The Distance Learning Course Development Process

The revision of the previous Distance Learning Course Approval Process

The previous USI Distance Learning approval process (1998 – 2012) reveals a design flaw by only focusing on curriculum design and not addressing the course development and delivery process. The Department of Distance Learning, along with its advisory committees, has proposed a modified version of the course approval process that is faculty friendly, easy-to-follow, and most importantly, it allows faculty to access needed training and support throughout the course development process.

This revised process was co-developed by a group of campus leaders (listed below) after consulting with members of the provost council (11/20/2012), faculty senate (11/16/2012), department chairs and directors (11/28/2012):

- Bonnie Beach – Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Teacher Education
- Shelly Blunt – Academic Affairs
- Tom Bordelon – College of Liberal Arts
- Ernie Hall – College of Business
- Megan Linos – Distance Learning
- Mayola Rowser – College of Nursing and Health Professions

A pilot experiment of this revised process was conducted in year 2013, and the campus implementation starts in January 2014 for summer/fall 2014 course proposals.

Modification Summary

1. The process is renamed from “course approval process” to “course development process”. The application form is renamed from “course approval form” to “course development proposal form”.
2. Faculty who complete all required tasks within the agreed time period will be automatically approved to offer this Distance Learning course without additional process.
3. The process is designed to be adaptable to individual instructor’s online teaching experience and training needs. Customized consultation support based on experience is an integral part of the process.

4. Training workshops will be offered during the course development process upon request. Novices can also choose to join the “course development program,” hosted by the faculty training staff at Distance Learning. Comprehensive support of technical training, pedagogical consultation, and peer review are embedded in the process.

The Step by Step Process

Once the course is approved to be developed as a Distance Learning course, faculty will schedule an initial meeting with the Distance Learning Consultant (Step 1). After the first meeting, faculty should feel free to start the course development process (step 2-4) either on their own or with a cohort. Faculty who complete the required tasks/steps within the agreed time period will be automatically approved to deliver this class as a Distance Learning course without additional approval process.

Step 1: Preparation/Initial Request

1.1 Submit a signed Distance Learning Course Development Proposal Form and a copy of the existing course syllabus (Can be for the traditional campus class)

1.2 Identify or request a spare Blackboard course site for the purpose of development. Send your request to it@usi.edu or call 812/465-1080

1.3 Schedule an initial meeting with the Distance Learning consultant

1.4 At the meeting, check list items and timeline will be determined and confirmed by the instructor

Step 2: Curriculum Conversion

2.1 The 1st edit of the course syllabus for online students

2.2 Develop the course event calendar

2.3 Configure the Blackboard navigation (skeleton) aligned with the curriculum/syllabus design

2.4 If available, transfer existing course content to the identified Blackboard development site

2.5 Mid-checking point – schedule another meeting with Distance Learning Consultant if needed

Step 3: Curriculum Conversion

3.1 Updated learning activities, assignments, exams, and assessments items on Blackboard

3.2 Blackboard Gradebook

3.3 The 2nd edit of the course syllabus for online students
3.4 Updated course event calendar
3.5 The Welcome message recording (Course overview) and the “start here” page

Step 4: Peer Review Process

4.1 Identify a faculty colleague for feedback (Subject Matter Expert preferred)
4.2 Final meeting with the identified faculty colleague (4.1) and the Distance Learning Consultant

Distance Learning Course Requirements:

1. A signed Distance Learning Course Proposal From & the existing syllabus
2. A spare Blackboard site for the purpose of course development
3. Initial meeting with the Distance Learning Consultant
4. An updated syllabus with virtual office hours, course policy, technology requirements, etc.
5. The Course Event Calendar
6. A welcome message (course overview) recording & the “Start here” information
7. A completed Blackboard course site with all web links checked
8. The final peer discussion meeting with the Distance Learning consultant

The Required Syllabus Components:

1. General course information: Course ID, Semester term, faculty contact information, etc.
2. Course description, course site overview, and learning objectives
3. Clearly stated virtual office hours and the technology platform for the meeting
4. Course requirements (e.g. textbook, technology hardware, software, etc.)
5. Assignment and learning activity description
6. Grading methods and rubrics
7. Course policy
8. Student support resources and technical support contact information

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

I have never taught online in the past. What kind of faculty training support is available?

The Department of Distance Learning offers a Distance Learning Course Development Program for faculty who either need to develop a new Distance Learning course or desire to improve their existing Distance Learning Courses. We also provide walk-in and mobile support station to address faculty’s course development/technical needs. Faculty can also borrow a piece of technology (e.g. iPad, webcam, headset, etc.) or use the computers (e.g. Camtasia software) in the Faculty Innovation Studio (FA 46). A
A group of **Student Technology Consultants** will assist you with your course development needs. For more details, please contact the Department of Distance Learning at (812) 228-5124 or [dlhelp@usi.edu](mailto:dlhelp@usi.edu).

**I am an experienced online teaching faculty member. Can I waive the process?**

No. All new proposed Distance Learning courses will need to be approved by the Department of Distance Learning despite the experience level of the instructor. The approval process has been the policy at USI since 1998 to ensure quality distance learning course development and delivery, and we believe it is important to continue the policy but simplify the process that better aligns with faculty’s course development needs and their online teaching experience.

**Can my course be listed on Banner/myUSI before it is fully developed?**

Yes, your “future” distance learning course can be listed on Banner after you have agreed with a course development timeline in the initial meeting. If your course is not fully developed by the agreed date or before the semester begins, it will NOT be cancelled for that term. However, this course/faculty will be on probation and will not be able to be offered again as a Distance Learning course until the requirements are fulfilled completely.

**What should I do if I (my course) am on probation?**

No worries!! Each proposed course has one **semester grace period** to be delivered as an unapproved Distance Learning course if faculty was unable to complete the requirements by the deadline. However, the course instructor is REQUIRED to go through the process again before it can be listed as a Distance Learning course the second time. As long as the instructor fulfills the requirements **before the registration period** of the next semester, your course can be listed again as a Distance Learning course.

For example: Dr. Joe Smith is listed as the ENG101.NO1 course instructor for spring 2014, but is unable to fulfill the course requirements by the agreed date before spring 2014 begins. Joe will be able to still teach this class as a Distance Learning course in spring 2014, but he will need to go through the process again to fulfill the requirements before the registration period for Fall 2014. Once the requirements are fully completed, the ENG101:NO1 course can be listed in a future term (e.g. Fall 2014 or beyond).

**Related Forms:**

- Distance Learning Course Development Proposal Form
  [http://www.usi.edu/media/870352/dlcourse_application.pdf](http://www.usi.edu/media/870352/dlcourse_application.pdf)
- The checklist
  [http://www.usi.edu/media/2080947/checklist01162014.docx](http://www.usi.edu/media/2080947/checklist01162014.docx)

**Questions or Comments:**

For further information about the revised Distance Learning Course Development process, please visit our web site at [http://www.usi.edu/distance/faculty/process](http://www.usi.edu/distance/faculty/process). If you have any questions or comments about this revised Distance Learning Course Development process, please contact the Department of Distance Learning at 812/228-5124 or send an email to [distance@usi.edu](mailto:distance@usi.edu).
Distance Learning Course Development Proposal Form

COURSE INFORMATION

Course ID: ________________     Proposed Initial Delivery Term: ☐ Fall ☐ Summer ☐ Spring 20____

Proposed Online Offering Scheduled: Every ☐ Fall ☐ Summer ☐ Spring ☐ Other ________________

Course Developer: ________________     Potential Course Instructor(s): ________________

Proposed Enrollment Size: ☐ Under 25 ☐ 25 – 30 ☐ 30 – 45 ☐ 45 – 60 ☐ 60+ ☐ New Blackboard Space?

PROPOSED COURSE DESIGN PLAN (Choose all that Apply)

Lecture Delivery: ☐ Record campus class lectures ☐ Pre-record lectures ☐ Conduct live sessions online ☐ Need Advice

How do you plan to deliver course lectures for online students?

Class Participation: ☐ Live Discussion ☐ Offline Discussion ☐ Self-Reflection ☐ Group Activities ☐ Need Advice

Exam/Quiz: ☐ Online Exam ☐ Proctored Exam ☐ Self-Practice Exam ☐ No Exam/Quiz ☐ Need Advice

Faculty/Student Communication: ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ Office Hours on Skype or Adobe Connect ☐ Need Advice

Note: ___________________________________________________________

PROPOSED LEARNING TECHNOLOGY PLAN (Choose all that Apply)

What web platform do you plan to deliver this course? ☐ Blackboard ☐ Need Advice ☐ Other ________________

How do you plan to record your lecture? ☐ Panopto ☐ Blackboard Collaborate ☐ VoiceThread ☐ GoTo Meeting

☐ Show Me on iPad ☐ Adobe Presenter/Breeze ☐ Need Advice ☐ Other ________________

If you plan to meet students online, what tool will you use? ☐ Panopto ☐ Blackboard Collaborate ☐ GoTo Meeting

☐ Adobe Connect ☐ Need Advice ☐ Other ________________

COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT APPROVAL

☐ The college has made arrangements for determining the ownership of intellectual property and copyright of this course as well as the compensation for development and delivery of this course.

Faculty Signature: _______________________     Department Approval: _______________________     Signature of Department Chair

College Approval: _______________________     Distance Learning Approval: _______________________     Signature of Assistant Provost for Distance Learning

Last Update: 1/14/2013