

Student Capabilities Focus Group
January 19 and 21, 2011
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What skills do all students need to be effective in the online environment?

- There are things students need to know and be able to do when taking an online class, such as; file management, how to save and find a file, use software, format, navigate on a screen, not be afraid to click on buttons, use Ferris Connect, use email, use Google Docs, etc.
- Each program might have different needs. Each instructor uses different Ferris Connect tools.
- Ferris has an ethical obligation to make sure student has the skills to take an online class.
- Students need a set of skills to take online classes. Online students are different from brick and mortar students.
- Self-reporting computer skills doesn't work. Information technology assessment needs to be done. Technology is a fundamental skill like reading and writing. Students need to prove their computer competency.
- We need to tell students what they need to know to take an online class.
- The university should have a minimum computer competency for students taking online courses.
- Computer competency is a general education. FSU should have program specific computer competencies.
- Ferris should have the ability to track student skills to know who can take online classes.

Should an orientation be required?

- Grants are available to help fund developing tutorials.
- The cost of orientation should be built into the program cost.
- As an institution we are fearful to set up barriers to be successful. FSU has a strong focus on preparing students for the future.
- Support staff should be available to teach students how to use a computer.
- Specialized software should be used for each program that shows students what they need to know.

If required, how should it be incorporated (within first course; at program enrollment, etc.)

- There are different kinds of online courses, some are click and read. Students should have to complete a 30 minute online tutorial to prove competency or whatever amount of time it takes to prove. Our responsibility is to teach students how to do tasks they can't do.
- First nursing course is based on technology, not on nursing because of the needs of the students. It shouldn't have to be this way.

How should students demonstrate that they have the capability to be an effective online learner?

- How far do we go to accommodate online students?
- Some type of tutorial/module that would have basics that they had to complete and pass. If couldn't do something, need to have a module or help desk that could walk them through that

piece. Could take it over until they did pass, but must have the pieces in place to teach them what they don't know.

- Before students can register for an online class, students must meet a certain skill set.

At what level should these "requirement" decisions be made? Course, Program, College, University?

- Decision to put courses or programs online needs to be made by a group from all levels; faculty, administrators, library, advisors, writing center, etc.

Other Comments:

- An online orientation for off campus students is being developed. It will have some Ferris Connect component. This might be a place to put in modules for online learning as most all students will take an online or blended course at some point during their education.
- FSU doesn't have the infrastructure needed by faculty to offer online classes.
- FSU should think about creating a Virtual University.
- Ferris needs an online director.
- Online courses cost more to deliver.
- What will happen to on campus classes as more online classes are offered?
- Courses should look the same in Ferris Connect to students. There needs to be a standardized syllabus for faculty.
- What do other colleges do?

4 people in attendance 1/19/11

9 people in attendance 1/21/11