

2017-2018 Faculty Senate Report

Online Learning Committee

April 26, 2017

I. Online Learning Committee Bylaws

Mission:

The Online Learning Committee is charged with the academic quality control of online learning which include: making recommendations about the creation and selection of online course offerings, making evaluations of CCSU's use of technology in online course offerings, making recommendations about faculty training, and making an ongoing assessment of the online course program overall.

Membership:

Committee membership will be composed as follows:

1. One faculty member from CLASS, elected by CLASS faculty via the Senate's Election Committee
2. One faculty member from SEPS, elected by SEPS faculty via the Senate's Election Committee
3. One faculty member from SOB, elected by SOB faculty via the Senate's Election Committee
4. One faculty member from SEST, elected by SEST faculty via the Senate's Election Committee
5. Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee's Online Subcommittee, elected by the Graduate Studies Committee to represent School of Graduate Studies
6. One member of the Curriculum Committee, appointed by the Curriculum Committee
7. One member of the Assessment Committee, appointed by the Assessment Committee
8. One member of the Instructional Technology Committee, appointed by the IT Committee
9. One member of the Academic Standards Committee, appointed by the Academic Standards Committee
10. The Director of the IDTRC or designee, ex officio
11. The Associate VPAA charged with oversight of online courses, ex officio and non-voting

Terms: Faculty members elected to the committee to represent their College or School shall serve two-year terms and may serve up to three consecutive terms. Members from CLASS and SEPS will be elected in even numbered years. Members from SOB and SEST will be elected in odd numbered years. Faculty members appointed to the committee to represent another committee shall serve one-year terms. Appointed members and ex officious have no term limits.

Special provision for spring 2017 election. In the spring 2017 election, members elected to represent Schools SOB and SEST shall serve one-year terms.

Primary Functions:

The primary functions of the Online Learning Committee are to:

1. Make recommendations concerning the creation and selection of online courses, and evaluation of the use of technology in CCSU's online course offerings
2. Make recommendations concerning the provision of appropriate training for all faculty wishing to teach an online, online-hybrid, or on-ground-hybrid course
3. Provide ongoing assessment of the online course program overall
4. Make recommendations regarding Online Learning
5. Gather, analyze and review the aggregated data from the sections of the online Student Opinion Surveys
6. Submit an annual report to the Faculty Senate
7. Propose guidelines and policies regarding Online Learning to the Senate

Online Learning Committee Procedures:

1. Online Course Proposal: Faculty will propose to teach an online course to their departments and fill out the Online Course Form that includes a rationale for the use of online learning. The Faculty member will also self-identify their level of expertise in online teaching and training needs. Departments will approve these requests in the initial draft of the schedule. At the same time, department chairs will submit the Online Course Form to the Committee for evaluation. In the event that the number of requests to teach online or online-hybrid courses in a given fall or spring semester exceeds the cap on such courses established by the Faculty Senate, the committee will prioritize the requests according to the following criteria (please note that these priorities apply only to undergraduate course offerings; the School of Graduate Studies has its own criteria in place) and make recommendations to department chairs, deans, and the provost about which courses are best to offer online. The Committee will make these recommendations before the final draft of the schedule is submitted.

Online Courses

1. Courses in which the content or subject matter is already substantially online (e.g. online searching in library sciences, online course development in education).

2. Courses designed to meet the specific needs of their target audiences (e.g. a course for students involved in full-time internships)

3. Courses with other compelling rationales for using the online format (given the value of campus community as well as student-faculty and student-student face-to-face contact, the convenience to faculty or students of not having to come to campus will be among the least compelling rationales).

Online-Hybrid Courses

1. Courses in which the content or subject matter is already substantially online (e.g. online searching in library sciences, online course development in education).

2. Courses designed to meet the specific needs of their target audiences (e.g. a course for students involved in full-time internships)

3. “3+1” courses: 4 credit courses where 3 credits are offered on ground with a 1-credit “between class” online component that has a compelling rationale for being online

4. Courses where the online component is synchronous, or broken into small groups meeting synchronously, allowing students to express themselves online as an alternative or enhancement to on-ground participation.

5. Courses with other compelling rationales for the substitution of online for on-ground sessions.

2. Training for Teaching Online: Faculty teaching online and hybrid courses must participate in training opportunities utilizing local Instructional Design and Technology Resource Center facilities, which may also include Quality Matters training. All faculty wishing to teach in online or online-hybrid format shall self-designate on the Online Course Form their current online and hybrid course level of proficiency from the list below in order to allow IDTRC to work with the faculty member to design the appropriate training to best support their training and course development needs:

Expert user: Excellence in online learning. Certified by Quality Matters, Online Learning Consortium, etc. Would be willing to serve as a mentor. Confident to teach or moderate an online teaching session.

User: some confidence in online teaching in need of support for improved course delivery.

Novice: never taught online.

Expert users may be asked to allow other faculty members to see their Blackboard courses as models of best practices, but this is voluntary. The Committee will review all Blackboard courses in order to make recommendations to department chairs, deans, and the provost about additional training needs.

3. Student Opinion Surveys in Online and Online-Hybrid Courses: Article 4.11.8 of the Contract requires that student opinion surveys be administrated in all courses by a third party. The Committee will make recommendations about how to administer these surveys. Each department with online courses will designate a person to be trained by IDTRC in administering it for their department. In addition to department course evaluation (student opinion surveys), data will be collected from students in a separate assessment of online learning overall, in order to measure the overall effectiveness of online learning at CCSU. Data on online learning as a general process will be aggregated for overall assessment and cannot be used in promotion or tenure deliberations.

II. Student Opinion Surveys in Online Courses

CourseEval Pilot

One of the duties of the Committee was to bring online and online-hybrid courses in line with the CSU-AAUP Contract. Article 4.11.7 requires that student opinion surveys be administrated in all courses by a third party. In spring 2018, we will pilot a system to do so, CourseEval. The Committee will then get feedback from departments about its use in order to make a recommendation on what should be used in the future. Departments with online courses will either designate a person to receive training on deploying the surveys in CourseEval from IDTRC, or they can continue to use their system if they use a third party, such as Select Survey, already. Departments can use their own existing surveys or decide if they wish to have a new one for online courses. Regardless, the decision remains with departments. This will allow the surveys to be used by DEC's for evaluation, and it will allow students to express their opinions on course design and delivery.

The Senate Report also requires the Committee to collect data on the overall quality of online learning. These questions will be added to the department's survey. The data, however, will only be reviewed in aggregate, making it impossible to determine specific instructors or courses. This data will also not be used in promotion and tenure evaluations. The goal of this data is to allow the Committee to make recommendations to Faculty Senate, departments, deans, and the Provost regarding the state of online learning at CCSU.

The questions to be used are:

Additional Questions for Student Opinion Surveys

1. How effective was the use of technology in this course? 5 scale
2. How reliable and accessible was the technology and/or Blackboard in this course? 5 scale
3. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of online learning? 5 scale

III. Recommendations for Courses Over the 40 Cap in Fall and Spring

One of the difficulties faced by this Committee was negotiating the responsibilities of the Committee as mandated by the Senate Report and the requirements set forth in the Contract. The bylaws (see above) reflect the resolution of this difficulty. Faculty wishing to teach online in fall and spring will propose the course to their department and fill out the Online Learning Form for the Committee. Department chairs and then deans will approve these courses in the first round of the schedule. The Committee will then evaluate the proposed courses if the cap has been exceeded and make recommendations to department chairs, deans, and ultimately the Provost using the priorities identified by the Senate Report and the new bylaws. There is no cap in summer and winter, and so, this will not be a responsibility of the Committee.

Online Course Form

Faculty Name:	
Department:	
Term of Course:	
Course:	
Credits:	
Rationale:	
Level of Technology: <small>Expert user: excellence in online learning. Certified by Quality Matters, Online Learning Consortium, etc. Would be willing to serve as a mentor. Confident to teach or moderate an online teaching session. User: some confidence in online teaching in need of support for improved course delivery. Novice: never taught online</small>	
Approval by Department:	
Date:	
Approval by Dean:	
Date:	
Recommendation by Online Learning	

Committee:	
Date:	

IV. Training and Support

As outlined in the Senate Report and reflected in the new bylaws, one of the ongoing duties of the Committee is to provide support and training for online faculty. According to the procedure in the bylaws, faculty will self-identify their level of training and preparation using the Online Learning Form. The Committee and IDTRC will then follow up to ensure that faculty are getting the support needed to teach effectively online.

One of the Committee's immediate recommendation for this is that the current \$1,000 stipend for developing a course that has never been offered before online be used for other purposes. There are several problems with the current policy. It only gives the money to a faculty member that teaches the course the first time. This means that additional faculty cannot get the stipend if someone, even long ago, offered the course online. This is especially problematic because the original developer does not have to share their course to new faculty. It is also problematic as all other courses go through the curriculum development grant process for a stipend. This process allows the larger faculty to consider university priorities for our curriculum; this circumvents this evaluation. Instead, we recommend that these funds be set aside in a fund for training and support. The Committee is working with IDTRC to explore options for local training opportunities through Quality Matters.

V. Verification of Student Identity

The final charge of the Senate Report was to develop a system for student identity verification. This is the final work of this Committee for the semester.

[SEE ORIGINAL REPORT FOR INFO. ON RESPONDUS AND CHARTER OAK]