

Report of the Distance Education Task Force --

A Proposal for the Ferris Model of E-Learning

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Distance Education Task Force Report

Introduction

In March 2003, Interim Vice President Tom Oldfield appointed a Task Force to study the landscape of distance education and to make recommendations for its future at Ferris State University. The charge to the Task Force is found in Appendix A. The Task Force was comprised of three faculty members, three administrators, and a chairperson. The history of the membership of the Task Force, as well as a list of current members, is found in Appendix B.

Before making recommendations regarding distance education at Ferris, the Task Force was charged with researching the state of distance education at the University and elsewhere. Although the research of the Task Force was neither scientific nor comprehensive, it was substantial, with each member assigned specific areas of inquiry.

To accomplish an external scan, the Task Force did the following:

- Reviewed distance education efforts at our sister institutions (the other public universities of Michigan)
- Reviewed distance education efforts at our peer institutions (Weber State, University of Minnesota-Duluth, Western Illinois University, University of Wisconsin--Stout, Central Missouri State University)
- Reviewed distance education efforts at other institutions we knew to have exemplary models or offerings likely to be in direct competition with our own (Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative, University of Maryland University College, University of Phoenix, and Cappella University)
- Shared and discussed a variety of readings related to distance education
- Shared and discussed the variety of experiences with and perspectives on distance education that each member brought to the Task Force

To accomplish an internal scan, the Task Force did the following:

- Reviewed existing University documents related to distance education (including Web-Based Instruction at Ferris State University: A Framework for Policy and Action draft document from July 2001, the University Center for Extended Learning Plan for Online Instruction, the Intellectual Property Rights and Electronic Distance Learning Materials Policy, and the Course Development Agreement)
- Reviewed existing data and procedures in the University Center for Extended Learning (UCEL) and the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development (CTLFD) related to web-based, mixed delivery, and web-enhanced course offerings
- Surveyed the Deans' Council about web-based, mixed delivery, and web-enhanced course offerings in their colleges (see Appendix C)
- Held two open forums for the University community in October 2003

- Established a Lotus Notes email address so that any member of the University community could offer written suggestions to the Task Force

Although there are multiple forms of distance education, including interactive television and correspondence courses, the Task Force came to believe that: 1) its focus should be restricted to the online learning environment because of its growth, popularity, and flexibility; and 2) its focus should, as much as possible, remain on student learning to be in keeping with the learning paradigm of higher education, a paradigm introduced and disseminated in the works of Barr and Tagg (1995), among others, and conceptualized for the future in works like *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002), among others. Because of these considerations, the Task Force will hereafter use the terms “e-learning” or “online learning” rather than “distance education.”

*Also, please note that, in this report, the term “web-based” is used to refer to wholly online courses, “mixed delivery” is used to refer to courses with significant portions of coursework presented in both traditional and online formats, and “web-enhanced” is used to refer to traditional courses that are supplemented with online work. Definitions will be further clarified later in this report.

Current Practices and Procedures at FSU

Ferris is in the early stages of development of e-learning. Practices related to e-learning at Ferris have evolved somewhat haphazardly over the past several years, with leadership coming primarily from UCEL, CTLFD, and the Office of Academic Affairs. The Task Force discovered that a variety of practices and procedures exist, that this variety causes some confusion, and that there is limited understanding of Ferris’s overall institutional engagement with e-learning.

The primary practices and procedures discovered to be in use regarding web-enhanced courses, primarily promoted and supported through the CTLFD, are outlined below:

1. In the late nineties, through the facilitation of the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development, a course management system, WebCT, was selected by the faculty as the platform that the University would support. Since that time, training (workshops and one-on-one assistance) and system administration support for WebCT have been handled through the Center. (Support of the hardware needed to run WebCT was initially provided by CTLFD, but is now provided by Information Services and Telecommunications.)
2. One-on-one assistance and system administration duties are provided by the Center’s Instructional Technologist, a full-time administrative support employee.
3. Workshops are developed and scheduled by the WebCT Training Coordinator, a full-time faculty member who receives overload pay for one course each semester as compensation for his work. Workshops are taught by the Training Coordinator and a

cadre of eight faculty members from across the University who are compensated at an hourly rate for their training duties.

4. The Center is able to offer faculty the support they need to master the WebCT tool and to understand the various ways in which they might use the tool to enhance the instruction they provide in their traditional courses. This has been the Center's strength.
5. Any instructor can simply request a WebCT account from the instructional technologist and enhance his or her course as he or she wishes. The extent to which instructors use WebCT to supplement their traditional classes is not consistently communicated to department heads/the Ferris administration and, therefore, to students before they register for classes.

The primary practices discovered to be in use regarding web-based or wholly online course offerings, primarily promoted and supported through UCEL and the College of Professional and Technological Studies (CPTS), are outlined below:

1. Some faculty members who are interested in developing a web-based course contact the University Center for Extended Learning to initiate the course development for which they would either be paid at \$1,500 per credit or receive release time. (Faculty members also may be asked by their departments/colleges to create an online course as part of their regular workload. Note that, sometimes, creation of new online courses requires adjunct faculty replacement costs be paid.) UCEL has allocated funds in each of the past few years to pay faculty for development of online courses. Course Development Agreements (see Appendix D) are initiated that are signed by the dean of the college from which the course is offered, as well as by the UCEL or CPTS dean. Although there is often conversation with department heads and others, there has not been a formal, consistent approval process.
2. Beginning in 2003, the process became more formalized with the request for a written rationale for the development of a web-based course (a form for which has recently been developed), more sign-offs, and identification of sources of funding. This procedure was instituted because of a lack of clear direction about what Ferris wanted to do with e-learning and concerns that courses may not be fitting into an overall preferred pattern of development. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or his designee must now approve course development requests for wholly online and for mixed delivery classes, whether or not they entail special funding for faculty stipends or release time.
3. A number of Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVACR) courses are in development as part of a federal earmark grant. The approval process for this special baccalaureate-degree completion program option is different, although the same compensation practices are observed.

4. Additionally, CPTS has paid for the development of selected courses, for example in Education, and has made these available for others' use.
5. Until January 2003, UCEL had an Instructional Designer on staff who worked with faculty seeking varying amounts of design assistance for courses developed with UCEL or CPTS investment dollars during the 2001 through early 2003 period. There was also a media specialist who provided faculty with web development support during this time period. Due to budgetary constraints and a lack of clear direction for e-learning at FSU, both of these positions were eliminated in early 2003. The federal earmark grant referenced above provided funds for both individuals to continue on a project basis, with the web designer having completed his work at the end of June 2003. The Instructional Designer is still being utilized on a consulting, as-needed basis for the HVACR project. Currently, the Center does not possess the expertise to offer in-depth instructional design support to faculty who wish to create wholly online or mixed delivery courses, nor does it have the staffing needed to actually do the technical work for faculty to get their materials online.
6. Another practice at Ferris (we cannot be sure how common it is) is for a faculty member to develop a web-based course on his or her own, possibly without receiving University approval or compensation. In these cases it seems that three factors influence this choice: (1) the desire of the faculty member to retain all rights to the course, (2) a lack of knowledge of possible sources of funds for development, or (3) a department's or College's specific desire for the course, independent of UCEL or CPTS interest, and their subsequent investment in it. Several courses in Allied Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education fall into this individual- or department-developed category. In some cases, Ferris faculty host their courses on commercial services, such as Yahoo! rather than WebCT. There may actually be more web-based courses being offered than FSU realizes.
7. Another source of support for online course development in the College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS) has been the creation of a WebCT Users Group. Because creation of wholly online and mixed delivery courses is integral to the success of several programs in the college and because of the understandably limited availability of the instructional technologist in CTLFD, out of necessity, CAHS faculty developed a mechanism by which faculty could support one another in the creation of new web-based courses. In this WebCT Users Group, seasoned faculty members, who have previous experience creating web-based courses, help beginning faculty overcome first-time course creation barriers by providing one-on-one technical assistance and moral support. Even if the availability of support from the instructional technologist (or an instructional designer) were sufficient, this Users Group would still provide needed assistance because of the unique challenges that the curricula in the college presents.

The primary practices discovered to be in use regarding mixed delivery or hybrid course offerings, also primarily promoted and supported by UCEL and CPTS, are outlined below.

1. The seven points noted above for web-based course offerings also apply to hybrid courses. However, mixed delivery courses, due to Ferris' systems, are more difficult to track. With the current system, only wholly web-based courses are designated as being delivered online. Because mixed delivery courses include face-to-face instruction in addition to web-based coursework, they are coded in a manner similar to that used in traditional course delivery. Hence, there really is no clear way to determine how many courses are delivered in a mixed delivery format. Some are clearly offered through UCEL, others are offered in the colleges with knowledge of the administration, but others appear to be offered solely at the discretion of the faculty member.
2. Through Winter Semester 2003, most of the College of Allied Health Sciences' hybrid courses were developed through a shared funding plan between CPTS and UCEL. Since Summer 2003, the College supported the development of online courses (not just mixed delivery) by both full-time and adjunct faculty through including course development as part of workload or through providing compensation from a variety of funding sources have been used in CAHS.
3. When compared with instruction in wholly online courses, additional, unique costs are incurred with instruction of mixed delivery coursework. Because mixed delivery courses include face-to-face class sessions, arrangements for use of facilities must be made. In most cases involving off-campus instruction, a facility rental fee is incurred for use of a classroom. If the mixed delivery course includes lab or clinical instruction, equipment must be transported for use in a classroom or use of specialized facilities must be negotiated. Additionally, because the student to faculty ratio in lab or clinical courses is often much smaller than that for a lecture course (e.g. 1:10), several lab or clinical sections must be offered or a lab assistant must be hired. Lastly, unlike lecture courses which have a 1:1 student contact hour to credit hour ratio, lab and clinical courses are usually taught in a 1:2 or 1:3 ratio, which results in greater personnel costs when adjunct faculty are utilized.
4. The following programs at Ferris are currently delivered in hybrid form: Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Associate of Applied Science in Respiratory Care, Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education, and the Master of Business Administration. The Master of Science in Nursing degree, which starts in Fall 2004, also will be implemented in a mixed-delivery format.

Having reviewed the current state of e-learning at Ferris, the Task Force determined that shortcomings in the following areas are detrimental to the effective future development, delivery, and assessment of e-learning and, therefore, are of great concern:

- the level of support for faculty and students
- the lack of policies and procedures related to e-learning
- the quality and presentation of Ferris' web-based courses

- the lack of a faculty-created code of ethics for e-learning courses
- the existence of barriers that reduce the transferability of web-based courses from one instructor to another
- the process for putting courses into an e-learning format
- the communication of the e-learning elements of courses to students and administration

Proposed remedies for these problematic areas will be presented in the Task Force Recommendations section of this report.

National Trends

Enrollment

As was noted earlier, in addition to performing a review of the literature on e-learning, each Task Force member talked with representatives of other universities and associations to learn about their experiences. Every entity consulted indicated that e-learning courses were enjoying significant enrollment growth.

In *Sizing the Opportunity – The Quality and Extent of Online Education in the United States, 2002 and 2003*, the Sloan Consortium reports the following statistics:

- Over 1.6 million students took at least one online course during Fall 2002 (p.1).
- Over one-third of these students (578,000) took all of their courses online (p.1).
- Among all U.S. higher education students in Fall 2002, 11 percent took at least one online course (p.1).
- Among those students at institutions where online courses were offered, 13 percent of students took at least one online course (p.1).
- The number of students taking at least one online course is projected to increase by 19.8 percent over the one-year period from Fall 2002 to Fall 2003, to include a total of 1.9 million students (p.1).
- Eighty-one percent of all institutions of higher education offer at least one fully online or blended course (p. 2).
- Complete online degree programs are offered by 34 percent of the institutions (p. 2).
- Among public institutions, the numbers are even more compelling, with 97 percent offering at least one online or blended course and 49 percent offering an online degree program (p. 2).

Note: the Sloan Consortium defines online courses as those that include at least 80 percent of the coursework online in contrast to blended or hybrid where they define the proportion of online component as 30 to 80%. Also, the Consortium defines an online degree as one where at least 80% of the courses are available online (p. 6).

Enrollment growth in online learning is expected to continue. In fact, most academic officers surveyed by the Sloan Consortium--67%--cite development of online learning opportunities as a “critical long-term strategy” for their institutions (p. 2).

Student Learning

Although a majority of academic officers surveyed for the Sloan Consortium study believe the learning outcomes for online education are just as good as for traditional, face-to-face instruction, faculty are more skeptical (pp. 2-3). However, another finding from the Task Force’s research is that student learning is not compromised in the e-learning environment.

In fact, this trend in distance education research has come to be known as the “no significant difference” phenomenon. In some studies, students’ academic achievement in a variety of distance education modalities--measured by retention and final grades--is even greater than that of students in comparable traditional courses. Neither the Task Force nor this report could review all of the studies done on this subject. For an overview of studies that support the “no significant difference” phenomenon, please consult <http://teleeducation.nb.ca/nosignificantdifference/>. For an overview of studies that do not support the phenomenon, please consult <http://teleeducation.nb.ca/significantdifference/>. The Task Force has concluded that e-learning is a credible and beneficial option for those students suited to its undertaking (see subsequent recommendations about student readiness) and concurs with noted author Carol Twigg, who writes in “Innovations in Online Learning: Moving Beyond No Significant Difference,” (2001) that “[w]hat we need now ... are new approaches that go beyond producing no significant difference.” In other words, we need to focus our collective energies on looking at how e-learning can offer new ways to improve student learning, not simply digital ways to replicate what happens in a traditional classroom.

Cost/Benefit Analyses

Although a common criticism of e-learning is that it is more costly than traditional, face-to-face instruction, the Task Force found that e-learning, through various means, can be made more affordable and should not be considered cost-prohibitive. In “Online Learning Costs More ... or Does It?” (1999) Carol Twigg notes that the initial time investment in online course development makes it more costly, and she adds: “Any first-time teaching experience is bound to take more time than one that has been repeated and refined over time.” This is, of course, only one factor that initially increases costs; technical infrastructure and faculty/staff/student support are two additional significant expenses. Still, the Task Force believes that the costs of venturing into the e-learning arena do not compare unfavorably to the costs of running many of Ferris’ programs or of creating a new technical/professional program. And the costs of not venturing into an arena that we have already seen is burgeoning may be even greater.

There are strategies that Twigg outlines in her article that a university might employ to lessen the costs, particularly the initial ones, of online instruction. For example, a

university may use a team approach to e-learning, with the faculty member as the “subject matter expert” and with web developers and instructional designers providing technical and pedagogical assistance. In fact, the Task Force will recommend that Ferris gradually move toward this model as it increases its e-learning offerings. Also, certain pedagogical techniques can be used to make the e-learning experience not only more efficient for the instructor but also more effective for the student. One of CTLFD’s responsibilities is to ensure that faculty teaching online are made aware of these techniques.

At Ferris specifically, Dr. Roberta Teahen, Dean of the University Center for Extended Learning, has estimated that only one offering of a didactic web-based course with 16 undergraduate students enrolled would be needed to recoup the direct costs for a faculty member to develop that course, given current compensation arrangements. Also, online courses offered to off-campus cohorts at Ferris’ regional sites would be particularly cost-effective, as travel for those courses nearly doubles normal instructional costs. It should be noted that in this break-even analysis no consideration is given to other costs associated with the offering of online instruction, such as maintenance of the server, staff time in UCEL or FSU-GR to coordinate development and delivery, staff time in CTLFD for WebCT training, and other overhead costs.

As already mentioned, the recovery cost for mixed delivery courses, particularly those with lab or clinical instruction, are more difficult to determine because of differing class sizes from program to program due to accreditation mandated faculty to student ratios, higher personnel costs due to the need for a lab assistant or compensation being based on contact vs. credit hour, and the need for specialized equipment and facility space.

Characteristics of Successful E-Learning

The Task Force read extensively and talked with many faculty and administrators about what makes for successful e-learning. Among the factors determined to be important and consistently reported in the literature are the following:

- Support and training for faculty, often with instructional designers or development coaches, as well as group workshops, online training, and/or individual coaching
- Technical infrastructure to support e-learning, including technicians and web specialists available to faculty
- Effective technical support systems for students, including orientation, helpdesks, etc. that are available 24 x 7
- Effective didactic support for students, including instructor availability, online learning resources, etc.
- Resources to invest in quality course development and delivery – faculty compensation, release time, instructional materials, computers, internet access, instructional development support, etc.
- Consistent online course standards to assure a quality product, a consistent image, and ease of use by faculty and students

- Clear, easy-to-understand, and easy-to-navigate institutional processes that do not thwart the creativity of the course developers but do promote a quality student learning experience and institutional accountability
- Strategic development of e-learning opportunities and systems, while obtaining and retaining adequate agility for changing expectations
- Clear responsibility – people know who they should ask for what assistance and what policies and procedures should be followed (for example, when seeking approval for a course, and developing, delivering, and assessing it)
- High levels of interaction among students and between students and the instructor
- Routine assessment of online courses for academic currency and pedagogical efficacy
- Routine assessment of the e-learning experience for students and faculty

In its *Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs* (2000), the regional accrediting commissions, including the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (Ferris' accreditor) summarize the critical categories for effective e-learning programs and use these guidelines in assessing institutions' programs:

1. Institutional Context and Commitment – evidence that the programs are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes, that budgets and policy statements are in place, and that adequate technical infrastructure and staffing are available.
2. Curriculum and Instruction – evidence that programs maintain standards of quality, focus on learning outcomes, make clear the expectations for students, and that decisions are made by qualified professionals.
3. Faculty Support – evidence that the institution has considered issues of workload and compensation; technical, design, and production support; orientation and training.
4. Student Support – evidence that the institution demonstrates its commitment to students completing a program; informs students appropriately in a variety of areas; makes provisions for advising, testing, financial aid, etc.
5. Evaluation and Assessment – evidence that both the assessment of student learning and program evaluation are regularly undertaken, and resulting data are used for improvement.

Extensive literature exists regarding what constitutes a high-quality online course. Another of many valuable resources is "Seven Principles of Effective Teaching: A Practical Lens for Evaluating Online Courses" (2001), which extrapolates from the "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." See the References page of this report for more information.

Other Institutions' Offerings

In Michigan, the institutions playing the most significant role in e-learning appear to be the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC), in which 25 of Michigan's 28 community colleges participate, and Central Michigan University, which has a well established extended learning program. Other institutions that we know, at least anecdotally, attract some students who might potentially attend Ferris are Baker College and the University of Phoenix. Certainly, however, any institution offering e-learning is a potential competitor with Ferris.

The College of Allied Health Sciences, in particular, sees competitors for its niche programs in many states, including Michigan, Colorado, California, and Utah. The proprietary institutions pose a particular threat.

The MCCVLC has grown at a truly impressive rate. It has increased its enrollment from about 1800 in Fall 1999 to over 16,000 in Fall 2003. It has increased its course offerings from 133 courses in 1999 to 644 in 2003.

The Task Force believes that, by partnering to offer 1+1 associate degrees in which Ferris provides professional coursework and the community college provides the general education and by offering third- and fourth-year degree completion opportunities online, Ferris can establish an even stronger relationship with the community colleges of Michigan.

Web-Based and Mixed Delivery Offerings/Growth at Ferris

Growth in online offerings through UCEL experienced an increase of 136% to 984 SCH in Fall 2003. Over the same period, FSU-GR increased from 42 SCH to 494, a 10-fold increase. UCEL staff report that online courses are filling early, and most will run at capacity. Following is the list of the online and hybrid courses offered through Ferris-UCEL in Fall 2003 and their associated enrollments:

• CCHS 101	Orientation to Health Care	28
• CCHS 102	Safety Issues in Health Care (3 sections)	61
• EDUC 540	Educational Technology in the Classroom (3 sec)	48
• EHSM 208	Environmental Regulations I	18
• EHSM 213	Introduction to Epidemiology	23
• EHSM 315	Epidemiology and Statistics	17
• EHSM 330	OSHA Laws and Regulations	25
• NURS 310	Nursing Health Promotion	8
• NURS 312	Nursing Health Assessment	8
• NURS 324	Transition into Professional Nursing (3 sec.)	68
• NURS 422	Nursing Research	13
• NURS 436	Community Health Nursing (2 sec.)	39
• NURS 499	Senior Seminar and Clinic Practicum (3 sec.)	33
• ISYS 275	Introduction to UNIX (4 sec.- 3 UCEL/1 FSU-GR)	16*
• MISM 655	E-Business Strategy	13

• MMBA 620	Human Resource Systems	17
• MMBA 625	Organizational Leadership	17
• MMBA 640	Project Management	20
• MRIS 102	Orientation to Medical Terminology	19
• MRIS 103	Medical Terminology	19
• RESP 100	Introduction to Respiratory Care (2 sec.)	46
• RESP 297	Cardiopulmonary Anatomy & Physiology	19
• RESP 297	Infectious Disorders	19
• HUMN 320	Biomedical Ethics	19
• HVAC 332	Security Equipment Selection & Design	18
• HVAC 342	Load Calculations and Energy Code	10

Following is the list of the online and hybrid courses offered through FSU-GR in Fall 2003 and their associated enrollments:

• CCHS 101	Orientation to Health Care	26
• EHSM 315	Epidemiology and Statistics	17
• EDUC 518	Diversity in the Classroom/Workplace (2 sec.)	36
• EDUC 540	Educational Technology in the Classroom	18
• EDUC 660	Action Research – Quality Mgt & Education	12
• ISYS 275	Introduction to UNIX (8 students GR/8 UCEL)	16*
• MISM 629	Legal & Ethical Issues in Business	15
• MRIS 103	Medical Terminology	20
• NURS 422	Nursing Research	13
• NURS 499	Senior Seminar and Clinic Practicum	7
• ECTE 510	Evaluation in Career/Technical Education	16
• MISM 661	Security Management	18
• MISM 662	Advanced Security Management	15

*A peculiarity established through tradition is that multiple sections are listed in a region's offerings, so students looking for courses in their regional area would find the all online offerings. As more FSU online offerings exist, we will wish to continue to have a separate online section in the course schedule publications so that students can easily identify both their regional options and their online options. The multiple sections for a single offering also confuse average class size calculations.

Responses to the Deans' Council Survey (taken in summer '03) indicate that there are approximately 50 wholly web-based courses that have been developed at Ferris and could be offered at any time. The survey further indicates that there are approximately 58 courses of which 50% or more is delivered online ("mixed delivery" courses), and all MSN courses in the College of Allied Health Sciences are planned for 50% or more delivery online, as the Graduate Nursing Education Certificate is. There could be additional courses that fall into these categories, but given the inconsistent use of our SIS course coding system, we cannot be certain at this time.

The number of traditional courses in which WebCT is used for some kind of enhancement is significantly higher than the figures noted above. Statistics from Winter 2003 show that there were 519 course sites on WebCT, 362 active sites, 178 designers, and 9444 student enrollments (includes duplicate headcount) in courses that utilized WebCT. Statistics from Winter 2004 show 547 active course sites, 197 designers, and 8769 student enrollments. (Note: these figures include all courses—wholly online, mixed delivery, or any degree of web-enhancement—which utilize WebCT.)

Successful existing certificates are being put online even as this report is being finalized. In February 2004, Professor Susan K. Jones and the University Center for Extended Learning announced the availability of two certificates online, in Direct Marketing and E-Commerce Marketing. These certificates are comprised of six online courses: ADVG 222 Principles of Advertising (to be offered online for the first time this summer), ADVG 375 Business-to-Business Advertising (offered online since 1999), MKTG 321 Principles of Marketing (to be offered online for the first time this summer), MKTG 383 Direct Marketing (offered online since 1998), ECOM 375 Business-to-Business E-Commerce Marketing, and ECOM 383, Business-to-Consumer E-Commerce Marketing (offered online since 2001 and 2002, respectively).

As subsequent recommendations will further demonstrate, the Task Force also believes that Ferris should focus its limited resources on development of high-demand niche courses and programs for online delivery and on development of supporting general education courses not readily available from community colleges or from the MCCVLC, most notably those at the upper levels.

Task Force Recommendations

Based on this research, input from the Ferris community, and conversations within the Task Force, the following recommendations are offered in response to the charge. Some additional recommendations on related topics are also made at the conclusion of this report.

Definitions

The Task Force, following the suggestion of Dr. Randy Vance, Professor in the Michigan College of Optometry and WebCT Training Coordinator, and others, recommends that an adaptation of the “Five Levels of Web Usage” formulated by Harmon and Jones in a 1999 article in *Educational Technology* be used to define the various levels of e-learning courses at Ferris. The adaptation involves using the descriptions of Harmon and Jones, but conflating the number of categories of e-learning from five to three, which are then linked to the widely used terms: web-enhanced courses, mixed delivery or hybrid courses, and web-based or wholly online courses. The three levels, and their descriptions, that the Task Force recommends Ferris use are:

1. **Level 1 – Web-Enhanced Courses** – In these courses, regular web access is essential because a student cannot be a productive member of the class and meet the learning outcomes without it. Often, a great deal of information and content is

available only via the web. Students make steady use of the web for various activities, although most traditional class meetings are retained.

2. **Level 2 – Mixed Delivery or Hybrid Courses** - In these courses, regular web access is essential because a student cannot be a productive member of the class and meet the learning outcomes without it. Most course content and materials are available only via the web. These courses are communal in nature in that a student generates much of the course content via the web through asynchronous discussions, real-time chats, presentations, and/or interactive television. Students make steady use of the web, although some traditional class meetings are retained. Often the actual class meetings occur on selected evenings or weekends in these courses.
3. **Level 3 – Web-Based or Wholly Online Courses** – These courses occur entirely online; classes no longer meet in the traditional classroom. These courses are completely virtual learning communities.

Note: courses that use some form of web enhancement, but do not require the student to have regular web access in order to meet the learning outcomes, are not designated with a specific “level” since they function in essentially the same manner as traditional, face-to-face courses.

New courses planned to be offered at Levels 2 and 3 would need curricular committee review consistent with traditional courses at Ferris. Curricular processes and forms would need to be adapted to include these kinds of courses.

The term “web” for purposes of defining these levels connotes the use of the Internet or an intranet to provide instruction and learning activities. Although it may include email communications, email by itself would not constitute an e-learning option.

According to discussions with the Assistant Director of Admissions and Records, these levels/designations could be used in course coding on SIS. They also would assist students in knowing what kind of e-learning elements and requirements their courses would have. They are student-friendly and easily comprehensible.

Criteria for Selecting Courses/Programs for E-Learning Development

Because Ferris is in the early stages of e-learning development, it is the faculty early adopters and innovators who have been most involved. This innovation should be encouraged even as institutional processes become more structured. The systems must serve the advancement of e-learning.

There are differing perspectives about whether only entire programs should be offered online or through mixed delivery or whether selected courses are viable in and of themselves. Valid arguments can be made in either direction. At this stage, with our limited offerings, and with our limited resources, the Task Force recommends that campus leaders remain open to either option, but **give priority to developing courses that will lead to complete niche programs being put online (such as HVACR and**

Respiratory Care) and to niche markets being served (such as continuing certifications for educators). When individual courses are being considered for online or mixed delivery, then priority should be given to those courses that meet University general education requirements not readily available from other sources or that provide career exploration opportunities, thereby serving as a recruitment tool for on-campus offerings (e.g. RESP 100 Introduction to Respiratory Care).

Therefore, the *criteria* for approving the development and offering of e-learning courses through Ferris should include the following:

1. Resources are available to support the development – compensation (in the form of stipend or faculty time) plus FSU support for the building of the course, either with web production and/or instructional design, when determined to be necessary in a given case.
2. A market exists for the courses for the foreseeable future – more than one year. The appropriate faculty member and department are responsible for providing this information, and UCEL and/or CPTS will confirm the market assessment based on their emerging experiences with e-learning.
3. The course developer either reports that s/he has the requisite skills to develop an e-learning course, based upon a self-assessment, and/or has agreed to participate in professional development activities to address gaps identified in the self-assessment. Course developers with prior development experience may require no additional structured professional development.
4. The faculty member will submit his/her course to departmental/peer review to get feedback on the course content, and to instructional design review (if available) to get feedback on the pedagogy and assure that the developed course meets the stipulations of the Course Development Agreement current at the time of signing.
5. The faculty member agrees to teach the course at least twice in two different semesters and make any required adjustments during or subsequent to teaching. This will assist in remedying some of the problems associated with the transfer of e-learning courses from one instructor to the next (e.g. problems with clarity of content, navigation, etc.).
6. The faculty member completes an end-of-semester course evaluation (form to be developed – see later recommendations).
7. The required approvals are secured, meaning that the academic department chair or head, the dean of the academic college, and the dean of UCEL and/or the CPTS, in addition to the VPAA, all support the course development for the FSU e-learning inventory.

*Note: any new courses at Levels 2 and 3 (explained earlier) would need to undergo the course approval process. Some courses may be approved but their development may not be funded with additional compensation or release time. Some courses may be approved and their development funded with additional compensation or release time. Some courses may not be approved.

Process for Approving Courses/Programs for E-Learning Development

Refer to Appendix E for the form recommended for securing approvals. The world of e-learning is one that is agile. The approval process should not be burdensome. At the same time, all with a need-to-know about the proposed development should both be informed and have the opportunity to comment. Current requests for online courses are being driven by student requests or by individual faculty or department initiative. At present, there are few requests to develop online courses. In many cases it is an interactive process that has resulted in the development of an online course – an interest expressed by an audience, a faculty member, and/or the encouragement of a department head or dean. All have a stake, both in the approval process as well as the final product.

Proposed steps in the *E-Learning Course Development Approval Process* include:

[Note: this approval process applies only to new e-learning courses at Levels 2 and 3 (wholly online or mixed delivery courses). All of these courses should be approved in advance, not just those for which there will be additional compensation or release time granted.]

1. The proposing faculty member advises interested parties of his/her plans to propose the development of an e-learning course or series of courses as part of a certificate or degree program by sending an email to the department head, the dean of the College, the UCEL and/or CPTS dean, and the VPAA or his /her designee. The proposing faculty member also should advise/consult other faculty who are teaching the same course or who are in the same department of his or her interest in developing an online course. This email provides advance notice of the potential for new courses, prompts a review of other workload and budget considerations, and provokes required conversations about funding, timing, etc. If there is not interest in having a course developed, then this phase should eliminate work for the person proposing the course.
2. The proposing faculty member completes an E-Learning Course Development Request/Approval form that outlines the rationale for developing the e-learning courses. Each course should be presented on a separate form. In addition, the faculty member in concert with the department head should identify how the course(s) fit into workload and, if overload occurs, what the source(s) of the funding will be to support the development should be specified. This step should avoid the occasional surprise when a faculty member expects to be paid for development when the expected sources of payment were unaware of the development or the expectation. It also provides advance warning for courses to

be listed and promoted so that students know of their availability and may enroll in them.

3. The faculty member secures signatures from the Department Head/Chair and the Dean of the College in which the course is offered, indicating their approval with the proposed development as well as the sources of funds. This form should be processed by the College within 5 business days. If not approved, rationale should be provided to the faculty member in writing.

4. The proposing College sends the form to either the UCEL dean or CPTS dean, if appropriate, since these units often pay development costs and register off-campus students. The UCEL signature is required if UCEL is expected to pay for the course development and/or admit and register students, and the CPTS signatures are required for courses to be handled for that location. This form should be processed within 5 business days. If the course is not approved, rationale should be provided to the faculty member and college administrators in writing.

5. Either UCEL or CPTS forwards the form to the VPAA or his/her designee for review and signature, if approved. A decision should be made within five working days. If not approved, rationale is provided to all parties in writing.

6. Copies of the fully executed E-learning Course Development Request/Approval Form are distributed by UCEL or CPTS to all signators. When a Course Development Agreement (CDA) is executed after the approvals are secured, UCEL or CPTS also will distribute this fully executed agreement to all signators.

Additional guidelines for processing are included on the form.

The preceding section summarizes the steps to gain approval for creating and offering a new e-learning course. The next phase concerns the Course Development Process.

E-Learning Development Guidelines

The current Course Development Agreement (CDA) contains the following guidelines. Refer to Appendix D for additional detail concerning course development expectations.

Each e-learning course should provide for the following:

- a. Instructor profile
- b. Course Syllabus
 - Course description
 - Prerequisite skills or knowledge
 - Textbook and other instructional materials
 - Goals and learning outcomes
 - Course assignments and activities (general statement)

- Face-to-face requirements (if any)
 - Performance standards (student assessment or performance criteria)
 - Grading scale
 - Schedule of events
 - Bibliography and web links
- c. Course communication standards
- d. Course assignments and activities
- Directions
 - Assignments
 - Submission criteria
 - Evaluation criteria
 - Feedback
- e. Course materials (graphics, notes, slides, reading materials, etc.) that will be used online or on a CD ROM
- f. Copyright clearances for the use of others' instructional materials and images in the online course. UCEL will assist the course developer in securing the copyright permissions.

In addition, the Task Force recommends that these guidelines be followed:

- The syllabus for each e-learning course should provide information about support available to students (e.g. FLITE resources, technical support, etc.).
- E-learning courses should be completely developed and launched on the University-supported platform one month before the semester of offering.
- Arrangements for students' access to required materials should be made at least 30 days prior to the start of class.
- Instructors of e-learning courses should strongly consider requiring students to develop their own Student Profiles to promote community in the virtual environment.
- All FSU courses must be launched and maintained from the FSU-endorsed platform, which is currently WebCT (the VPAA's office will be responsible for this assurance). This recommendation does not constitute an endorsement of WebCT. Rather it is an endorsement of the need to have one course management system to support instead of many. It also is an endorsement of the need to promote, for ease of student use, one common platform for FSU. Certainly, the course management system needs to be periodically reviewed, as is noted in a later recommendation. The Task Force does realize, however, that in some instances there may be a legitimate need to have coursework launched from an alternative platform (for example, training certifications offered through FSU by private providers). In these cases, the faculty member or department should provide an explanation for the use of an alternative platform and secure permission for its use from the VPAA or his or her designee.
- Any e-learning course must be clearly specified on SIS and in the schedule with information for students regarding the level of web usage the course will require (see the three levels explained earlier).

Faculty Workload

A faculty member and his/her department head and/or dean will agree on whether the development of a mixed delivery or wholly online course will be part of his/her regular workload or whether the faculty member will receive additional compensation or release time. Course development that is not part of a faculty member's regular workload is specified in the Course Development Agreement at \$1,500 per credit of development. If a faculty member chooses to develop a course with release time rather than be paid extra compensation, release is calculated to be the number of credits of development. Therefore, a 3-credit course being developed would equate to 3 credit hours of release time. This compensation plan should be reviewed on the same schedule as the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Other related issues that will need to be periodically re-examined include enrollment caps and release time for the first time a wholly online course is offered by an instructor.

Orientation Strategies and E-Learning Support for Students

Students must be prepared to participate actively from the beginning of an e-learning offering. As greater numbers of courses are available, we should expect that the readiness levels of students may vary widely. Many frustrations and lost students could be avoided if there were advance preparation and adequate support for students in the forms of: 1) **student readiness assessments**, and 2) **“one-stop” online support information**.

Student Readiness Assessment

The Task Force recommends that a brief online ***E-Learning Preparedness Assessment*** be required for all first-time at FSU e-learning students. Students who do not successfully complete this preparedness assessment will have their enrollment in the e-learning course blocked until doing so, unless their instructor permits them to not take this “prerequisite.” The Instructional Technologist, working with experienced faculty and trained student workers, will coordinate this workshop. Students will be urged to complete the preparedness assessment at least 3 days ahead of the start of classes to allow time to get systems working by the first class day. UCEL or CPTS will inform enrolled students of the need to complete this preparedness assessment as a part of the communications that already occur with enrolled e-learning students. If the e-learning offerings are not being run through UCEL or CPTS, it will be the responsibility of the offering department/college to inform students of the requirement.

The Task Force also recommends that there be available to students to take at any time a brief online ***Is E-Learning Right for Me?*** survey through which students could gauge whether or not e-learning courses would fit well with their learning style, lifestyle, and temperament. This self-assessment tool would not be required.

The Instructional Technologist in the CTLFD will convene a small group of interested faculty, staff, and/or students to create or adapt or adopt the afore-mentioned student readiness assessment instruments. In particular, the ***E-Learning Preparedness Assessment*** will assess the students' basic computer literacy skills, as well as ability to navigate the University's course management system. Students will be allowed no more than 2 hours of time to complete this assessment. As examples, students will demonstrate their abilities to download various types of files, to complete online forms, attach and send documents, post documents to WebCT, navigate within WebCT, and participate in a threaded discussion. The technology fee addressed later will support the expense associated with this extra step to prepare e-learners. The E-Learning Preparedness Course should be developed in Summer 2004 for implementation in Fall 2004.

Students will not be required to complete the ***E-Learning Preparedness Assessment*** more than once. Because of current challenges with data systems, the immediate implementation strategy will be to advise all students who enroll for online courses of the need to complete the workshop if they have not done it before. Some program areas have additional requirements, such as downloading files from remote sites or using specialized hardware or software. In these instances, it will be the responsibility of the instructor to assess students' ability to complete these additional tasks and to provide the required guidance to students. The University system will be designed to meet the requirements of generic e-learning courses.

One-Stop Online Support Information

The Task Force also recommends that the University create an online **E-Learning Handbook**, similar to the hard copy currently supplied to students, but including information particularly needed by online students. This material would include policies and procedures and support resources. It also would include technical information the students will need to be able to determine if they have the hardware and software needed to take and complete most e-learning courses at Ferris successfully. The Handbook would be created over a year's time by representatives of Student Affairs, the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development, UCEL, and CPTS. This handbook also could be developed with the website redesign recommended later in this report. A representative from the Office of Academic Affairs could organize and oversee this initiative. A faculty member with web development expertise could be given release time or additional compensation to do the technical work.

Orientation Strategies and E-Learning Support for Faculty

Critical to Ferris's advancement in e-learning is the creation of a culture that embraces faculty development in the area of e-learning. Integral to this culture are professional learning communities, both face-to-face and virtual. We need to create networks, forums, and sharing opportunities that extend the reach of successful e-learning initiatives. Consequently, a totally centralized process will not best serve the University's long-term interests. We need to develop capability in many areas, which the following recommendations are intended to address.

A variety of methods should be created for developers and instructors to learn about both the use of WebCT and the development of effective e-learning courses and programs. Among the options will be group workshops, one-on-one instruction, mentoring groups, and web-based instruction.

In particular, **a Ferris online course for faculty developers will be created**, building on work already completed by other institutions. The Instructional Technologist in CTLFD will oversee this project. If needed, the University will buy the right to adapt others' faculty orientation materials. These materials will be modularized, if they are not already, so that individuals can utilize just those that are important to them at the time they need it – “just-in-time learning.” These materials also will include a self-assessment tool for instructors to gauge their readiness to teach e-learning courses.

Additional tasks to be considered in developing a system for faculty development are the following. The Task Force believes that several models of faculty support for e-learning would work, and so notes that **one, several, or all** of the following options could be fruitfully pursued.

- Appoint a continuing **E-Learning Consultant or Specialist** who is a regular FSU employee who is dedicated at least half-time to supporting and advancing e-learning. This individual, ideally a faculty member, should have both technology and instructional design experience.
- Continue to refine, document, and provide the group instruction in e-learning offered by the WebCT Training Group through the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development.
- Recruit and develop an ***E-Learning Coaching Corps***. (Members of this corps may also be members of the WebCT Training Group.) These individuals would earn a modest stipend for helping colleagues – maybe \$150 per course, one time only per faculty member per course. The goal will be to have at least two individuals identified in each college. A form will be developed for securing approval and initiating payment. This should not be a cumbersome process, so it may best be handled by asking each of the E-Corps members to submit a list of individuals and courses for which they served as coaches in the semester. Payment will be made from the central accounts dedicated to student and faculty e-learning support.
- Continue advanced training for the WebCT Training Group and/or ***E-Learning Coaching Corps***, including support for conference attendance, materials, etc.
- Create and maintain a list of **approved external consultants** for assistance with e-learning development. Those on the list would need to complete orientation to Ferris's systems, know the current learning management system

(currently WebCT), and specify their rates. Course developers may utilize any of the consultants on the list to the maximum amount approved for this assistance whenever the Ferris e-learning specialist or members of the *E-Learning Coaching Corps* are unavailable or have too many other projects.

- Hire a full-time **Instructional Designer** for the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development. Use the salary designated for a new Director to do so.
- This designer, along with the current Instructional Technologist, could supervise **student workers** who would do technical work for faculty wanting to put materials online.
- The designer could create a **basic template**, which would be **customizable** by individual faculty and/or colleges, to improve the useability of e-learning courses for students and faculty.
- Preference for assistance by any of the afore-mentioned individuals would be given to those faculty who were working to put courses that are part of entire programs online or those faculty who are creating online “stand-alone” courses that will support entire online programs.

Quality Assurance

Higher education is an environment experiencing greater scrutiny. Calls for accountability are increasing, and e-learning courses are garnering particular attention as legislators debate appropriations. In an era where more organizations are embracing principles of “continuous quality improvement,” it is incumbent upon the University to build quality improvement into its processes. In this environment, e-learning at FSU should have a group charged with overseeing its implementation and improvements.

An *E-Learning Quality Team* should be appointed. Individuals with Academic Affairs administrative authority as well as curriculum expertise should be included within the membership. Suggested membership is 7 members, including at least 5 faculty members. This team will do the following:

- Review and refine suggested e-learning course guidelines to assure consistency with expanding knowledge about e-learning.
- This review and refinement would include offering recommendations regarding ethical issues associated with e-learning.
- Recommend and publicize best practices in e-learning to faculty and staff.
- Assure that peer review of courses is occurring within departments.

- Make recommendations about institutional processes related to the e-learning initiative at FSU.
- Create (many good models already exist that could be modified, if necessary) an end-of-semester student and an end-of-semester instructor evaluation form for e-learning courses. (Note: these evaluation forms, one to be completed by students and one to be completed by instructors, would not focus on the instructor's performance, but on student learning achieved and the delivery mechanism for the course material. These would not supplant the use of the Student Assessment of Instruction or other departmentally approved evaluation instruments.)
- Review end-of-semester student and instructor evaluations of e-learning courses (see above) and make recommendations, as necessary.
- Review comparative statistics for online course completions, grades, etc., with face-to-face classes (data to be compiled by Institutional Research and Testing). Make recommendations as necessary.
- Solicit feedback from appropriate stakeholders regarding the strengths and areas for improvement in FSU e-learning.
- Work with the Office of Academic Affairs to prepare an annual report of the *Status of Ferris State University E-Learning*.
- Meet at least quarterly to review FSU e-learning progress.

Additional Recommendations

Technology

The Instructional Technologist in the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development University should periodically review the Ferris learning management system and make recommendations concerning when to change, when to upgrade, how to support, etc. In performing this review, the Instructional Technologist should consult with all stakeholders, including faculty, academic and student affairs administration, students, and Information Services and Telecommunications. The Instructional Technologist will make recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or his/her designee, who will be ultimately responsible for the learning management system. An informal review of the learning management system should occur at least annually. A more extensive, formal review should occur every three years.

Organizational Structure

A decentralized system can be effective. However, there also needs to be good coordination and communication. Course developers and others must know to whom

they go for what questions. Some functions appropriately report to the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development in Academic Affairs, such as the Instructional Technologist. Implementation of development agreements and review of completed courses is occurring in UCEL and FSU-GR. This model is working, but it could work better if roles were better understood.

In his article “The Changing Nature of Distance Education: Moving from the Periphery to the Institutional Core,” (2003) David Eisler writes:

Does distance education have responsibility for online and colleges the responsibility for web enhanced or enabled efforts? This seems to reflect traditional roles and responsibilities, but makes little conceptual sense. Inevitably such an approach will lead to a duplication of efforts and potential waste of valuable resources. In reality faculty need one point of contact for support of their teaching efforts. Students should seek assistance from one source. It will be very interesting to observe how this issue evolves and is resolved at universities. Depending upon campus structure and organization, this could prove to be an expanding responsibility for distance education efforts. (p.5)

The Task Force proposes that the University move toward more consistently consolidating e-learning responsibilities in the following ways:

CTLFD – Support for Students and Faculty

Support for faculty and students should be consolidated in the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development. Currently, the CTLFD has oversight of the Instructional Technologist, WebCT Training Coordinator, and WebCT Training Group. Because of its nonpartisan nature, its long-standing promotion of sound pedagogy, and its history of faculty support, the CTLFD would be an ideal candidate for oversight of instructional designers, e-learning specialists, and student web development assistants.

University Center for Extended Learning and College of Professional and Technological Studies – Administrative Support

UCEL and CPTS provide coordination support for e-learning. Examples include working with faculty members to secure assistance in instructional design (currently available only on a contract basis for HVACR faculty), processing e-learning contracts for development, and promoting e-learning options through class schedules and special marketing pieces. UCEL or CPTS also serves as the primary communication link among students and instructors by registering students, communicating course expectations, coordinating the acquisition of required course materials, and communicating how to access online resources. UCEL and CPTS also provide financial support for faculty stipends for e-learning course development.

Clarification must also be forthcoming on how online and mixed delivery course offerings from Big Rapids, Grand Rapids, and UCEL relate. To date there are so few that

there have been no challenges. However, as more courses are offered, we should expect to see enrollees from throughout the world. How do we count? Because “counts” are so important to units like CPTS and UCEL, as well as the University overall, a “win-win” plan must be crafted. This is a topic for further development among the stakeholders.

The Academic Colleges

Identification of e-learning opportunities and assurance of the quality of online teaching bests fits with the academic colleges, who have oversight of their curricula and faculty. Academic deans may, if UCEL or CPTS, is not willing, choose to fund their own online initiatives, always following established policies and procedures. Academic colleges also must recruit and professionally develop the appropriate faculty for online instruction.

Information Services and Telecommunications – Technology Infrastructure

The role of Information Services and Telecommunications (IS&T) cannot be underestimated in the University e-learning efforts. Currently the WebCT servers (primary and back-up) are maintained in IS&T, and staff also have occasionally provided expertise in database management as well. Communication has been and will remain open regarding the integration of WebCT with the campus portal. Guidelines for this relationship between IS&T and Academic Affairs/CTLFD have been established in a yearly, renewable Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Although the SLA has established baseline funding for the support of the WebCT hardware, clearly this funding must continually be re-evaluated in light of the University’s e-learning growth and in light of new advances in e-learning technology. Increased funding of the University’s technology support for e-learning efforts may come from allocating a portion of the proposed e-learning course fee to those efforts. Other options also must be explored.

It is also important to acknowledge and support the consortia for the local desktop and lab support that they provide that allows the University to engage in e-learning. Funding sources/levels appropriate to this support also must be found.

Ferris Library for Information, Technology, and Education (FLITE) – Support for Distant Students

FLITE has been a leader in providing library resources for our off-campus students, and their continuing support will be key for our e-learning initiatives to succeed. FLITE currently has a librarian assigned to distance education support, and easily accessible from the FLITE homepage is a menu of services/information available to distant students (those engaged in e-learning and those in traditional classes at our regional sites). See <http://www.ferris.edu/library/distanceed/homepage.html> . This menu includes information on document delivery, off-campus database access, and the opportunity to chat live with a librarian, among other resources. Funding appropriate to maintain these services and to expand them as needed also should be secured.

The Office of Academic Affairs

The Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee will be responsible for ensuring that communication and collaboration occur related to e-learning and that e-learning efforts are running smoothly. He or she will make the final determination about what courses will be put in wholly online or hybrid form. These determinations will be shared with the University Curriculum Committee as informational items. He or she will have final responsibility for the learning management system. Furthermore, he or she will liaise with Information Services and Telecommunications and the Network Coordinating Group as needed to ensure the technical smooth-functioning of e-learning. Along with the appropriate deans, he or she also will have responsibility for setting the institutional vision, agenda, and reporting for e-learning. **Although we believe that a decentralized organizational structure can work, the Task Force does encourage the VPAA to appoint one individual to have the primary leadership and responsibility for e-learning for the entirety of Ferris State University.**

Budget Considerations

Although e-learning can be profitable, it also takes investment. The Task Force recommends a series of budget considerations for funding and expanding the Ferris presence in e-learning. A few budget scenarios are offered as examples of how the model could work.

1. Introduce a per-course technology fee of \$50 for courses delivered at Levels 2 and 3 (explained earlier). This fee will be used to fund the student and faculty orientations. Refer to the attached spreadsheet for projected revenues and expenses if this fee were instituted.
2. Dedicate 30% of the incentive money generated by e-learning courses going to the VPAA and FSU-GR to the support of e-learning development, including faculty stipends, instructional design, and learning management system upgrades.
3. Establish a restricted account for e-learning technology fee revenues and expenses and utilize profits to fund new e-learning development and infrastructure enhancements.
4. Dedicate \$200,000 in both 2004-05 and 2005-06 for faculty development, course development, and e-learning promotion as a start-up fund for years 1 and 2. This amount should include the costs associated with a full-time instructional designer. Subsequent years should be self-funded from enrollment growth.
5. Set aside 10 percent of tuition revenues annually from E-Learning for infrastructure upgrades, including support staff required for increasing enrollments, course development, etc. Tie growth metrics to additional capacity enhancement.
6. Continue to offer e-learning opportunities through UCEL and CPTS, and maintain current incentive payouts from UCEL and CPTS for hybrid and wholly online courses.

FSU Website Addition

The Task Force recommends that the Ferris homepage include a clear link to e-learning opportunities and support and policies/procedures. This link would then lead to a newly created e-learning strand on the website. Someone in the Academic Affairs Office might be responsible for this redesign, or a faculty member might be given release time to effect the redesign. Having such an e-learning strand, similar to the design used by Central Michigan University, would clearly communicate Ferris' e-learning opportunities to potential students and would signal its commitment to being "a national leader in career-oriented professional and technical education," including through e-learning.

Conclusion

Several faculty members have noted, rightly, that this report deals more with administrative and infrastructure issues than it does with the pedagogical issues associated with e-learning. The Task Force closely followed its charge, and this report is the result. Nevertheless, we fully acknowledge that much work – particularly involving issues of pedagogy, assessment, and ethics – remains to be done to perfect the Ferris model of e-learning. This work will primarily require the leadership and involvement of the faculty.

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