August 20, 2002

TO: Deans Council Members
FROM: Parks B. Dimsdale  
Executive Vice President

SUBJECT: DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

Attached is a copy of the report made by the Distance and Distributed Learning Advisory Committee. The Committee recommends that the University Center for Teaching and Learning coordinates distributed learning at UWF and that a formal Advisory Group be formed to develop a plan for distributed learning with representation from the Deans and Directors of academic units and other stakeholders.

The President and I agree with the Committee’s recommendation that the Center coordinates distributed learning efforts for UWF. To begin implementation, I am requesting the Committee to recommend an appropriate name for the center and membership to the Advisory Group. I am also requesting Dr. Gary Howard to present these recommendations, including the Committee’s proposed organizational structure, at the next Deans Council meeting.

I would like to thank the committee members for their work. Each of you has helped move the University forward in an area of complexity and real challenge. The unified approach recommended by the Committee should help the University ensure that resources committed to distributed learning are used efficiently and that our plans are marketed appropriately and effectively. And, even more importantly, that the University’s success with distributed learning is celebrated.

PBD: cdw

Attachment

cc: Dr. John Cavanaugh  
Distance and Distributed Learning  
Advisory Committee  
Mr. Vance Burgess  
Mr. Paul Williford  
Dr. Gary Howard  
Dr. Pam Northrup  
Dr. John Clune  
Dr. Grady Morein  
Dr. Kitty Fouché  
Dr. Wes Little  
Dr. Richie Platt  
Ms. Karen Goldschmidt
Planning Priorities for
Distance and Distributed Learning at UWF

June 26, 2002

Introduction

The Distance and Distributed Learning Advisory Committee was reformed as a subcommittee of the UPC-IT. The committee’s role was to create the Action Plan to establish a centralized organizational structure for distance learning at UWF and to propose an initial budget for the cost of off-campus programs for the upcoming three years.

The Distance and Distributed Learning (DDL) Advisory Committee is recommending that distance learning be positioned in the Center for University Teaching and Learning and that an Advisory Committee be formed to continue in the planning efforts and to decide the direction for distance learning at UWF. The following recommendations are being proposed for consideration during the next organizational phase of the DDL.

Priority Areas

The priorities for distance learning focus on collaboration with off-campus programs and a continued partnership with community colleges and regional organizations to meet the needs of the community. The following major areas are considered as priority for the upcoming three years (not listed in order of importance):

1. Establish the organizational structure
2. Establish the location to house Distance and Distributed Learning.
3. Provide ongoing faculty development
4. Provide ongoing faculty support
5. Ensure students are provided quality support
6. Implement and maintain high quality distance learning programs and focused efforts
7. Collaborate with the university stakeholders (area community colleges, military, etc.) on program development and ongoing implementation
8. Select and fund distance learning programs and focused program initiatives
9. Conduct R & D on innovative curricular strategies for distance learning

Discussion of Priorities by University Strategic Planning Goal

Each of the planning priorities presented through this document will be discussed in relation to the UWF Strategic Planning Goals.

UWF Strategic Planning Goal One: Promote a learning environment that encourages the development of individual potential in students, faculty and staff.
Establish Organizational Structure

**Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the Center for University Teaching and Learning be responsible for the administration and oversight of Distance/Distributed Learning (DDL) with each college maintaining its own Instructional Technology Team to support individual program initiatives.

**Action 1:** Inform the campus of the enhanced mission of the Center for University Teaching and Learning.

**Action 2:** Working with the Director and other academic units, establish an appropriate name for the center.

**Action 3:** Review existing DDL entities and establish clear lines of responsibility. Insure that appropriate entity names are reflected and published.

**Recommendation 2:** Establish an Advisory Group that will work collaboratively with DDL to set strategic goals, objectives and policies relative to the pedagogical and technological administration and support of DDL.

**Action 1:** Working with Deans and Directors of academic units, appoint an Advisory Group representative of the following groups: colleges, library, and CDE.

**Action 2:** Working with the Director of DDL, establish an organizational structure for the advisory group.

**Recommendation 3:** College level Teams will be established that will have the primary responsibility of identifying and supporting teaching and learning needs, courses, programs and focused program initiatives at the college level.

**Action 1:** Programs and focused initiatives will be identified in the colleges and supported by DDL.

**Action 2:** Identify teams for each college that will work closely with the Deans and Department Chairs to identify and support DDL initiatives.

**Location for Distance and Distributed Learning**

**Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the Director of the Center for University Teaching and Learning work with the Provost to identify appropriate space for immediate occupancy.

**Recommendation 2:** It is recommended that DDL be located in a future classroom building with state-of-the-art wiring and technologies available for designing, developing, and implementing high-quality, high-tech distance learning.
Provide Ongoing Faculty Development

**Recommendation:** The University Center for Teaching and Learning is leading this effort. It is our recommendation that they continue their efforts, focusing on program-level development and focused initiatives.

**Action 1:** Conduct training sessions on new LMS  
**Action 2:** Assist faculty in designing and developing web-based courses  
**Action 3:** Prioritize faculty development and support for those engaged in program or focused initiative efforts.

Provide Ongoing Faculty Support

**Recommendation:** The Director of the Center for University Teaching and Learning and the college-level Instructional Technology Teams will work together in this effort. It is recommended that the teams work directly with Department Chairs and Deans to provide support for program development and focused initiatives.

**Action 1:** Assist faculty in technical support issues  
**Action 2:** Assist Department Chairs and Deans in establishing the constructs for programs to be completely delivered at a distance. Dealing with issues of online interaction, collaboration, design strategies, and implementation realities.  
**Action 3:** Assist Department Chairs and program contacts in gaining whatever additional support is required to design, implement and maintain high-quality distance programs.

Ensure Students Are Provided Quality Support

**Recommendation:** The Director of the Center for University Teaching and Learning will coordinate this effort with the appropriate student service delivery organization. Supporting students is one of the most critical features of implementing a program at a distance. In trying to maintain our “flavor” of working with students individually, encouraging them, and creating a positive, conducive learning environment, the committee is recommending that student support be available at a distance with the same strength that it is available on campus.

**Action 1:** Improve infrastructure support for students (dial up, etc.)  
**Action 2:** Assure advising for distance students  
**Action 3:** Assure support for web registration  
**Action 4:** Promote support for library services  
**Action 5:** Conduct ongoing mentor and facilitator training.  
**Action 7:** In the spirit of “Students First,” coordinate efforts of campus-wide student services related to DDL
Implement and Maintain High Quality Distance Learning Programs and Focused Efforts

Recommendation 1: The Director of the Center for University Teaching and Learning and the college level Instructional Technology Teams will work with University Advancement, Enrollment Services, the Library staff and other divisions in this effort. To implement distance programs we must have a focused marketing campaign that reaches students in our region that traditionally would not consider attending UWF and those too distant to normally consider. It is recommended that campus-wide distance programs be aggressively marketed.

Action 1: Plan and market distance learning programs to targeted groups of diverse and talented students

Recommendation 2: Maintenance of distance learning programs will be facilitated through the college level Instructional Technology Teams in collaboration with the Center for University for Teaching and Learning and ITS.

Action 1: Create a plan of action in each college to deal with maintenance of distance programs

Action 2: Establish a campus-wide plan for dealing with archiving course materials, sharing materials across faculty members, etc.

Recommendation 3: It is the recommendation of this committee that quality course design be implemented in all program and focused initiatives and that ongoing evaluation occur to ensure the quality of courses delivered at a distance.

Action 1: Form a group to establish quality indicators for DDL courses using SACS criteria for quality distance programs.

Action 2: Use data gathered for quality distance programs to make modifications to overall courses and programs.

UWF Strategic Planning Goal Three: Provide solutions to educational, cultural, economic and environmental needs of the region.
Collaborate with the University
Stakeholders on Program Development and Ongoing Implementation

Recommendation 1: DDL and individual Colleges will work with stakeholders including Community Colleges, the Navy, and other organizations to develop high-quality market-driven programs.

Action 1: Conduct college-level market analysis
Action 2: Work with Deans and Department chairs to identify areas of need.

Select and Fund Distance Learning Programs
Focused Program Initiatives

Recommendation 2: Decision making on new programs and focused initiatives should be based on the need for programs to be offered at a distance. Funding should be directed at programs at a distance and at focused initiatives such as general education courses and professional core of program areas.

Action 1: Deans, Department Chairs, and college Instructional Technology Teams utilize market analysis data on program selection for distance learning programs
Action 2: Programs selected for funding should be supported by DDL.

UWF Strategic Planning Goal Four: Manage growth responsibly through focus on continuous quality improvement of programs and processes.

Conduct R & D on Innovative Curricular Strategies
For Distance Learning

Recommendation: To further the efforts of establishing quality programs, it is recommended that research and development efforts occurring on the campus are given merit through focused research funding to improve distance learning practices on the campus. This is a campus-wide effort to be coordinated by the Director of University Teaching and Learning.

Action 1: Award Summer Research funding to faculty pursuing distance learning research as their line of inquiry.
Action 2: Award focused research initiatives in the areas of quality, retention, and innovative instructional strategies.

Note: See Implement and Maintain High Quality Distance Learning Programs and Focused Efforts-Recommendation 3.