distance education classes are set by the department/division head in consultation with college/school dean.
**Faculty Issues:**

**Faculty Training**
All faculty scheduled to teach a distance education course for the first time must participate in a course preparation program. The Director of Instructional Technology provides training opportunities for all faculty using distance education technology in instruction. Any instructor wishing to teach an interactive video or on-line course for the first time will attend an orientation and logistics meeting, which will be conducted by the Instructional Technology Center staff, who will coordinate and lead these activities as well as work with interactive video and on-line courses, and assist faculty as needed prior to and during the semester their course is delivered. Web design consultants may also be assigned to assist on-line faculty.

**Faculty Support Services**
The services are available to all faculty. Faculty interested in incorporating technology into their traditional (classroom) courses are provided assistance and instruction in one-on-one sessions as well as group workshops. Interactive video and on-line faculty are provided assistance and instruction during the orientation and logistics meeting conducted by the Director of Instructional Technology. On-line faculty are also provided web courseware, web accounts, and design assistance by Instructional Technology staff preceding and during the semester the course is taught. In addition, OIT personnel provide help setting up courseware accounts, web accounts, home pages on the Internet, forms for gathering data on the Internet, and other assistance with websites for distance education faculty.

**Library Support**
The Roberts LaForge Library staff coordinates library support for all distance education classes and will consult with faculty in planning their courses to assure appropriate library services. Faculty can determine the needs for their class and can receive assistance in determining availability of resources at various libraries, on-line access information and training, or the mailing of specific materials requested by students.

**E-mail Support**
The OIT staff provides assistance in establishing student e-mail accounts for distance education courses. All distance education faculty and students must have an e-mail account. These accounts will be activated at the request of the course instructor or student(s) enrolled in the class.

**Textbooks and Copy Center Packets**
Faculty textbook orders will be handled through the usual departmental channels. A Copy Center packet containing all class handouts or handouts can be scanned in and made available through the homepage. Students may purchase these at the beginning of the semester through the Campus Bookstore. Students may order their textbooks and packets by phone from the Campus Bookstore and receive them by mail for an additional handling fee, if they call before the Campus Bookstore's specified mail order deadlines.

**Copyright Permission**
Faculty members are responsible for securing advance written copyright clearances on any copyright-protected materials they may use in their broadcast, re-run, or on-line classes. Additional information on Copyright is available on the U.S. Copyright Office's website at: http://www.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ1.html. The only substantial exception to the rule that only copyright holders may distribute copyrighted material is the long-standing provision that individuals may make "fair use" of copyrighted materials. Use of a copyrighted work “for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research” (17 USC 107) is generally considered fair use. Fair use does not extend to extensive quotations and may not adversely affect the commercial market for the work in question.

**Intellectual Property**
The materials created by faculty members for distance education courses will be treated in the same fashion as materials created by faculty members for traditional courses.

**Site Facilitators and Distance Education Assistance**
Technology Learning Center staff are available to assist faculty and students in the on-campus section of interactive video courses. Everyone involved with distance education may also call the Technology Learning Center for assistance. The Technology Learning Center maintains and updates an informational distance education website and provides instructional and technical support to faculty and students.

**Student Services:**
Enrolled students in distance education courses shall have access to the range of student services to support their learning comparable to that of the on-campus learner. Services should also be supportive of the part-time distance learner. Students should be provided with clear, complete information about programs of study including curriculum, course and degree requirements; the nature of faculty and student interaction; assumptions about technical competence and skills; technical equipment requirements; and availability of academic support services, financial aid resources, and cost and payment policies. Enrolled students should also have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support their learning including admission services; registration; transcripts; financial aid – including access to Veteran’s Assistance programs, scholarships, grants and loans; academic advising; library services; methods of adding or dropping course; bookstore services; and adequate communication about registration and admission requirements.

**Admissions**
Information and advice about requirements for admission to DSU and admission to a specific program should be available to distance education students.

**Financial Aid**
Students enrolled in telecommunication-based courses are eligible to apply for Federal Financial Aid. Federal Financial Aid includes...
grants, loans, and a student employment program. Students should apply on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov each academic year. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance at (662) 846-4670 or visit their office in Kent Wyatt Hall 144.

Advising
Comparable advising services should be made available to both on-campus and distance education students. Advice about academic programs is critical to the success and productivity of the student. Distance education advising will be available in a range of modes, using new technologies (e.g., e-mail, telephone, toll-free numbers)

Library
Appropriate library services will be available to distance education students. Quality programs demand adequate library services for all students. Specific library/staff resources will be designated at campus libraries to adequately service distance education students as well as support interlibrary loan policies and on-line access to catalogs and materials.

Computer Literacy Prerequisites
It will be necessary that students come to the course with the requisite knowledge enabling them to use the technology. Because access to computers in homes and schools is not uniform, students arrive in distance education classrooms in all states of readiness. Distance education programs/courses will identify computer literacy prerequisites needed for students to participate successfully, so students may be properly advised about skill level that is required.

Academic Honesty
Students taking distance education courses will be held to the same requirements of academic honesty as students taking traditional courses. Faculty should ensure that safeguards have been built into the distance education course format to require that students be held to the same standards of academic honesty as students in traditional courses.

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities needing special accommodations should contact the DSU Counseling Center in the Reilly Health Center; Dr. Richard Houston, 662.846.4690, rhouston@deltastate.edu.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Academic Council minutes approved 8-25-2009.