



# A Plan for the Next Stage of E-Learning at Ferris

## Update 2013

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**Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a system whereby each student who registers for a fully online course has demonstrated minimum proficiency in skills required for successful online learning.**

**Accomplishments to date:**

- A pilot study was conducted to verify the skills needed for a pre-assessment.
- After the pilot, a student readiness orientation for online learning was created and added to the ferris.edu/online website.
  - Any student (or prospective student) may complete the orientation tutorial.
  - The tutorial consists of the skills to log into an online course and the basic navigation skills required (navigation, uploading assignments, checking grades, using discussion boards, etc).
  - The tutorial uses text and video materials, and includes a 10 question final test.
- If it is a current student, Extended and International Operations (EIO) will record the completion status in Banner the day after completion.
  - A 'grade' of 7 correct answers out of 10 is required before the status indicates the orientation was completed.
- Students and staff can verify that completion status was updated in Banner by viewing the 'test scores' area.
  - The orientation will indicate a score of '1' if the orientation was successfully completed.
- Course sections with an ORO test score restriction will limit enrollments based upon test score completion.
  - Use of ORO test score restrictions is up to each department's discretion.
  - Students who have previously been successful in online courses may alternatively submit a waiver form. Waiver form completion status is also logged as a test score of '1' for ORO. These are logged by EIO the day after submission.
- As of March 28, approximately 1400 students have successfully completed the online tutorial.
- The orientation is a no-cost program for students. EIO has supported the cost of the course content management software, and personnel resources for updating the student status.
- A survey will be conducted to determine the impact of the tutorial on student skills in the online environment.

**Recommendation 2: Advance and support faculty effectiveness and instructional quality in online learning.**

**Recommendation 3: Evaluate the quality of online instruction and develop strategies for continual improvement and enhanced student learning.**

**Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a system of review for course and program quality.**

**Accomplishments to date:**

- The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning has provided an extensive and expanded schedule of offerings on Ferris Connect and technology related topics, both in Big Rapids, online, and at various 'off campus' locations.
- A common template has been developed and will be provided for any faculty who requests a course shell, to standardize some of the content for students, particularly the use of a 'start here' page.
  - Faculty may still adjust the 'look and feel' of the course to suit their needs, but this common template will simplify the design for most instructors.
- All faculty teaching an online (enhanced, mixed, or fully online) first complete a FerrisConnect program, and are 'checked off' by a faculty member or instructional technologist.

- There are two phases:
  - For an enhanced or mixed delivery class faculty need only complete Phase 1, but those teaching fully online have additional content to learn (Phase 2).
  - This ensures the minimum skill levels necessary for working within FerrisConnect, as well as meets the minimal recommendations for online courses identified by Quality Matters.
- The Quality Matters rubric is used in the various training and check-off sessions.
- In some program areas, such as nursing, lead instructors are assigned to assist adjunct faculty with the design and instruction of nursing courses.
- Development of Netiquette policy for students learning in an online environment is in process.

**Recommendation 4: Create mechanisms for department/college/university-wide collaboration to promote best practices in online learning.**

**Accomplishments to date:**

- The second annual Online Fair was conducted this semester, with an increase in attendance.
- A Languages and Literature department issues a newsletter dedicated to strategies and activities supporting online learning.
- Some departments have used faculty meetings for quick suggestions on techniques used in online learning, or have developed their own user groups.

**Recommendation 6: Increase the ongoing quality and amount of support for students, faculty, and staff involved with online learning and technology use in instruction,**

**Recommendation 7: Enhance communications with students, faculty, and staff about the availability of TAC and IT support services.**

**Accomplishments to date:**

- TAC support is now available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - Recently, additional changes were made to extend this into holidays, when TAC has typically been closed in the past.
- The TAC team now also has access to a variety of training sessions and materials, to help improve the technical knowledge level of all technicians.
- The backup e-learning administrator position was changed from a year to year assignment to a continuing position.
- An additional person was hired and added to the IT Services e-learning team (three total now).
- A new website was created for MyTechSupport, so that students, faculty and staff know the hours, email address, etc for TAC.
- Websites specifically created to address FerrisConnect support information.
- The MyTech support and MyFSU sites include the maintenance schedules for FerrisConnect, so that faculty can plan accordingly. This is also communicated via UWN and posted on the MyFSU login page.
- IT Services worked with the FCTL to clarify support call routing for students and faculty. A diagram was created with types of calls typically received and which support group will handle the different functions.

**Recommendation 8: Promote the ongoing exploration of, and recommendations for, the use of new and existing academic technology.**

**Accomplishments to date:**

- The Ferris Connect Advisory Board (FAB) has been renamed to better reflect its true purpose: the review of academic teaching technologies, whether that be in the classroom or for online courses.
  - The new Learning Technologies Advisory Board (LTAB) meets regularly to evaluate new teaching technology.
- The meeting minutes are now open on the Ferris website for people to view.
- The LTAB recently completed a review of student response systems (“clickers”) and a report is forthcoming.
- The LTAB is currently studying the need and requirements for classroom to classroom web-conferencing.

**Recommendation 9: Develop an administrative structure that encourages quality and viability of online learning at Ferris.**

**Recommendation 10: Create a financial model that is sustainable and aligns with the university’s strategic plan.**

**Recommendation 11: Assure compliance with applicable state and federal guidelines and integrity of online systems.**

**Accomplishments to date:**

- A new Executive Director for online learning has been appointed to provide overall leadership for online learning at Ferris.
- Several possible budget formats have been presented/proposed which would support the ongoing development and growth for online learning. Discussions are ongoing.
- Academic Affairs has contacted several states to determine state requirements for approval of online offerings. At this time, most are still in process, although there are some states which we may decide are not worth the investment in approvals.