

2013

Report from the Joint Committee on Online and Distance Education Academic Year 2013 - 2014

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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Statistics

Total Approved Courses: 191 Approved Online Courses

- Arts and Sciences – 140
- Business – 7
- CELS – 7
- Engineering – 1
- Human Services – 22
- Library – 3
- Nursing – 3
- Other - 8

AY 13-14 Statistics:

Sakai Training Course

- 85 signed up.
- 65 logged on once
- 21 have logged in once or twice
- 21 are in process
- 23 have finished.

OLTF:

- OLTF 1 starters: 30. Finishers, 22.
- OLTF 2 starters: 20. Finishers, 13

Gave two awards for exemplary course design to Lauren Mandel (GLIS) and James Baglama (math)

Technology Survey

In conjunction with the Office of Online Education, the committee reviewed and distributed a faculty survey on technology. Survey results indicated most people were satisfied with Sakai, but there were some tools that needed to be fixed or improved. In general, one-on-one training was the most effective, compared to short courses and online supplemental materials. We compared these survey results with those from a previous Sakai survey, and found the number of faculty using Sakai has increased.

Curriculum Affairs Committee

Kathleen and/or Diane attended all CAC meetings to provide expertise in discussions of the quality of online and blended courses. At the suggestion of the Joint Committee on Online and Distance Education, the CAC agreed to no longer require that approved online courses require a new approval for every new instructor – in essence agreeing to treat online courses similarly to face to face. However, both the CAC and the Joint Committee on Online and Distance Education believe this means it is up to the Department Chair to ensure that online courses meet our accreditation standards and are taught by faculty with the appropriate training in teaching online and experience.

Sakai Development

The committee has advocated for and reviewed a variety of improvements to Sakai.

- It advocated for and reviewed the new simplified Sakai portal page
- It supported the move to a single resources (help desk wiki for both student and faculty support)
- Advocated for the addition of a function to allow faculty to upload grades from Sakai to eCampus. This function will be optional and available for final fall 2014 grades.
- Has asked for the addition of the email archive tool, fixed for J-forum, and improved video server solution, integration of google apps with Sakai as we move forward with Google email and calendar, and integration with turning point.

AMRC

The committee submitted a document to the AMRC specifically commenting on the IT report. That document is on the AMRC website.

Sakai Vendor

The committee has seriously considered the lack of appropriate staff support for Sakai and will be submitting a recommendation to the Provost regarding the need remedy this by exploring and budgeting for outside support for Sakai.

Sakai and Pedagogy Training and Policy

The committee reviewed the new Sakai training course which was designed by Joannah Portman-Daley of the Office of Online Education as one part of online teaching competency. The Committee will make a formal proposal to the Provost, Deans and Chairs that all faculty who are teaching online must show they have the appropriate training or experience to do so.

FERPA, NEASC, Financial Aid Regulations

The committee has also reviewed some of the federal, state, and accreditation rules and regulations which impact online courses. These have been incorporated into the OLTF training and the Online Teaching website.

Accessibility

How to ensure that online and blended courses are accessible to all students remains an issue. The Committee, the Office of Online Education, ITS, the Office of Disability Services, and the President's Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities continue to work together to ensure that we provide appropriate training in universal design and resources to meet these needs.

Programs Moving Online

The committee discusses updates related to moving programs online. The focus is on programs that directed at working adults. Currently this includes discussions with nursing -- an RN to BS degree, a masters in Dietetics, and GLIS degrees). These are all in the formative stages and will all need a variety of University, State, and NEASC approvals to go forward. Their development, however, has also highlighted the need to examine student services, academic support, and technology support for students who are taking online courses and are not on our campus.

Faculty Initiatives/ Incentives

Dean Libutti's Initiative for Alternative Semesters to increase summer school enrollment and improve graduation rates. He will be looking for funding to provide incentives to faculty to create courses.