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TASK FORCE SUMMARY REGARDING THE REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES IN DISTANCE DELIVERED AND HYBRID COURSES

The goals of UC Third Century, UC2019, and the Academic Master Plan are to provide effective online teaching to meet student needs; however, concerns have been raised regarding a lack of consistent and clear practices and policies to promote this objective. This Task Force was, therefore, charged with providing recommendations for best practices in the following areas: clarification of the roles of various personnel, including faculty and Information Technology and Instructional Design (IT/ID) personnel; consideration of workload issues; addressing regulations relating to online teaching; and alignment of or distinction from face-to-face class delivery.

The committee represented and sought input from colleges in developing its recommendations, including input from faculty and administrators, which revealed the following concerns existing *across the university*:

- There are few to no clearly documented faculty-oriented policies for online teaching to guide curricular, workload, and other decisions;
- The lack of such guidelines creates confusion, inequities, and sub-optimal learning conditions at worst and a lack of direction at best;
- Faculty input is often not sought or included in decision-making;
- In some units, significant decisions regarding online learning are made by those without direct experience teaching in this modality and in a manner that is potentially at odds with effective student learning, equitable workload conditions, and without attention to related legal and other considerations; and
- While major eLearning committees exist within the University, there is relatively little faculty representation on those committees and there is no comparable faculty-led committee directly charged with promoting efficient and effective online teaching.

Specific recommendations to address these concerns are set out in the Task Force report. General guidelines regarding these recommendations may be summarized as follows:

1. Faculty must be integrally involved in decisions related to online teaching. This includes decisions as to recommendations by IT/ID personnel; the development of appropriate and equitable workload policies; curricular specifications for online courses from the development of courses to their delivery and assessment; requisite and appropriate faculty development; and alignment with face-to-face courses;

2. Where there are no principal distinctions between face-to-face and online courses, units must work to align curricular, workload, and other relevant expectations (e.g., Intellectual Property and FERPA); where there are relevant and principal distinctions between the modalities, such distinctions must be addressed and accommodated;
3. UC and its various units need to continue to provide needed support commensurate with the expectations of online teaching and to increase that support where necessary. This includes sufficient and appropriate opportunities for faculty development, IT/ID and structural support (e.g., a Learning Management System) that meet faculty needs, and adequate and timely sharing of information and resources available;
4. Faculty and administrators at all levels must work to clarify practices and policies relating to online learning and to document them where appropriate; this should include relevant creation or modification of unit by-laws, workload documents, and RPT documents; and
5. A Faculty Senate committee or subcommittee focused on online education must be formed to insure that the recommendations of the Task Force are promoted; to continue to assess and address the needs related to online teaching and learning; and to collaborate with relevant constituencies throughout the university.

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