

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.

2 March 2015

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TO: Tracy Herrmann, Chair, Faculty Senate
 FROM: Cynthia Nitz Ris, Chair
 Faculty Senate Task Force on Online Teaching
 RE: Best Practices in Distance Delivered and Hybrid Courses
 DATE: 12 January 2015

Background

In April, 2014, this Faculty Senate Task Force was charged with creating a report relating to faculty best practices in online teaching at UC. A group of faculty had been in discussion concerning observed differences between units and colleges in the development and implementation of online teaching and had questions about practices or lack of clear practices; questions relating to these concerns led to the initial request for this Task Force. This committee was subsequently charged by incoming Faculty Chair, Adrienne Lane, with the following:

- "Create a report that addresses Faculty Best Practices in distance education and online teaching (DE-OT)*: This report should include, but not be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
1. Differentiation of faculty and staff role in development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of courses offered via DE-OT;
 2. Faculty Workload Best Practices addressing, but not limited to, such topics as various instructional roles within a course, faculty student ratios, course ownership, workload credit, and variation in factors among disciplines;
 3. Faculty Development for DE-OT, including but not limited to, core knowledge including regulations i.e. FERPA required, recommended administrative and staff (IT/ID) support, suggested knowledge updates for faculty involved with DE-OT; and
 4. Program and course curricular alignment, including but not limited to, normalization of grading and other pedagogical practices between instructor of record and other instructors within a DE-OT course and faculty adherence to program and course curricular design."

As requested, our Task Force filed an interim report at the end of summer identifying work to date; during Fall term, the Task Force continued to gather, compile, and evaluate that data. Representatives from six different colleges and a representative from the Provost Office (now also with UCIT) served on this committee throughout its tenure (an additional two college representatives served for part of that time).

*Note: This committee has used particular terminology here and throughout this report this is important in understanding our focus and emphases throughout. Please see "Appendix A—Terminology and Definitions" for clarification on this. For example, the term DE-OT as used in the above charge is referred to in this report as "online teaching" and is further described in Appendix A as relating to fully distance-delivered and hybrid courses and not to face-to-face courses that may, in part, utilize online technologies.

All faculty committee members have taught online courses and have taken and/or led a variety of workshops regarding online teaching. Members have drawn on information from their various units, from their experience with online teaching or serving on committees relating to online teaching, and from literature and reports relating to online teaching. A small representation of the literature and reports will be referred to in this letter; those reports more frequently noted or published within UC are “Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-Line Learning)” by the Higher Learning Commission (hereinafter referred to as HLC Guidelines); a May 17, 2013 report created by a UC Provostal E-Learning Work Group entitled “Ensuring the Highest Quality in Online Courses and Programs” (hereinafter referred to as the PEL Report); and a 2013 white paper developed by faculty members in one A&S unit regarding best practices for online teaching (hereinafter referred to as the White Paper). (These and other documents referred to herein, together with explanatory annotations, are listed more fully in Appendix B.)

In addition, the committee has engaged in a variety of data gathering including a survey sent to UC full time and adjunct faculty; emails to or interviews with Deans, Associate Deans, School Heads, and Department Heads, or their representatives, in many of the units where faculty are teaching online; and conversations with representatives of various E-Learning and online teaching initiatives and programs, such as those associated with UC Libraries, CET&L, UCIT, Instructional Design, Office of General Counsel, and others.

All participants were promised anonymity; unless given explicit permission, neither individuals’ names nor names of specific units are provided. This committee has endeavored to accurately represent the array of responses received.

Preliminary Considerations

The Task Force members aligned their focus with those sections of UC2019 and the Academic Master Plan Actions Steps that reflect UC’s dedication to online learning. Two such goals, for example, are to “[c]reate more efficient programmatic resources for faculty and graduate students teaching online courses” as well as to “[s]trategically determine how, when, and where online learning offerings best meet students’ needs” (University of Cincinnati). In other words, this committee assumed online education as a part of UC’s mission in considering best practices toward these goals.

It is the intent that this committee’s work not duplicate the efforts of the other initiatives and programs already in place. Additionally, unlike other reports and the UC Academic Master Plan that identifies primarily administrative areas of responsibility for action steps, this committee has focused on faculty involvement. It is the assumption of this committee that faculty can and should be integrally involved in online teaching in a manner commensurate with faculty involvement in face-to-face teaching. This is supported by UC’s Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which notes that “[a]ctive participation in governance and academic planning is expected” of faculty (3.8), including that faculty “make their own regulations governing . . . fundamental areas of curriculum” such as courses of instruction (27.2). Furthermore, faculty are to “share significantly” in responsibilities including “program development, program review [and] department review” (27.2). The HLC Guidelines as well note that faculty should “have a designated role in the design and implementation of [an institution’s] on-line learning offerings” (3a).

Faculty input is especially useful in this endeavor since research suggests that there is a wide disparity in the opinions held by faculty and administrators relating to online education. One such example is in crucial markers of classroom success such as to whether and how learning outcomes are met in face-to-face versus online courses (Allen and Seaman 30-31). Differences also may include those relating to experience in teaching online. In the UC faculty survey, 45% of faculty responding indicated that they had been teaching online for over 5 years, with another 26% teaching 3-5 years. The views and opinions

of faculty in the classroom and actively engaged in student teaching and assessment are crucial to the strategic planning regarding online education.

Many of the faculty we heard from expressed a positive attitude toward online teaching. In the faculty survey, the majority of faculty who identified as teaching online courses noted that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they experienced “more excitement than fear” about online teaching (56%), while an even larger majority, 65%, provided the same response for the statement that “course goals are equally attainable in online and face-to-face courses.”

Responses about online teaching, however, also included concerns. While some faculty acknowledged adequate support and detailed practices regarding online teaching, others voiced concerns about insufficient support of expected online teaching; unclear goals and expectations; and ad hoc and contradictory practices. In regard to unit practices and policies, 45% of respondents indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that their units provided clear written policies, and almost 40% provided the same answer relating to clear practices in their units.

Specific concerns included a lack of clear policies or procedures about what courses could or should be offered online; how course approval was to take place; how much lead time faculty should have to develop online courses; what kinds of support and professional development should be expected; and how online teaching could be assessed for workload and RPT requirements. Where clear practices existed, some faculty were concerned that decisions were made without requested faculty involvement or in contradiction to faculty experiences and suggestions. Faculty appeared to note with more frequency than administrators concerns about differences in parity between online and face-to-face courses in areas such as workload, faculty control of course content, and experiences provided to students.

Responses by unit heads (both college and department/program level) tended to corroborate the variety of technological support available within units, ranging from limited Informational / Instructional Technology (IT) assistance and/or no Instructional Design (ID) availability, to a full range of IT and ID personnel and, in some cases, individuals who play roles as directors of online learning within the college. One college representative called that college’s lack of resources a “significant disadvantage.” Another noted appreciation for technological tools that were available university-wide but suggested that “tools accompanied by procedures and personnel” are important so all colleges can respond to online initiatives.

A number of colleges do have policies in place and, of those, college representatives tended to note satisfaction with those policies or the acknowledgement that they were developing adequately. Others mentioned the active promotion of guidelines such as the use of Quality Matters or other UC resources to encourage training of faculty and consistency of student experience. Regardless of whether policies were in place or not within colleges or departments/programs, a number of unit heads within colleges expressed concerns similar to those noted on the faculty survey responses; these included concerns of insufficient technology support within the college for use by the units; a lack of student awareness regarding requirements for learning in an online environment; and whether or not all courses might be best represented in an online modality. Other concerns included how best to incentivize online course development and how to find sufficient time and resources for training to ensure faculty involvement, readiness to teach online, and consistency of student experience between online and face-to-face classes. A few questioned whether expediency concerns were overshadowing what one unit head called “pedagogical reasons [and] student welfare” in the requirement of online courses.

While it is not the intent of this report to be a literature review, and this committee recognizes that some measures of differences between face-to-face and online teaching are still unclear, research supports the concerns raised by faculty and administrators. In particular, in an educational environment where online learning is often now discussed as a “need” rather than an option (Betts and Heaston 1), findings continue to emphasize the crucial importance of institutional support for faculty and addressing faculty workload

considerations in determining success of online education (Betts and Heaston 8; Singleton and Session 36).

While the road to best practices is in the early stages of construction for many units, this committee agrees, and a number of those responding have noted, that it is best to lay a good foundation now before there is a risk of paving the road with further inconsistencies and a lack of attention to crucial details. It is the intention of this task force that these recommendations can help lay that crucial foundation and realign and reaffirm best practices in order to help UC traverse the distance to excellent online education experiences for students, faculty, and affiliated personnel alike.

Recommendations

This committee advises implementation of the general and specific recommendations noted below. The following recommendations address the specific charges as developed by the Faculty Senate; related concerns that were not directly charged; and the general means by which such recommendations might be carried out, assessed, developed, and periodically reconsidered as the lessons we learn about online education modify our current knowledge.

General Recommendations

1. A standing Faculty Senate committee on online education be formed

No faculty-driven university-wide committee exists that is charged with oversight of this important teaching initiative. Such a committee could ensure a faculty role and voice in future growth in this area; be charged with oversight of recommendations such as those within this report; serve as a resource and sounding board for questions and concerns regarding online matters at any level; promote centralization and dissemination of knowledge regarding resources related to online education; and develop further recommendations for and assessment of online education.

As the Faculty Senate is a primary body through which faculty can voice their ideas in relation to these and other areas, such a standing committee can best ensure this important participation (see Article 27 of the CBA). Liaisons from this committee could work with other initiatives across campus for a better exchange of information, to better promote common goals while avoiding duplication of effort, and to ensure dissemination of information to relevant constituents. Among other matters, the additional recommendations noted at the end of this report are examples of areas requiring further consideration that such a standing committee could address.

2. Continuing and increasing attention to the development of support and resources for faculty and students, with regular and proportional involvement by faculty in the type, content, amount, and delivery of such resources

Resources such as websites, programs, and outreach provided by CET&L, UC Libraries, UCIT, Canopy, and UC's website on Distance Learning and Outreach supply useful tools and programs for meeting the needs of students and faculty regarding online education. It is recommended that such university-wide resources continue to be supported and developed and that resources be communicated more effectively to relevant constituencies. Such recommendations are echoed in the HLC Guidelines and the PEL Report; some of the recommendations from the latter report are in development or at least partly in place. All efforts should include a strong faculty voice in the nature and availability of various resources.

College-level resources also need to be provided commensurate to the expectations of online course development. Where colleges are expected to grow their online course offerings, resources in terms of IT and ID assistance; faculty development opportunities; and necessary time and expenditures to support such preparation need to align with expectations of online development. How these resources are to be

used requires faculty involvement. More specific recommendations are detailed below in relation to specific charges.

3. The promulgation of faculty-driven university-wide guidelines/best practices for online education supplemented by transparent unit-level policies and practices.

University-wide guidelines can highlight unique needs, concerns, and limitations relating to online education, and also identify where expectations regarding online teaching need further alignment with those of face-to-face teaching. Identifying problematic and/or inconsistent policies or practices across campuses can help avoid situations where faculty or students are provided unequal opportunities in these modalities.

As already noted, lack of clear policies and practices are a concern to both faculty and administrators alike. These recommendations of best practices should serve as guidelines for discussion on the unit level. Policies and practices should be driven by substantive disciplinary requirements through open discussions and agreement by members of that unit, with special attention given to those experienced in the modalities under discussion.

Recommendations Regarding Specific Charges Given by the Faculty Senate

Charge 1: Differentiation of faculty and staff role in development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of courses offered via online teaching.

Certain fundamental characteristics of a course are no different between a face-to-face course and one taught online; that is, the faculty member is responsible for course content and for providing an environment to promote effective student learning. It is the faculty who determine what is taught, how it is taught, and how students are evaluated.

It is acknowledged that the inherent differences in the delivery of face-to-face and online courses can be substantial and can require alternative means of developing course content, including material and activities, to achieve desired learning objectives. Individuals such as IT and ID personnel can provide valuable support and expertise to faculty members in relation to the use of technology and the technological delivery of course and program content based on current teaching and learning theory; leveraging technology for student engagement, efficiency and effectiveness; and the development and implementation of courses and programs delivered with this technology.

Many faculty and unit heads have requested more resources for online education, including support from these personnel; this includes support that is disciplinary in nature and more readily available than such personnel may be at the university level. On the other hand, where ID and IT personnel are available in units and are, in some cases, embedded in courses, faculty have raised questions about the line to be reasonably drawn between support offered relating to course content and that provided for technology and design. Other concerns raised include the continuation of that support, FERPA issues, the ownership of material (i.e., Intellectual Property, or IP) created by faculty in conjunction with assistance by IT and ID, and other roles played by ID and IT personnel such as evaluators of faculty or course content. Because of these and other concerns raised, the following are recommended:

Recommendation 1: Units should provide faculty adequate support for the purposes of requisite online course development and implementation, including access to appropriate IT and ID support for development of online courses and programs. This access can be via central resources or unit specific personnel as necessary and appropriate to adequately meet the needs of faculty and students.

Recommendation 2: Units, in consultation with and agreement by faculty, should develop and clearly articulate guidelines and policies to address roles and expectations for the appropriate use of IT and ID personnel in relation to the development, implementation, assessment, content creation, and revision of courses and programs, or the creation of consistent templates or unit-specific resources, for both online and face-to-face courses. Policies should ensure alignment with course learning objectives and ensure that there is no principal distinction between faculty roles or ownership of faculty course content in face-to-face and online courses. Recommendations to follow are not intended to be utilized in contradiction to such agreed-upon policies but should be considered in formation of such policies.

Recommendation 3: A collaborative working relationship between faculty and IT and ID personnel should be sought that will maximize the skills of each professional. As faculty are primarily responsible for course content and delivery, faculty determinations in these areas should govern the type and extent of IT and ID support in order to best maintain the academic standards of the course.

Recommendation 4: ID personnel access to the course materials should be provided on an as-needed basis. ID personnel can help faculty develop and implement online courses and programs. At the request of faculty, ID personnel may, for example, help faculty determine and implement best practices in the design of an online environment that can most usefully support learning outcomes; align content, assessment, and activities within the course; assess student learning; and other similar functions to ensure quality online teaching and learning. Faculty will then determine which recommendations or guidelines provided should be followed. ID personnel should not remain in the course once the immediate educational interest has been met.

Recommendation 5: IT personnel access to course materials should be provided on an as-needed basis. IT personnel can assist faculty in choosing the best technology to support their pedagogy. At the request of faculty, IT personnel may, for example, help create structures for a course (e.g. a template to be used in a learning management system); provide training on technology used in a course; analyze data acquired through a course (other than evaluation of student performance); troubleshoot technology issues associated with a course; and provide similar functions related to instructional use of technology to support student learning. Faculty will then determine which recommendations or guidelines provided should be followed. IT personnel should not remain in the course once the immediate educational interest has been met.

Recommendation 6: Faculty should not be required to allow continuous access to a course by IT or ID personnel.

Recommendation 7: For matters of assessing teaching effectiveness, review of content and methods is encouraged in both online and face-to-face courses. It is suggested that reviewers be peers or individuals trained in the particular methods of teaching under review who are also familiar with course goals and learning outcomes.

Recommendation 8: Assessment of teaching effectiveness for workload, RPT, or accreditation concerns, among others, should be commensurate with that of face-to-face courses; pertinent distinctions in such review should be addressed in clear policy statements.

Charge #2: Faculty Workload Best Practices addressing, but not limited to, such topics as various instructional roles within a course, faculty student ratios, course ownership, workload credit, and variation in factors among disciplines.

There are many indications that the effort required to create and deliver an online course is greater than the effort required to develop and deliver a traditional course. This is reported by faculty survey responses as well as research. Only a minority considered elements of online teaching to be equal or less work than face-to-face. As compared to face-to-face courses, 78% of faculty surveyed thought creation

of an online course was more work; 68% considered amount of time to provide feedback was more; and 61% experienced more work in responding to student communication such as emails and discussions.

The White Paper summarizes a variety of corroborating research in this regard: for example, the authors note that research by the American Federation of Teachers indicates that online courses require more teacher preparation time and time interacting with students (4), and that researcher Lawrence Tomei shows more time in online courses taken for delivery of instructional content and advising as well as net time across all teaching interactions. Tomei's report also cautions that class size should be limited (4-5). Research by Taft, Perkowski, and Martin which indicates that factors such as how interactive instruction is, what type of student population is involved, and the frequency and quality of assessment should cause faculty and administrators to consider that online courses may require smaller, rather than larger courses as compared to face-to-face courses (The White Paper 6).

In addition to workload concerns noted in the faculty survey, 75% of faculty respondents did not know who owned their course material created for online courses. Academic tradition and UC Board Rules confirm the right by faculty, absent agreements to the contrary, to maintain copyright to their work that results from their normal course of professional activity. Such a perspective does not differentiate between the modality in which course material is delivered.

It is acknowledged that faculty workload, in many cases, is college or unit-specific. These guidelines are intended to inform discussions regarding faculty workload for online teaching so that policies can be implemented to best conform to unit requirements.

Recommendation 1: Colleges and/or units, in consultation with faculty, should clearly articulate workload and RPT policies relating to online teaching to the extent necessary to provide equity in relation to face-to-face teaching.

Recommendation 2: In regard to the development, compensation, and ownership of online courses, colleges and /or units, in consultation with faculty, should clearly articulate policies to provide such equity and to note any critical distinctions between online and face-to-face courses, including distinctions between the preparation and development of courses compared to the teaching of those courses.

Recommendation 3: Where the form of online courses vary in relation to face-to-face courses (for example, the course is developed by one faculty member and taught or co-taught by another; the course is developed and supervised by a faculty member, but taught by facilitators; etc.), such differences may affect workload, IP concerns, student enrollment caps, and other factors related to the developer/instructor of record and the facilitators. Colleges and/or units, in consultation with faculty, should clearly articulate and account for any such differences to provide equity for workload and RPT consideration.

Recommendation 4: Differences between face-to-face courses and online courses may be due to requirements and challenges of the online environment. Colleges and units, in consultation with faculty, should articulate these differences and account for them in articulating policies regarding whether or not online courses should be developed; the size and format of those courses; whether and how facilitators should be used; and other features of the course that may require change to ensure an excellent learning environment and equity for faculty compared to face-to-face courses.

Recommendation 5: When a faculty member is asked to develop a course that others will teach, or is asked after the development of a course to allow others to use the material to teach the course in a single use or for program development, a written agreement regarding the compensation of that faculty member and the effect this agreement has on IP, must be utilized unless such policies are clearly articulated in the unit's RPT or workload document. This should apply equally to face-to-face and to online courses.

Recommendation 6: While it may be in the faculty member and unit's best interest, assigning someone else to teach a course developed by a faculty member should be done only with the faculty member's agreement; with compensation for that role and the resulting additive value that this arrangement provides to a unit; and, absent any clear agreement to the contrary, with the continued right of the faculty member to teach the course. This should apply equally to face-to-face and to online courses.

Recommendation 7: Absent any specific policy or agreement to the contrary, faculty maintain ownership of their course material regardless of the modality in which a course is taught.

Charge #3: Faculty Development for online teaching, including but not limited to, core knowledge including regulations i.e. FERPA requirements, recommended administrative and staff (IT/ID) support, and suggested knowledge updates for faculty involved with online teaching.

Online education at UC and nationwide has grown substantially in the past ten years. Data provided by the UC Office of Institutional Research comparing growth in distance-learning courses and sections in Fall terms from 2005 to 2014 include the following increases in courses: 244% in Uptown Campus undergraduate courses; 540% in Uptown graduate courses; and 1150% in the Regional undergraduate courses. Distance-learning sections for Uptown undergraduate, graduate, and Regional undergraduate increased at the rates of 136%, 453%, and 2255% respectively; while FTEs in distance-learning courses increased 299%, 339%, and 2,950% respectively (*see* OIR Report). Especially given such rapid increases, most faculty currently teaching did not participate in online courses or learn specific methods of teaching in an online environment as part of their formative time in graduate studies. Such a focus is still not a common feature of many graduate programs. Unlike traditional teaching and learning, most faculty have therefore not had experiences with the pedagogies and processes associated with online education.

While principles of good practice in teaching and learning are consistent regardless of format or medium, there are considerable differences in the implementation of these principles in the online environment. It is imperative that faculty have the training and experiences that will allow them to provide excellent education regardless of how that education is delivered. Both the HLC Guidelines and the PEL Report recognize the important role of university leadership in supporting such initiatives. The PEL Report, for example, recognizes responsibility at the university level to provide "course development training opportunities" and at the college and unit level to "[p]rovide program faculty training regarding course development expectations" including development of content.

Research on best practices for online instructors cite literature as supporting evidence that "[i]nstitutions must provide ongoing faculty training and support through professional development opportunities" in order to obtain the goal of successful online course development (Fish and Wickersham 280). As noted earlier, resources for professional development exist at UC; continued and growing support by UC for these will be crucial, as will the improvement of mechanisms to build awareness by faculty and other constituents about available resources. Including faculty in the content and development of these resources is equally important.

Recommendation 1: Professional development programs must be available to faculty who are expected to teach online and distance courses. These opportunities must be made available sufficiently ahead of the term that the online course is to be taught and on a regular enough basis so that faculty have time to both participate in the programs and reflect on the experience so the new knowledge can be incorporated into the online course.

Recommendation 2: Such professional development programs available at UC, whether at the university or unit-level, should include substantive faculty input to help determine availability in terms of frequency and timing of available offerings within the three semesters, as well as the type of programs that are most useful to faculty.

Recommendation 3: Professional development programs available at UC should include those topics related to best practices that may represent increased or particular concerns in an online environment. Since these are often practices that can affect the learning environment in face-to-face courses as well, increased awareness of their overall importance should be sought regardless of teaching modality. These topics include copyright and fair use of material used by faculty within a course; plagiarism and other issues of student integrity; accessibility; FERPA regulations; and other pertinent topics.

Recommendation 4: Professional development programs available at UC should continue to address best practices in online course design such as use of learning management systems and features of that system, pedagogies associated with online learning, technologies and techniques for creation of content, technologies and techniques that facilitate interaction, best practices in online and distance education, time management for instructors in online and distance education, and the like. Facilitation of these programs should include individuals who have taught online courses.

Recommendation 5: So that faculty understand the context of the medium and pedagogical implications, faculty should not develop and/or teach an online course until they have participated in relevant online learning activities or courses or until they have had equivalent experience to qualify them as ready to teach online. Specific expectations as to evidence of and the necessary and sufficient knowledge required to teach online should be set by the unit in consultation with faculty.

Charge #4: Program and course curricular alignment, including but not limited to, normalization of grading and other pedagogical practices between instructor of record and other instructors within an online course and faculty adherence to program and course curricular design.

Just as significant thought must be given to increasing class sizes in a face-to-face environment, serious consideration must be provided as to whether or not large class sizes can be successfully accommodated in an online environment. Given concerns that time and effort required for teaching online courses may already be more than a comparable face-to-face course, increased class sizes need close examination to consider pedagogical and workload effects.

Additionally, in courses with multiple facilitators and/or recitation sections in either modality, attention must be given to consistency of learning and grading. Maintaining fidelity of student experience needs to be addressed. Since a number of variations of large classes or courses with multiple sections are in place, a variety of other concerns are raised: these include workload equity for the faculty member who creates a course, for a faculty member who creates and supervises others teaching the course, for a faculty member who does not create a course but facilitates a course section, and for faculty who teach more distant iterations of a course created by a faculty member who may no longer be within the unit. Compared with the more traditional situation of a faculty member who develops and teaches his or her own course, these variations require close attention and consideration for equity considerations noted. Attempts at maintaining the integrity of course content through standardization, however, must be balanced by the need for variation depending on student population and other factors. As one faculty member summarized the concern in a survey response: "If a course is taught with the same philosophical perspective as face-to-face, every semester is different, content is NOT static, and structure may change. Online courses are living, changing, evolving courses as technology and content changes. Teaching online should not be a template venture any more than teaching face-to-face."

Other issues of alignment include comparable methods of course or program approval, review, and assessment. Agreements with third-party providers also raise these types of concerns, as well as questions of general oversight and consideration of long-term unexpected consequences related to growth and various management issues. The HLC Guidelines require clear oversight of "contractual relationships and arrangements with consortial partners" to ensure academic quality of all course offerings (3c, d, e, f).

A related concern regarding integrity of learning environment is the adequate preparation of students for working in an online environment. Some online programs and faculty provide orientations to online learners prior to their engagement in the program or their continuation in a course. In addition, the university provides information for students through sources such as UC's Distance Learning website regarding what to expect in online courses. It is recommended that such information continue to be developed and that this information be widely publicized in order to ensure that students are aware of and utilize the currently existing information. The PEL report, the White Paper, the HLC Guidelines, and other research recommend robust student orientation to best prepare students for online learning.

Recommendation 1: It is almost always preferable that the faculty member who developed the course also be the faculty member who teaches the course.

Recommendation 2: When a course has multiple individuals who are grading, the faculty of record responsible for oversight of the course must ensure that grading is done consistently and is performed to the standards set by the faculty of record. Such graders should be given appropriate training and guidance to complete these duties appropriately.

Recommendation 3: If a course is taught by an instructor other than the faculty member who developed the course, the units, in consultation with faculty, should develop processes to ensure that the instructor teaching the course teaches it in accordance with the course learning objectives and program requirements. The amount and degree of variation permitted to address student needs should be identified.

Recommendation 4: Course enrollment management systems at UC should clearly identify online and hybrid courses to best facilitate appropriate and informed student enrollment.

Recommendations 5: Students should have frequent opportunities other than incoming orientation to learn about the specifics of online education. Resources may include pre-screening of students at the university or unit-level as a prerequisite to registration for an online course; screening and information at the course level provided by faculty to clarify course expectations; and workshops for students to provide continued support for use of various technology including use of the learning management system.

Recommendation 6: Units should ensure that the same oversight provided to face-to-face courses and programs also occurs with online courses and programs whether offered by units or by third-party entities. This includes the method by which courses are approved, reviewed, and assessed. Colleges and/or units, in consultation with faculty, should determine the best method to ensure timely and comparable oversight and periodic review.

Recommendations for Further Consideration

While the committee has attempted to be comprehensive in their recommendations based on the charges provided to them, not all issues were addressed in equal depth, especially those relevant to, but not directly specified by, the charges. Because these were considered pertinent to best practices, however, the committee recommends further consideration of the following:

- Adjunct and other part-time faculty: Faculty survey participants included many adjuncts, as well as full-time faculty, who were unaware of their roles and obligations in relation to online teaching and in relation to each other. It is important to consider how the role of adjuncts fit into the overall objectives of continuing and increasing online education.

- Licensing and other agreements: Agreements relating to development of online courses within the university or with third-party entities, or the use of faculty-created courses by the unit or other faculty, may prove mutually beneficial. The use of any such agreements, however, should receive close scrutiny in order to ensure fairness for all participants including, but not limited to, off-tenure-track and adjunct faculty. As would be true for other policy matters, the process under which any agreements, written or verbal, are arrived at should be discussed, agreed to, and overseen by faculty within each unit.
- Student preparation and support: University resources and faculty course content are helping to acculturate students to the online environment. More assessment should be done to identify student expectations about, readiness for, and work within the online environment in order to better understand how to help prepare students for greater success in an online environment and to ensure that the quality of online education is commensurate with that of face-to-face courses. As with other components, faculty should serve to advise regarding resources that may be useful to enhance student success.
- Teaching satisfaction and student satisfaction are not directly addressed within this report but should be explored. In addition to objective differences in online teaching noted by faculty in comparison to face-to-face teaching, almost half of the faculty survey responses indicated either disagreement or strong disagreement with the idea that online teaching was as satisfying as face-to-face teaching. Conversations with faculty also indicated significant differences in subjective responses to online teaching, especially where faculty taught online exclusively. The committee recommends more investigation into these important considerations and their potential short and long-term effects.
- Finally, and in acknowledgement of many faculty comments raising this as a concern, it should not be the intent of the University to use online teaching to permanently reduce, eliminate, or consolidate full-time faculty. The presence and active participation of full-time faculty are at least as crucial in an online environment as they are in face-to-face courses. Any indications that this might be the intended or unintended consequences of online policies require immediate attention and response.

Conclusion

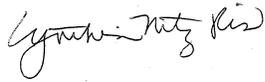
The committee would like to reemphasize that the responsibility for achieving these recommendations should be a joint effort among various UC constituents. The faculty role in curricular development is a crucial component of all aspects of the development of courses and programs, whether online or face-to-face. It is up to faculty and administrators alike to adhere to and insist on this involvement and to encourage cooperation between constituencies depending on their relevant knowledge and function.

It should be noted that even as this committee met and began working on this report, resources have continued to grow and address at least in part some of the concerns noted here and in prior reports and recommendations. This dynamic situation represents useful movement forward; however, continued efforts in identifying and responding to the concerns raised and oversight needed regarding changing and enlarging requirements to meet the demands of online education are strongly recommended.

It is, therefore, the committee's request that these recommendations be approved by the Faculty Senate and disseminated to those who have the power to act on these recommendations; that would include forwarding this report to the Provost, to Deans across UC, to Unit Heads, and to the UC Faculty Senate

and to college-level faculty senates to promote to the faculty at large. As noted, it is requested that a standing UC Faculty Senate committee be charged to continue the work of this committee.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Nitz Ris, Chair
On behalf of the Faculty Senate Task Force on Online Teaching

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APPENDIX A—TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

1. Applications: The ability to achieve excellence in teaching, whether online or face-to-face, cannot be accomplished by any single segment of the UC community. These recommendations, therefore, are to be understood as addressing multiple segments of the UC community. Faculty bring excellent teaching to either modality, but given critical distinctions between the modalities, may require additional support in terms of time, programs, workload, and other compensation considerations, among other things. For teaching success as well as the success of a unit’s programmatic goals, these considerations as well as appropriate student enrollment caps, maintaining the integrity of course delivery, and other factors, need to be addressed and supported by the disciplinary units. All administrative levels must anticipate that creation of online courses is not merely multiplying standing courses but requires various types of resources to ensure adequate development to achieve the goals of UC2019. Hence, all types and levels of the UC community are asked to consider their role in achieving these recommendations.

2. Comparisons between online and face-to-face teaching: “no principal distinctions” and “critical differences”: It is not the intention of this committee to identify all distinctions between online and face-to-face teaching since these distinctions may vary from unit to unit depending on how courses are created and delivered, and may be affected by the content of each unit’s workload and RPT documents.

It is recommended, however, that online teaching be treated in a manner in which there are *no principal distinctions* between face-to-face courses and online courses where such courses can be seen as comparable for purposes including, but not limited to, the following:

- Faculty lead in course development, content, and delivery, including the collaborative relationship between faculty and personnel in information/instructional technology (IT) and instructional design (ID);
- Intellectual property (IP) or course ownership considerations;
- Workload credit;
- RPT consideration;
- Assessment;
- Faculty development; and
- Student learning support

Where principal distinctions do occur, *critical differences* must be recognized to ensure the highest quality of teaching and learning. Such differences may include, but are not limited to, distinctions in workload related to discipline-specific requirements within courses such as interactivity, robust feedback, experiential components, and the like; technological differences where online course delivery is unique and without a comparable face-to-face component; and program-specific requirements such as courses developed by faculty that are then taught by facilitators.

Awareness of the circumstances under which online courses should be treated similar to or different from face-to-face courses entail crucial and detailed considerations to ensure clear and equitable policies; while these can be suggested, they may require further deliberation on a unit level.

3. Faculty Role: Just as they are in face-to-face modalities, therefore, faculty should be recognized as the primary source of course content, and should be the final arbiter of course and program learning objectives in concert with unit heads. Course curricular involvement is still considered a faculty purview and should not differ whether the modality is face-to-face or online; faculty and administrators alike need to recognize and encourage the practice of this pivotal role by faculty. This is especially true since in a number of departments, although faculty have been teaching online, unit heads and others making decisions regarding online education may not have had experience in this arena. Recognizing the combined fact of the differences that exist in online teaching as compared to face-to-face and the

respective experience that faculty may have suggests an even higher responsibility to involve faculty in final decisions concerning online teaching.

Assuming faculty involvement as equal in both modalities helps ensure that course content and course learning objectives remain comparable across learning modalities. The HLC, for example, sets as an expectation in its “Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components” that “program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality)” (Higher Learning Commission “Criteria”). UC also notes in its Academic Master Plan that it seeks to provide online education that meets UC’s overall goals of educational excellence.

4. Inclusive Charges: This committee was charged with the following: to “create a report that addresses Faculty Best Practices in distance education and online teaching” which “should include, but not be limited to,” recommendations in four primary areas. Some of our discussions in each of these areas by necessity extended beyond the precise language of each charge. Additionally, some of the recommendations cross categories of each charge or are affected by considerations noted under other charges. It is therefore recommended that the reader consider these recommendations as interrelated and therefore to be viewed and understood holistically.

5. Specific Definitions: In any area of new development, terms may be in flux for some time and may need to be altered to meet particular requirements; however, it is recommended that UC aim for consistency in terminology that can best support overall understanding. For the purposes of this report, the following terms are used:

Facilitators: Used to describe those additional instructors who may be other full-time faculty, adjuncts, or graduate students who teach sections of a course in addition to or alongside of the faculty member who has developed the course or is the faculty member of record. The faculty member who has developed the course or who is of record is assumed to have some level of responsibility to oversee the facilitators.

Online teaching: Unless otherwise noted, the term “online teaching” or “online instruction” is used interchangeably to describe teaching that aligns with the phrase “distance-delivered and hybrid courses” (DDHC) as utilized by the Higher Learning Commission. As described by the HLC, distance-delivered courses are defined as “those in which 75% or more of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication or equivalent mechanics, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other” and hybrid courses as those where the amount of distance instruction or interaction is more than 25% but less than 75%. While exact percentages are not the aim here, this committee wanted to emphasize the special concerns of and circumstances presented by courses generally considered to be “online” and avoid specific recommendations for web or technology-enhanced face-to-face courses.

Unit: unless otherwise specified, units refer to individual organizational components of UC, whether it is by UC campus (Uptown Campus, Blue Ash, Clermont), disciplinary colleges (e.g., CEAS, A&S), or departments, programs, or schools within such colleges. Unit refers to any of these unless specifically noted.

APPENDIX B—REPORTS, LITERATURE, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

Allen, I. Elaine and Jeff Seaman with Doug Lederman and Scott Jaschik. “Conflicted: Faculty and Online Education.” 2012. *Babson Survey Research Group*. June 2012. Web. June 2013.
<http://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/IHE-BSRG-Conflict.pdf>

American Federation of Teachers. “A Virtual Revolution: Trends in the Expansion of Distance Education.” *American Federation of Teachers*. May 2001. Web. April 2012
<<http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/virtualrevolution0501.pdf>>

Betts, Kristen and Amy Heaston. “Build It But Will They Teach?: Strategies for Increasing Faculty Participation & Retention in Online & Blended Education.” *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* 17.2 (2014) Web. September 2014.
http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer172/betts_heaston172.html

Collective Bargaining Agreement between University of Cincinnati and American Association of University Professors: University of Cincinnati Chapter. AAUP. 2013-2016. Linked from
<http://www.uc.edu/hr/lrpd/collective_bargaining.html>

*“Email: Faculty Senate Task Force Request.” Email Questions to UC Deans and Unit Heads Regarding Online Teaching. October – December 2014.

Note: A copy of the email sent to heads of colleges and units in certain colleges that engage in online teaching is included. Emails were initially sent in October 2014 and follow-up emails were sent in November and December. Not all those emailed replied. Seven colleges and eighteen units within colleges are represented in the answers noted.

*“Faculty Survey: UC Faculty Views on Online Teaching.” Visual Representation of Faculty Survey Results from Full-time and Adjunct Online Teaching Faculty. November 2014.

Note: Full-time and adjunct faculty were sent this survey through Survey Monkey. Those faculty who taught online were asked to continue to answer questions 3 - 12. Some of the faculty who did not teach online also answered some of these questions (the number varied between questions). Comments referred to in the report are taken only from those faculty who also identified as teaching online.

Fish, Wade W. and Leah E. Wickersham. “Best Practices for Online Instructors: Reminders.” *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*. 10.3 (2009): 279-84. Print.

*“The HLC Guidelines”: Higher Learning Commission. “Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-Line Learning).” *Higher Learning Commission*. 2006. Web. June 2014.
Link from: <<http://www.ncahlc.org/Document-Library/publications.html>>

Higher Learning Commission. “The Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components.” *Higher Learning Commission*. 2015. Web. January 2015. <<https://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html>>

*“Mid-Project Report of the Faculty Senate Task Force.” Memorandum to Tracy Herrmann from Cynthia Nitz Ris. June 30, 2014.

*“The PEL Report”: Clark, Melody, Dani Peterson, and Eugene Rutz. “Ensuring the Highest Quality in Online Courses and Programs.” UC Internal Document. Draft. 17 May 2013.

Note: This draft document was created by the Provostal E-Learning Work Group, charged by Interim Provost Larry Johnson (December 2012) to review and prioritize recommendations made by the *Blue Ribbon Online and Distance Learning Support Action Team*, in relation to the promotion, support, and development of a Quality Matters culture. This draft aimed to serve as an initial framework for planning. It recognizes quality assurance guidance/structures/resources that were in place, at multiple levels of the institution, at the time of the drafting of this document. Additionally, it provides recommendations for further development of these resources to help ensure the highest quality of online instruction; such recommendations anticipate engagement at multiple levels and among multiple constituents.

Singleton, H. Wells, and Carmen L. Session. “Faculty Concerns Related to Distance Learning Within Nontraditional Doctoral Programs.” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 239 (2011): 31-41. Print.

Taft, Susan H., Tracy Perkowski, and Lorene S. Martin. "A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education." *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* 12.3 (2011): 181-197. Academic Search Complete. Web. 30 Apr 2012.

Tomei, Lawrence A. "The Impact Of Online Teaching On Faculty Load: Computing The Ideal Class Size For Online Courses." *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education* 14.3 (2006): 531-541. Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson). Web. 30 Apr. 2012.

University of Cincinnati. “Academic Master Plan Phase II: Phase 2: Action Steps: UC 2019/Accelerating our Transformation.” Linked from “Third Century.” *Office of the President, University of Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati*. 2014. Web. January 2015.
<<http://president.uc.edu/thirdcentury/>>

University of Cincinnati Office of Institutional Research. “University of Cincinnati Distance Learning Instructional Full-time Equivalent Enrollment Autumn Terms 2005-2014 and Distance Learning Courses and Sections Autumn Terms 2005-2014.” Excel Report. January 2015.

*“The White Paper”: Griegel-McCord, Michele, Cynthia Nitz Ris, and Lisa Beckelhimer. “Online Writing Instruction Report and Recommendations,” published at: University of Cincinnati AAUP, “Advisories & Reviews: Online Writing Instruction White Paper,” *AAUP:UC*, 2013 Web. December 2014. Link from: <<http://aaupuc.org/advisory-letters-reviews/>>

Note: The authors are members of the Teaching and Technology Committee, a standing committee within the Department of English, McMicken College of Arts & Sciences. The authors/members are online teaching faculty; the report was provided to the unit and program heads as recommendations for online course policies and practices for the English Composition program. The report was later published by the AAUP as part of its report on online teaching practices at UC.

*Attached Documents

Emails sent out in October, 2014 with follow-up emails through December, 2014

Dear College / Unit Head:

We're writing on behalf of a Faculty Senate Task Force regarding Distance Delivered and Hybrid Courses. Our committee members represent Blue Ash, Clermont, and Clifton campuses, and six colleges throughout UC. We've been tasked with looking at policies across campus to provide an overview of and recommendations on a number of focus points relating to online teaching. We're completing an information-gathering stage regarding the policies and practices, and the good ideas, present at UC.

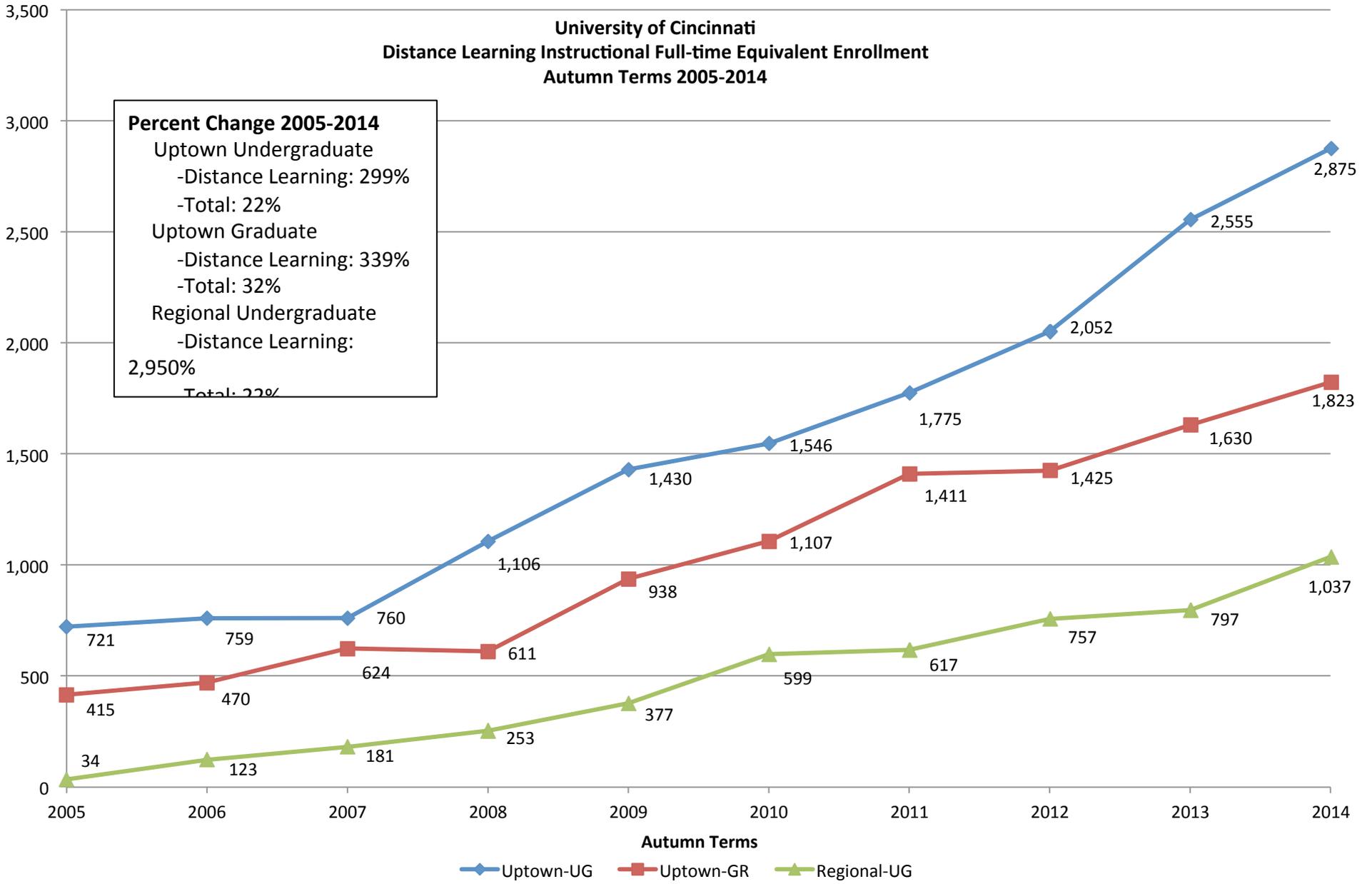
We would appreciate your information on as many of these questions as you are able to provide. If you are not the best person to answer these, please feel free to send this on to whomever that would be.

1. Does (your unit) have written policies in place regarding best practices for online teaching? If so, are these embodied in your workload documents or in some other form?
2. Does (your unit) have a faculty curriculum committee for online learning?
3. What are your policies or practices for online learning in (your unit) that address issues such as:
 - Assessment of faculty, including through integration of Quality Matters training;
 - Assessment of students and courses;
 - Curriculum-related decisions regarding which courses to offer, class size, division of responsibility in large classes, etc.;
 - Intellectual Property considerations of online components;
 - Qualifications and lead time for online teaching;
 - Resources for online training or practice including the use of IT/ID personnel; and
 - Workload and compensation policies for online course or program design
4. Some colleges and units addressed "sticky points" that exist regarding online learning, including more conceptual ideas such as identifying the "value added" aspect of online courses or practical concerns such as faculty assessment, IP questions, how to treat lecture capture of face to face courses, and so on. Is there any particular issue with which (your unit) is wrestling?
5. Any comments you would like to add.

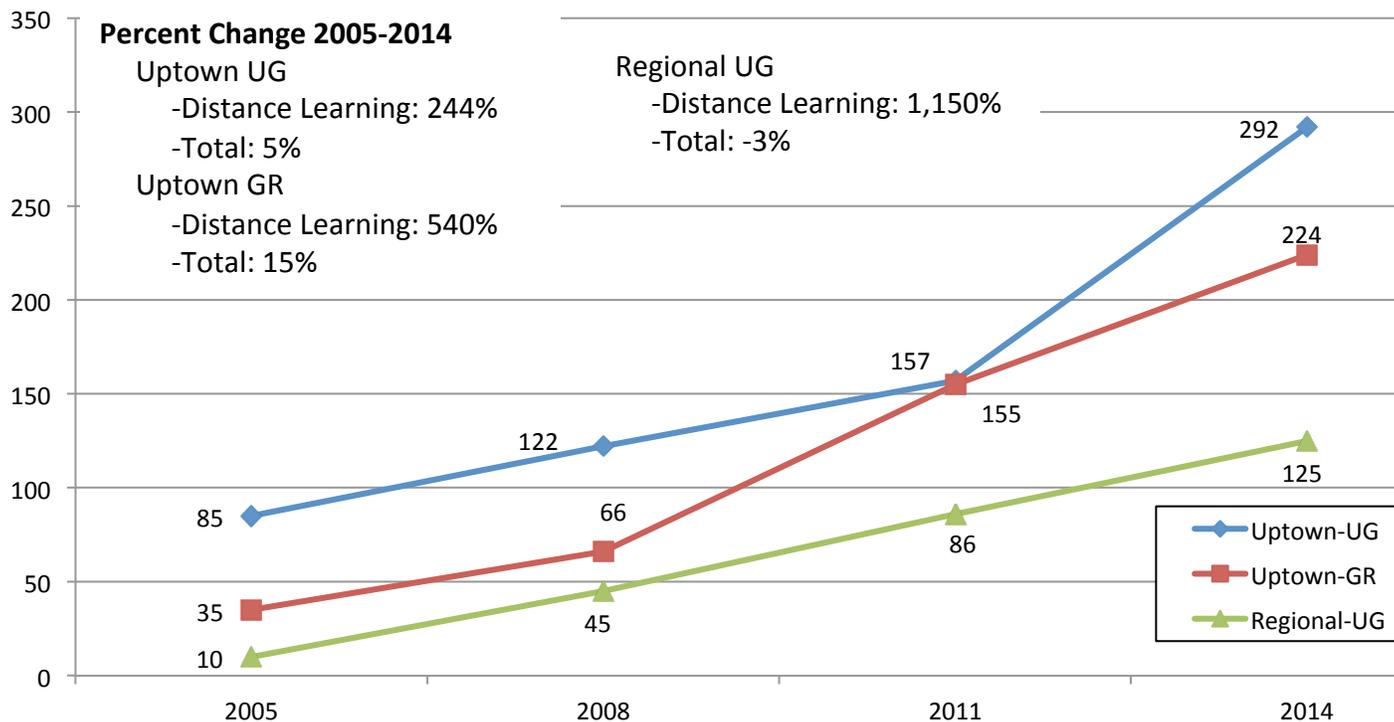
If possible, we would appreciate a response by _____. Please feel free, as well, to ask any questions you may have or to arrange to talk to us about this in lieu of an email response. All information will be aggregated in our final recommendations and particular information will not be linked to any specific college unless prior approval has been provided (e.g., where a good practice can be used as an example).

Thank you for your help with this important initiative.

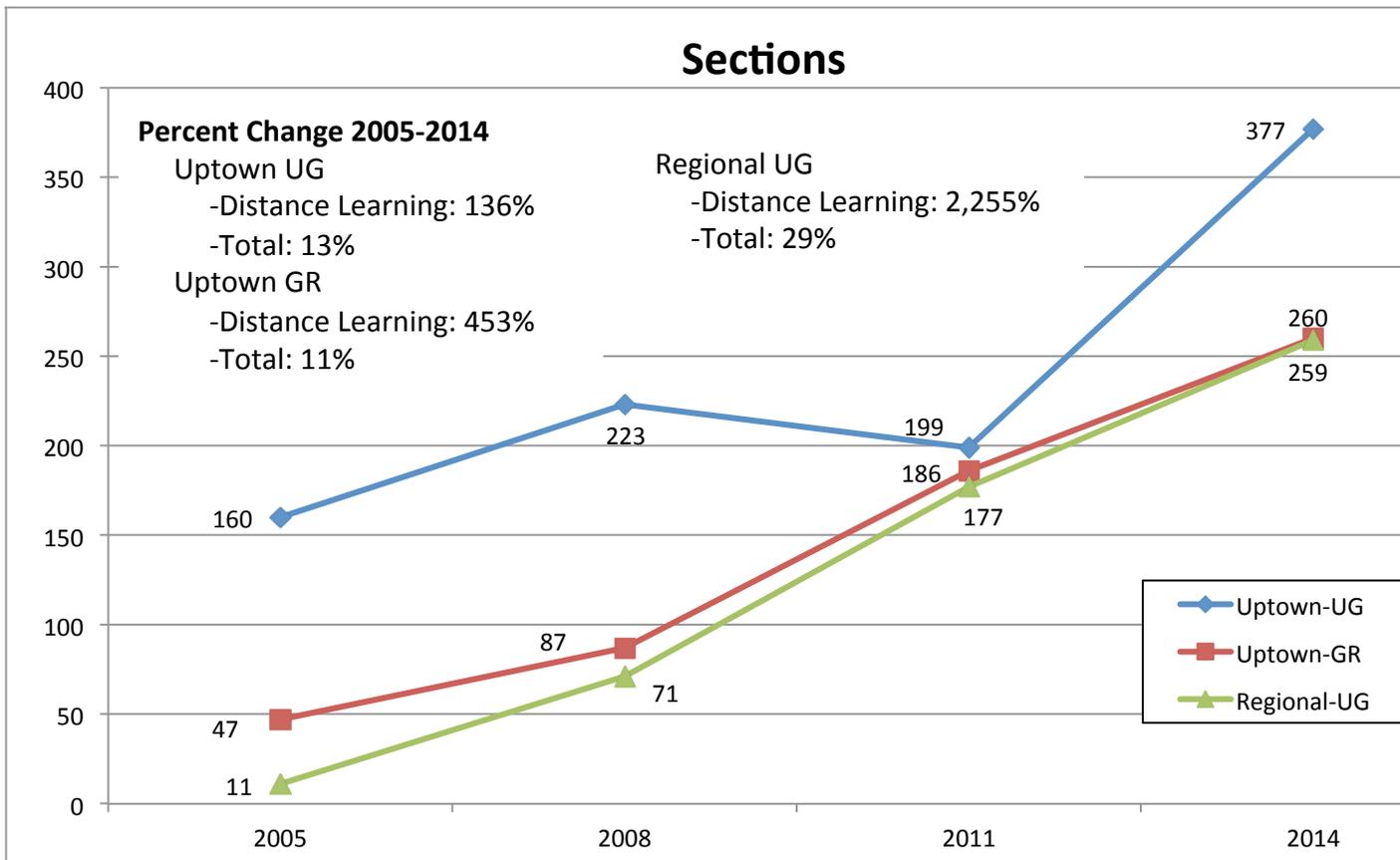
Distance Learning Instructional Full-time Equivalent Enrollment Autumn Terms 2005-2014



Courses



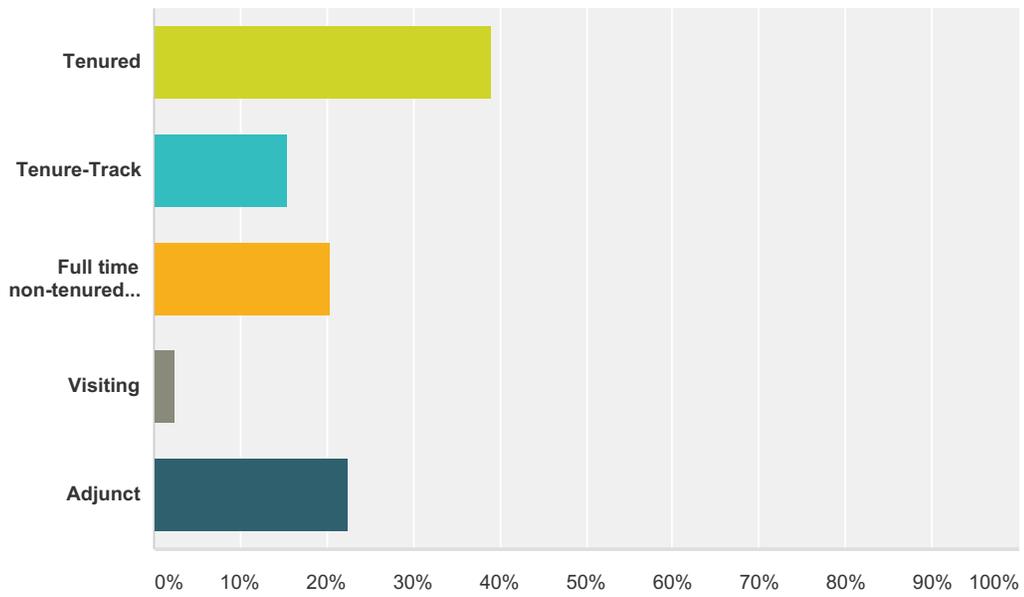
Sections



Note: By Offering Campus as determined by Offering College

Q1 Which of the following best describe your current professional track

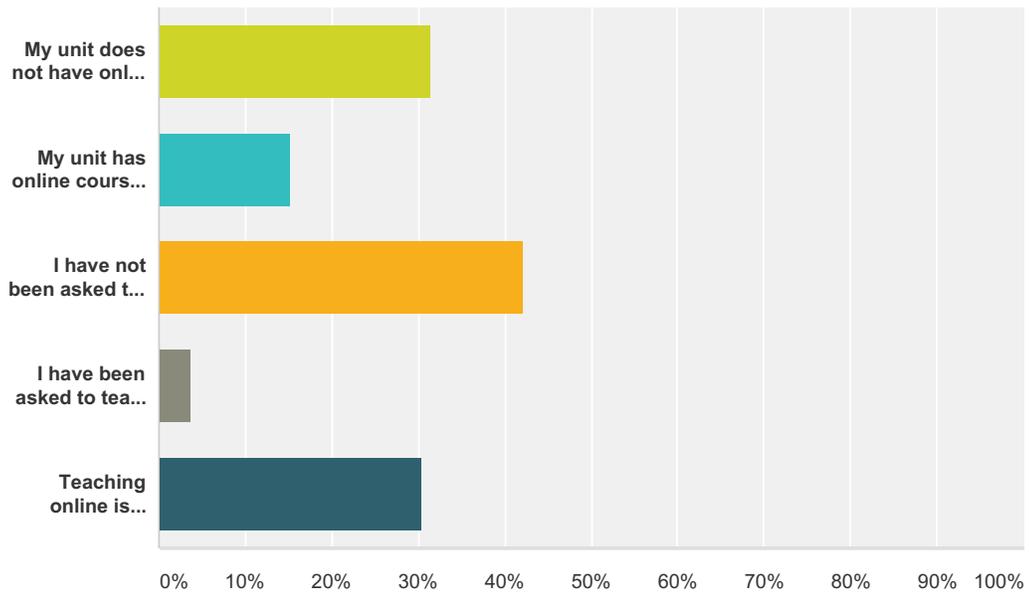
Answered: 409 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses	
Tenured	39.12%	160
Tenure-Track	15.40%	63
Full time non-tenured track	20.54%	84
Visiting	2.44%	10
Adjunct	22.49%	92
Total		409

Q2 References to "online" courses in this survey are those courses that are fully distance-delivered or hybrid, not merely traditional face to face courses that use technology or online platforms such as Blackboard. If you do not teach any online courses, please answer this question and then submit the survey; if you DO teach online, please jump to Question 3 and complete the rest of the survey. Why have you not yet taught online? Please select all that apply and explain as necessary, especially if you are choosing not to teach:

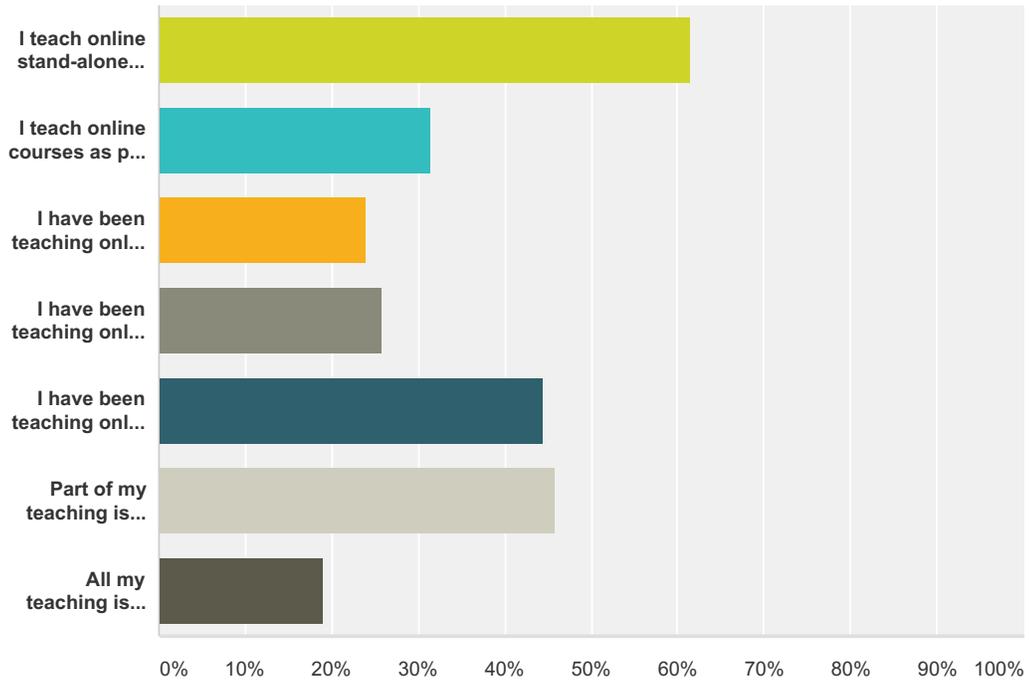
Answered: 190 Skipped: 224



Answer Choices	Responses
My unit does not have online courses or programs	31.58% 60
My unit has online courses or programs but I do not teach in that particular subject area	15.26% 29
I have not been asked to teach online	42.11% 80
I have been asked to teach, but I have declined (please explain below)	3.68% 7
Teaching online is voluntary and I have not volunteered to teach online (please explain below)	30.53% 58
Total Respondents: 190	

Q3 EXPERIENCE WITH ONLINE TEACHING:
Please select all that apply (note: for all answers, please feel free to explain any answer, especially any calling for more information):

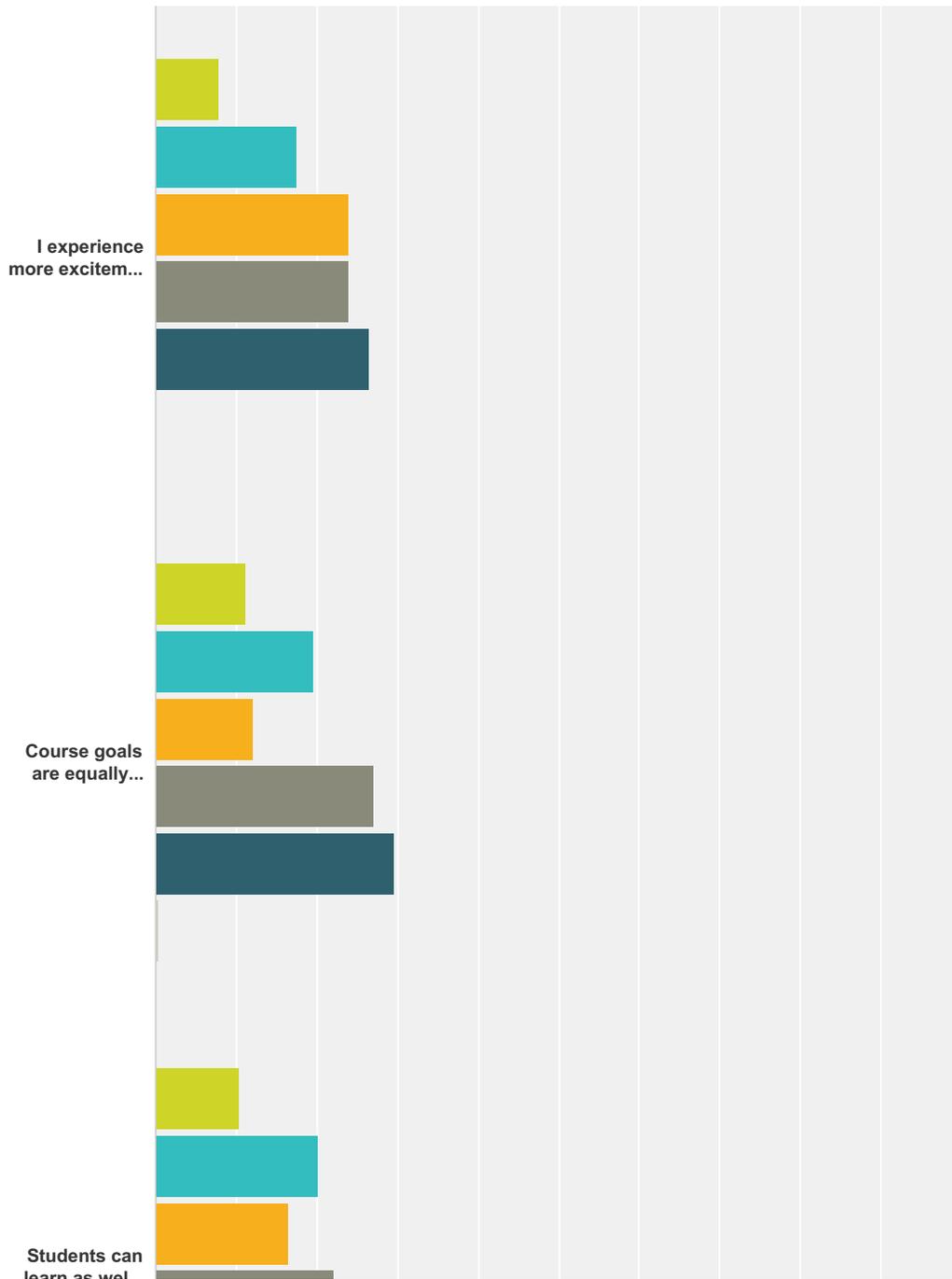
Answered: 216 Skipped: 198

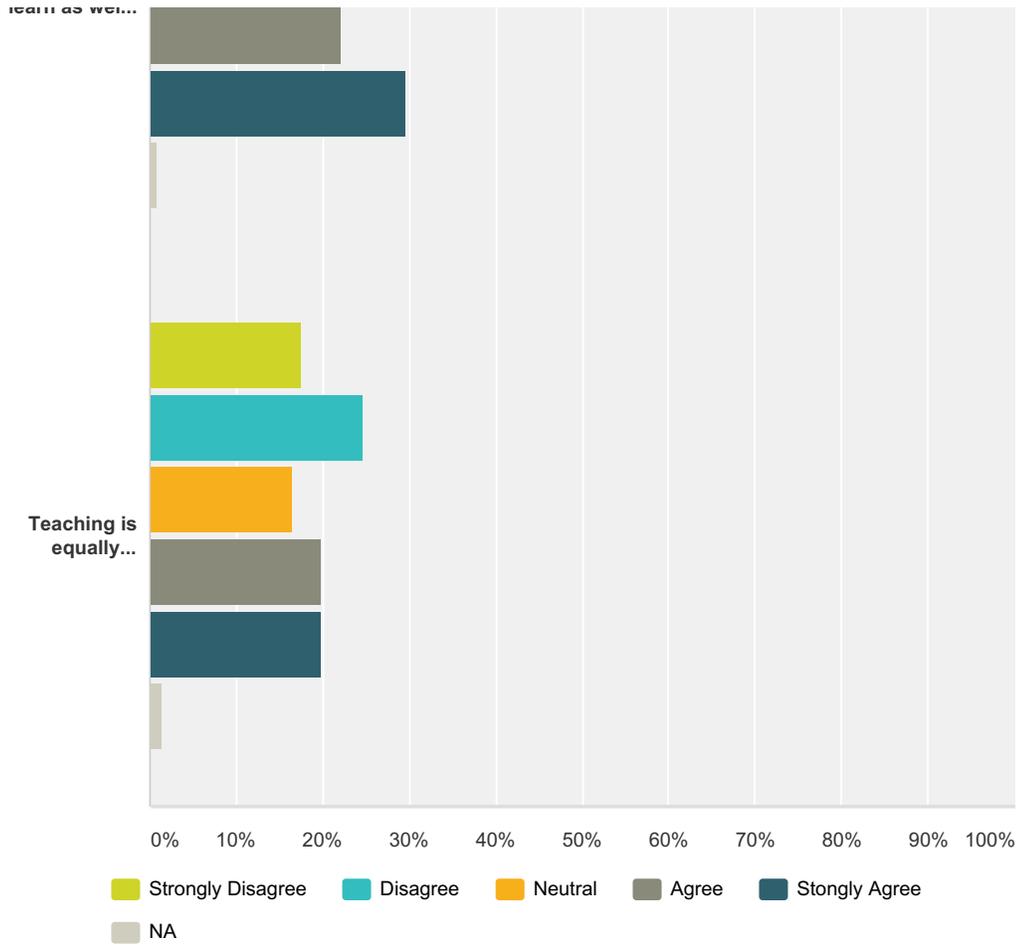


Answer Choices	Responses
I teach online stand-alone courses in my department	61.57% 133
I teach online courses as part of a fully online program	31.48% 68
I have been teaching online 0-2 years	24.07% 52
I have been teaching online 3-5 years	25.93% 56
I have been teaching online more than 5 years	44.44% 96
Part of my teaching is online or administering online courses	45.83% 99
All my teaching is online or administering online courses	18.98% 41
Total Respondents: 216	

Q4 Please select the choice that best represents your experience. Some of these questions here and in Question 5 were adapted from survey questions included in the document "Conflicted: Faculty and Online Education, 2012" by I. Elaine Allen, Jeff Seaman, Doug Lederman, and Scott Jaschik, by The Babson Survey Research Group and Inside Higher Education.

Answered: 268 Skipped: 146

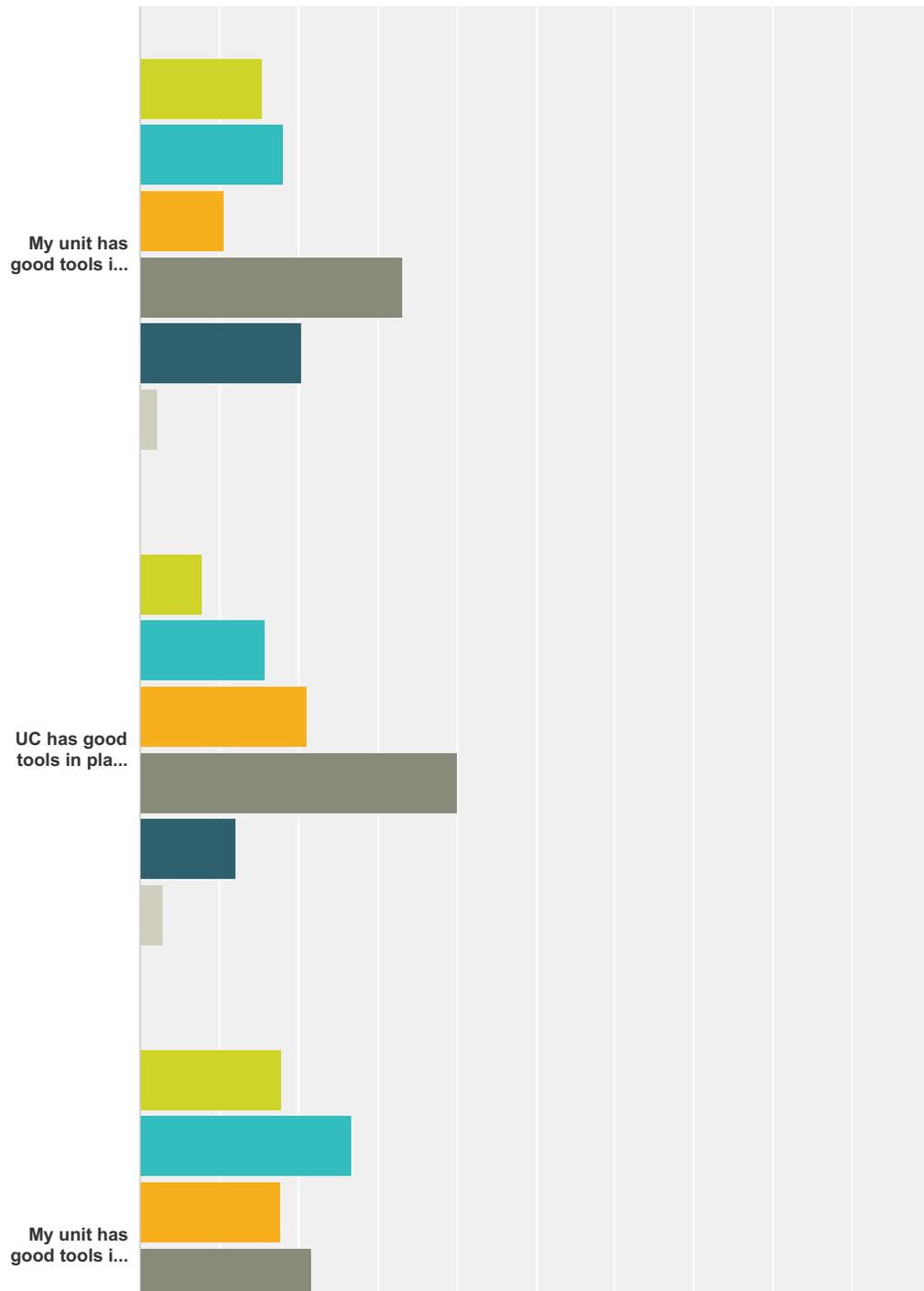


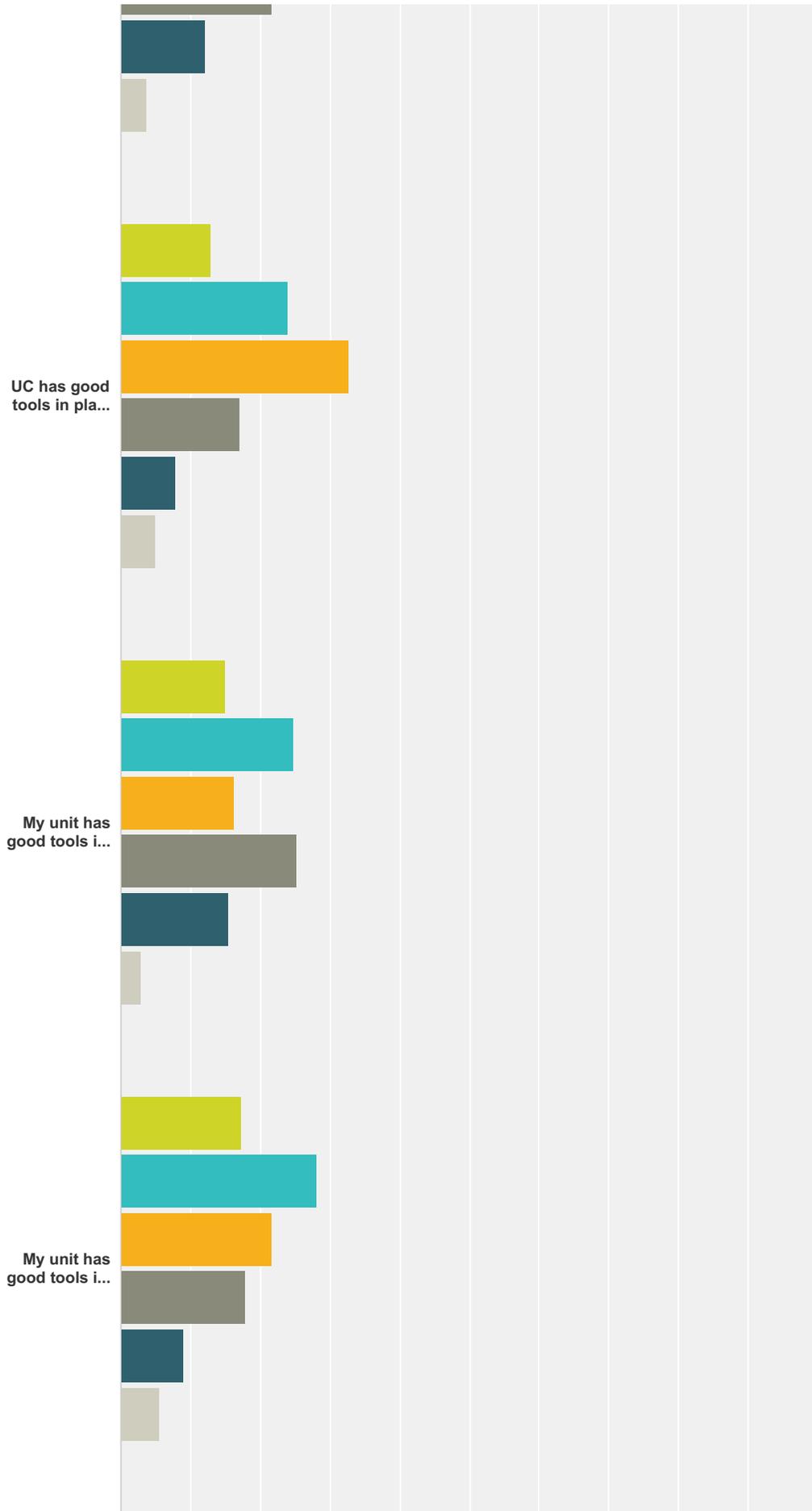


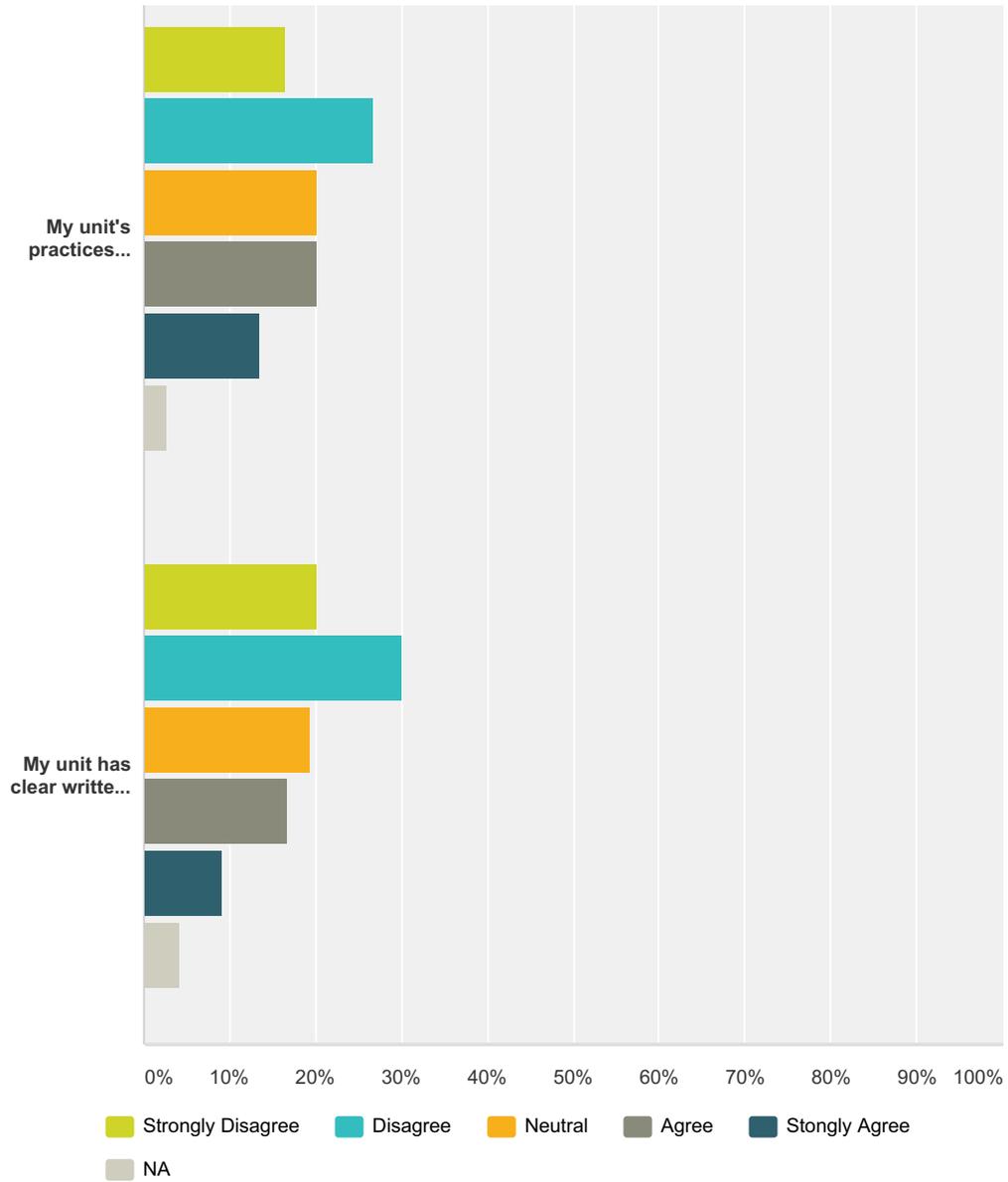
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA	Total
I experience more excitement than fear about the growth of online education	7.87% 21	17.60% 47	23.97% 64	23.97% 64	26.59% 71	0.00% 0	267
Course goals are equally attainable in an online course as in face to face courses	11.28% 30	19.55% 52	12.03% 32	27.07% 72	29.70% 79	0.38% 1	266
Students can learn as well in online courses as in face to face courses	10.53% 28	20.30% 54	16.54% 44	22.18% 59	29.70% 79	0.75% 2	266
Teaching is equally satisfying in online/hybrid courses and in face to face courses	17.60% 47	24.72% 66	16.48% 44	19.85% 53	19.85% 53	1.50% 4	267

Q5 Please select the choice that best represents your experience. In relation to resources, these seek to differentiate resources available within your unit (program, department, etc.) and those that are available outside your unit through an institutional resource at UC (e.g., CET&L, registrar, etc.).

Answered: 267 Skipped: 147







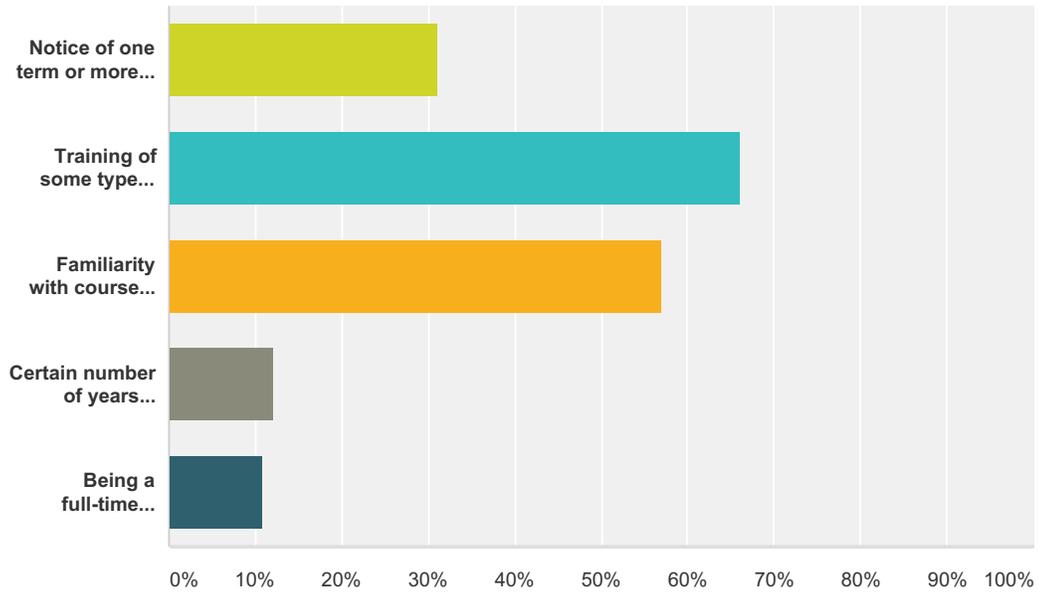
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA	Total
My unit has good tools in place to prepare faculty to teach online	15.47% 41	18.11% 48	10.57% 28	33.21% 88	20.38% 54	2.26% 6	265
UC has good tools in place to prepare faculty to teach online	7.92% 21	15.85% 42	21.13% 56	40.00% 106	12.08% 32	3.02% 8	265
My unit has good tools in place to prepare students to take online courses	18.05% 48	26.69% 71	17.67% 47	21.80% 58	12.03% 32	3.76% 10	266
UC has good tools in place to prepare students to take online courses	12.98% 34	24.05% 63	32.82% 86	17.18% 45	8.02% 21	4.96% 13	262
My unit has good tools in place to assess the quality of online courses	15.09% 40	24.91% 66	16.23% 43	25.28% 67	15.47% 41	3.02% 8	265
My unit has good tools in place to assess the quality of online teaching for RPT purposes	17.29% 46	28.20% 75	21.80% 58	18.05% 48	9.02% 24	5.64% 15	266
My unit's practices regarding online teaching are clear	16.54% 44	26.69% 71	20.30% 54	20.30% 54	13.53% 36	2.63% 7	266

UC Faculty Views on Online Teaching

My unit has clear written policies regarding online teaching	20.23% 53	30.15% 79	19.47% 51	16.79% 44	9.16% 24	4.20% 11	262
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Q6 PREREQUISITES TO TEACHING ONLINE: What, if any, are the prerequisites in your unit to teaching online courses for the first time? Please select all that apply.

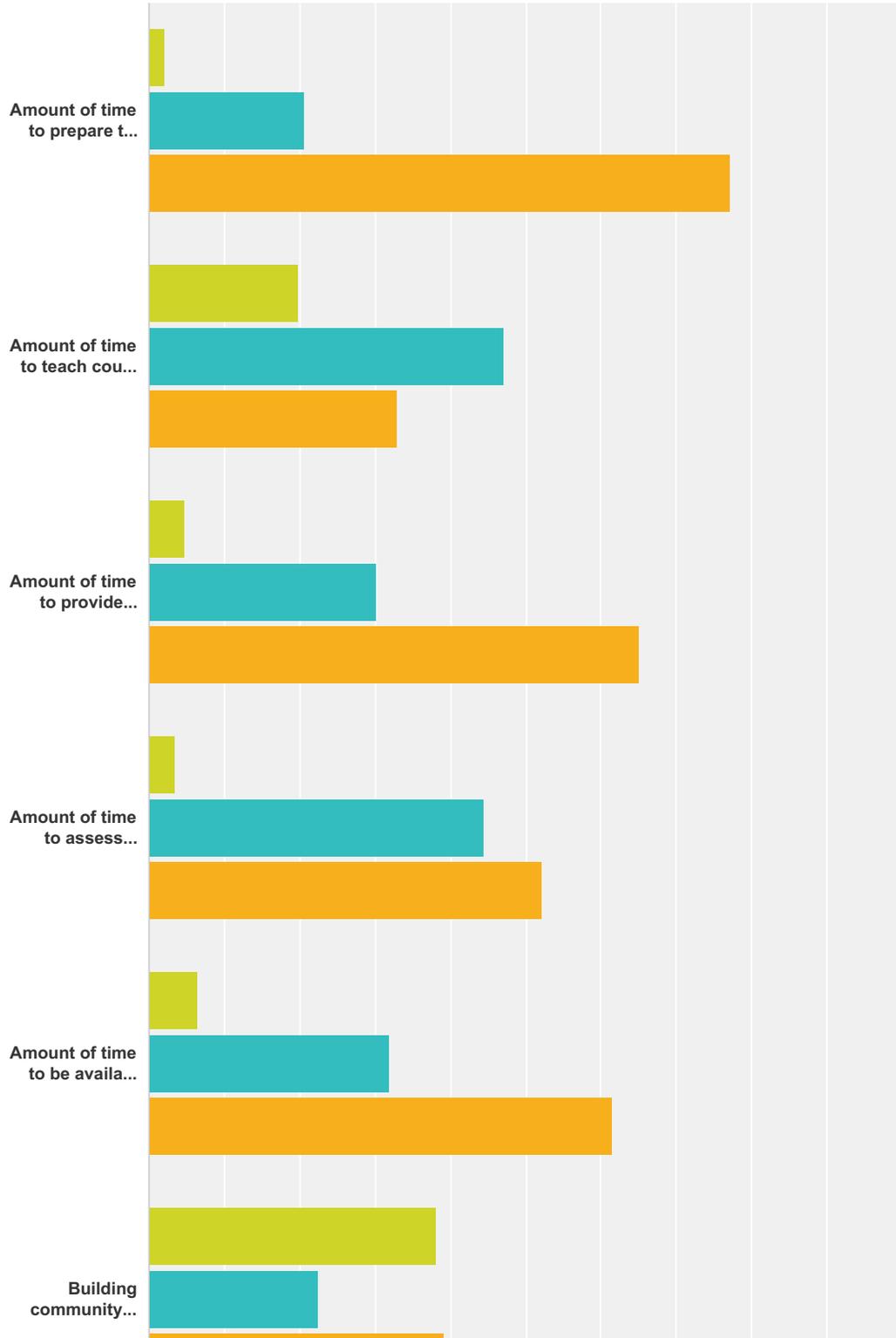
Answered: 174 Skipped: 240

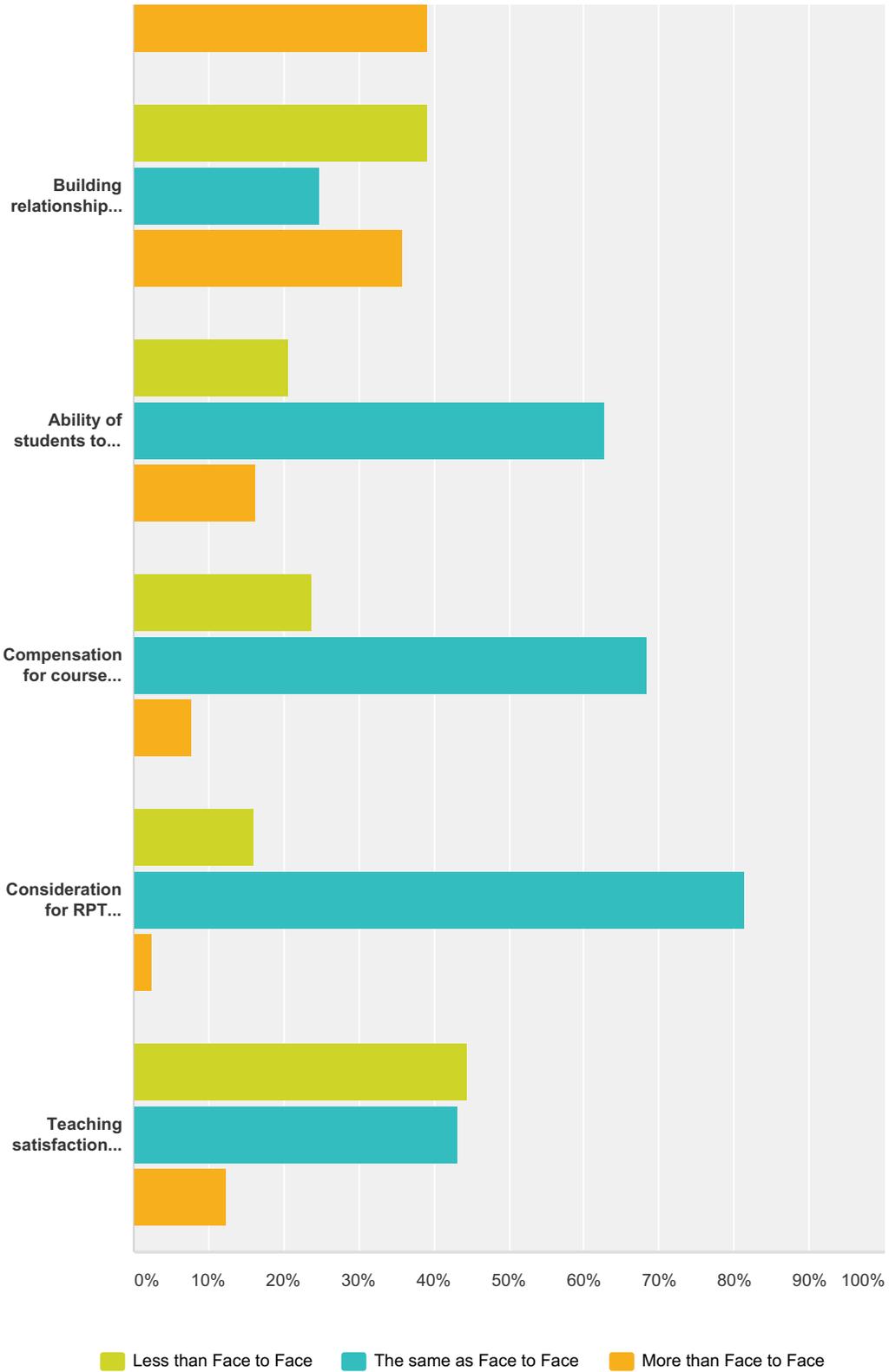


Answer Choices	Responses
Notice of one term or more before teaching online	31.03% 54
Training of some type (e.g., workshops, Quality Matters, etc--please describe type and length of training below)	66.09% 115
Familiarity with course (taught it before, designed it, etc.)	56.90% 99
Certain number of years teaching for the unit	12.07% 21
Being a full-time faculty member	10.92% 19
Total Respondents: 174	

Q7 REGARDING EXPERIENCES TEACHING ONLINE COURSES COMPARED TO FACE TO FACE COURSES. Please select the choice that best represents your experience.

Answered: 237 Skipped: 177





	Less than Face to Face	The same as Face to Face	More than Face to Face	Total
Amount of time to prepare the course .	2.15% 5	20.60% 48	77.25% 180	233
Amount of time to teach course content	19.91% 46	47.19% 109	32.90% 76	231

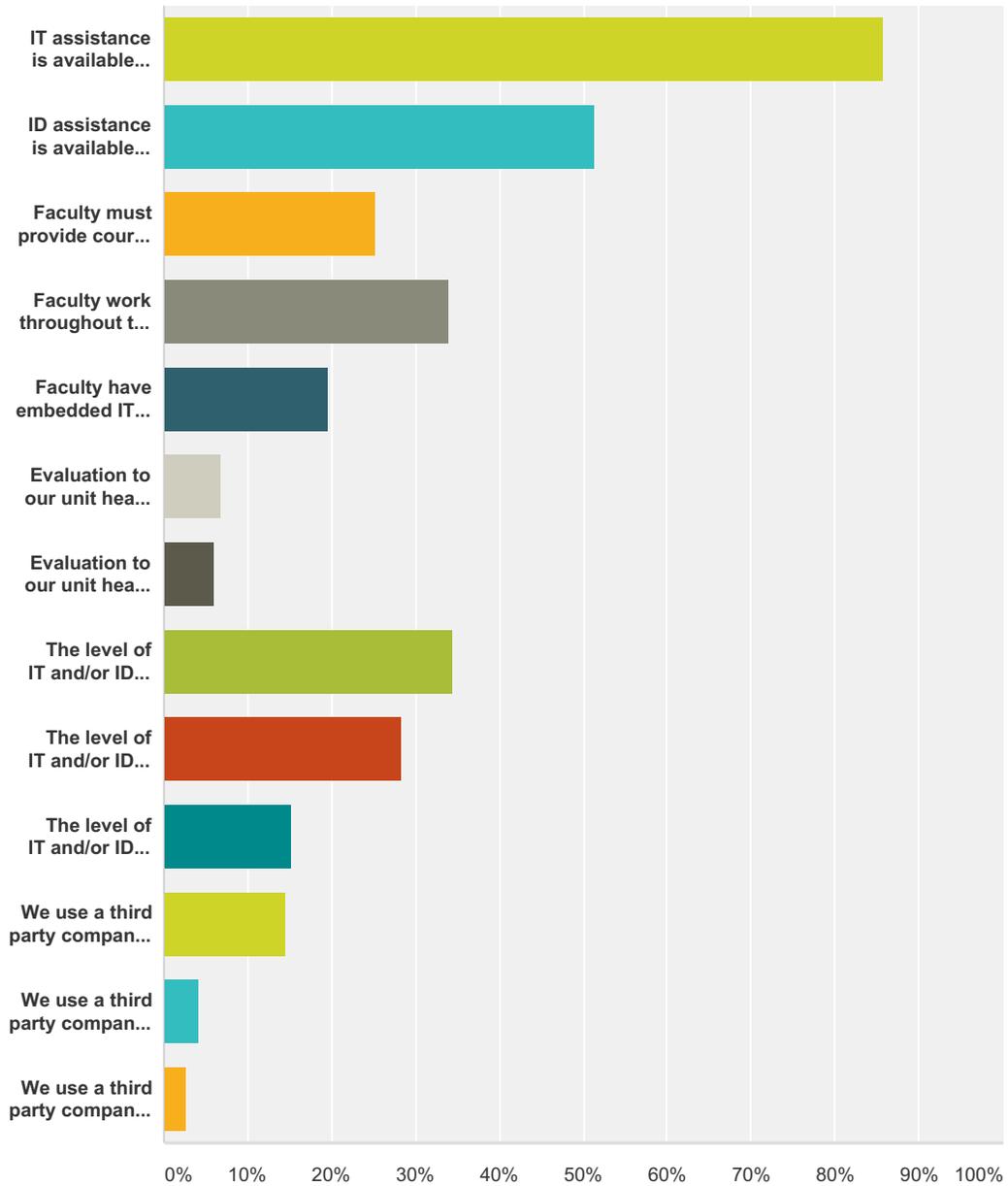
UC Faculty Views on Online Teaching

32

Amount of time to provide feedback to student work	4.74% 11	30.17% 70	65.09% 151	232
Amount of time to assess student work	3.45% 8	44.40% 103	52.16% 121	232
Amount of time to be available for student communication (e.g., responding to email, discussions, etc.)	6.47% 15	31.90% 74	61.64% 143	232
Building community between students	38.30% 90	22.55% 53	39.15% 92	235
Building relationship between faculty and students	39.32% 92	24.79% 58	35.90% 84	234
Ability of students to learn content	20.69% 48	62.93% 146	16.38% 38	232
Compensation for course design and/or delivery (please note type of compensation)	23.87% 53	68.47% 152	7.66% 17	222
Consideration for RPT purposes (please note difference in consideration)	16.10% 33	81.46% 167	2.44% 5	205
Teaching satisfaction (please explain)	44.54% 102	43.23% 99	12.23% 28	229

Q8 RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY (IT) or INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN (ID) PERSONNEL or WITH THIRD PARTY COMPANIES: Explain any questions or specific use of these terms in the comment section. Please select all that apply.

Answered: 218 Skipped: 196



Answer Choices	Responses
IT assistance is available within our college	85.78% 187

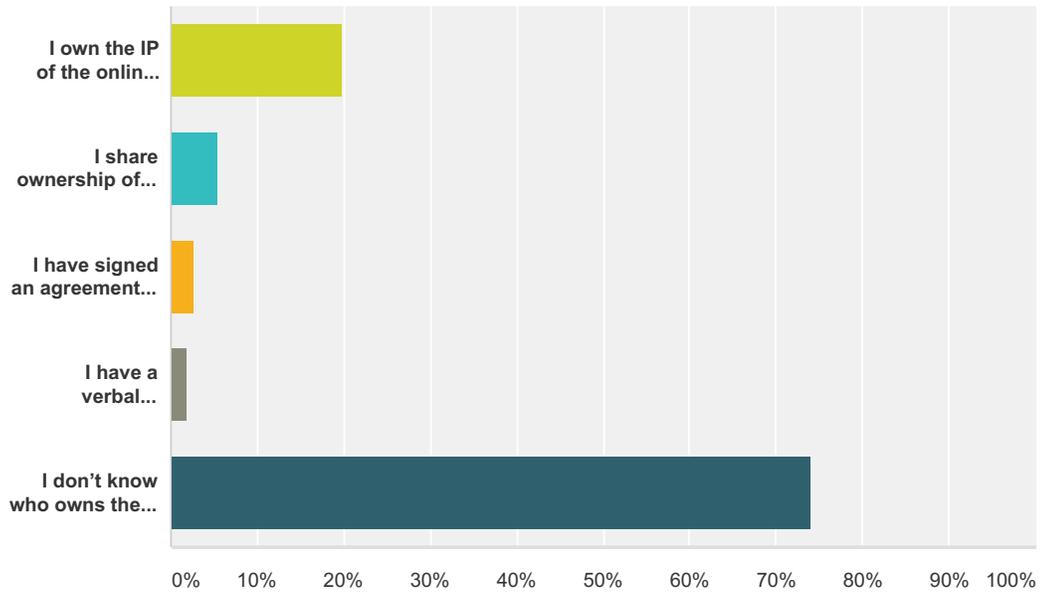
UC Faculty Views on Online Teaching

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ID assistance is available within our college	51.38%	112
Faculty must provide courses in advance of the teaching term to IT and/or ID personnel for review/approval/assistance	25.23%	55
Faculty work throughout the term with IT and/or ID personnel	33.94%	74
Faculty have embedded IT and/or ID personnel in our courses	19.72%	43
Evaluation to our unit head is made by IT and/or ID personnel in relation to our course design	6.88%	15
Evaluation to our unit head is made by IT and/or ID personnel in relation to our teaching	5.96%	13
The level of IT and/or ID engagement is insufficient	34.40%	75
The level of IT and/or ID engagement is sufficient	28.44%	62
The level of IT and/or ID engagement is more than appropriate	15.14%	33
We use a third party company that assists in marketing our courses/programs	14.68%	32
We use a third party company that provides a shell/template for required course use	4.13%	9
We use a third party company that provides course content	2.75%	6
Total Respondents: 218		

Q9 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP): Please check all that apply for your online courses:

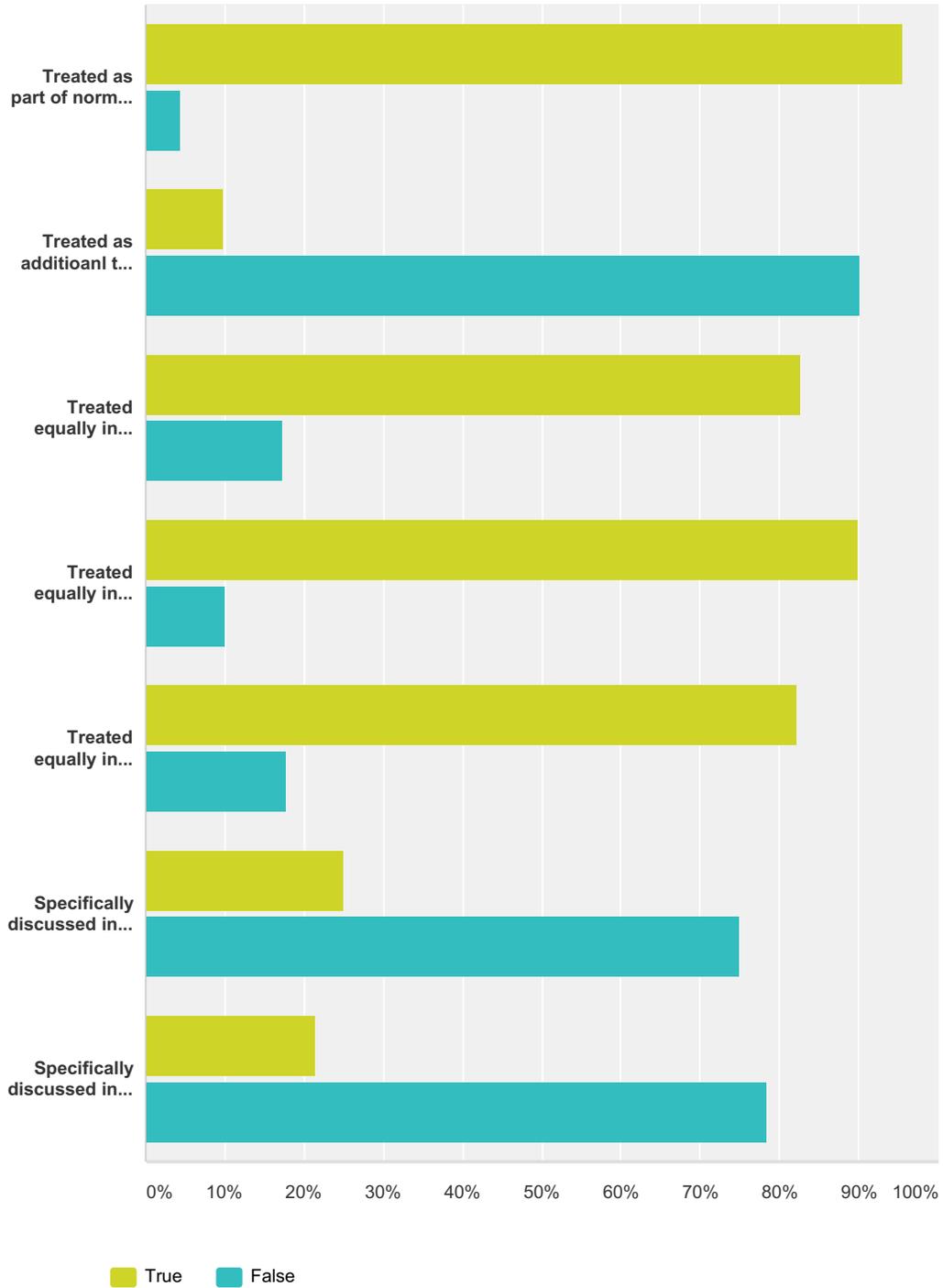
Answered: 221 Skipped: 193



Answer Choices	Responses
I own the IP of the online course content which I developed and/or taught	19.91% 44
I share ownership of the IP of the online course content with my department and/or with IT/ID personnel (if so, please explain arrangement)	5.43% 12
I have signed an agreement regarding IP ownership of online course content (please describe)	2.71% 6
I have a verbal agreement regarding IP ownership of online course content (please describe)	1.81% 4
I don't know who owns the IP of my online course content	74.21% 164
Total Respondents: 221	

Q10 Regarding workload and compensation: For workload, RPT, and other compensation purpose, online courses in my unit are (please select all that apply)

Answered: 226 Skipped: 188



	True	False	Total

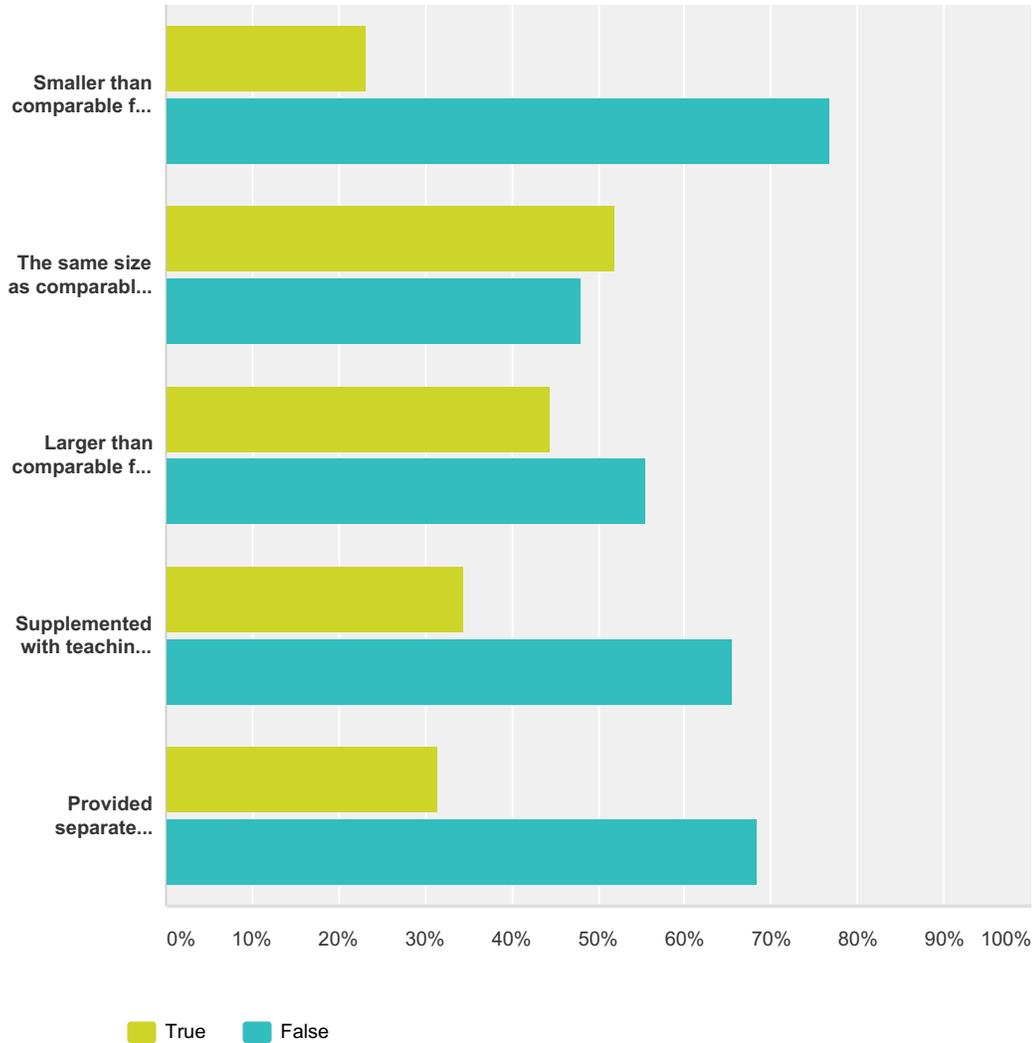
UC Faculty Views on Online Teaching

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Treated as part of normal teaching workload	95.52% 213	4.48% 10	223
Treated as additional to normal workload and provided overload pay	9.79% 19	90.21% 175	194
Treated equally in regard to designing a course compared to face to face (describe differences, including any incentives)	82.78% 173	17.22% 36	209
Treated equally in regard to being instructor of record as compared to face to face (describe differences, including any incentives)	90.05% 190	9.95% 21	211
Treated equally in regard to being facilitator or teaching assistant as compared to face to face (describe differences, including any incentives)	82.26% 153	17.74% 33	186
Specifically discussed in workload documents	25.13% 50	74.87% 149	199
Specifically discussed in RPT documents	21.51% 40	78.49% 146	186

Q11 Regarding class size and configuration: Online courses in my unit are:

Answered: 228 Skipped: 186



	True	False	Total
Smaller than comparable face to face courses	23.26% 50	76.74% 165	215
The same size as comparable face to face courses	51.90% 109	48.10% 101	210
Larger than comparable face to face courses	44.55% 94	55.45% 117	211
Supplemented with teaching assistants if a comparable-sized face to face course would also be supplemented with teaching assistants	34.36% 67	65.64% 128	195
Provided separate sections taught by facilitators (or teaching assistants) if a comparably-sized face to face course would also have separately taught sections	31.58% 60	68.42% 130	190

Q12 Please add any comments based on your experience that you would like to share with this committee regarding the benefits or drawbacks of online teaching. Note as well as any final comment or explanation that would help the committee understand your responses to this survey. Optional: Indicate your college. Thank you for your time and interest in taking this survey.

Answered: 139 Skipped: 275

This document was developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC). The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is a member of C-RAC. HLC provides these guidelines as a resource for its affiliated institutions and its Peer Review Corps.

Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)

Introduction

The *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)* have been developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) to assist institutions in planning distance education and to provide an assessment framework for institutions already involved in distance education and for evaluation teams. They are based on a 2006 report prepared by the General Accounting Office, *Evidence of Quality in Distance Education drawn from Interviews with the Accreditation Community* and the “Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education,” prepared by WCET. They replace the 2001 Statement of Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs, and are intended to be used in conjunction with the relevant standards and policies of each accreditor.

The *Guidelines* comprise nine hallmarks of quality for distance education. In their discussions of how their distance education programming fulfills their accreditor’s standards, institutions are asked to include evidence of the extent to which they meet these hallmarks. Examples of the types of evidence that institutions might use are given below. These lists are not meant to be exhaustive; it is likely that institutions will include additional types of evidence in their reports.

Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)

1. On-line learning is appropriate to the institution's mission and purposes.

Examples of evidence:

- a. The mission statement explains the role of on-line learning within the range of the institution's programs and services.
- b. Institutional and program statements of vision and values inform how the on-line learning environment(s) is created and supported.
- c. As appropriate, the institution incorporates into its on-line learning programs methods of meeting the stated institutional goals for the student experience at the institution.
- d. The recruitment and admissions programs supporting the on-line learning courses and programs appropriately target the student populations to be served.
- e. The students enrolled in the institution's on-line learning courses and programs fit the profile of the students the institution intends to serve.
- f. Senior administrators and staff can articulate how on-line learning is consonant with the institution's mission and goals.

2. The institution's plans for developing, sustaining and, if appropriate, expanding on-line learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.

Examples of evidence:

- a. Development and ownership of plans for on-line learning extend beyond the administrators directly responsible for it and the programs directly using it.
- b. Planning documents are explicit about any goals to increase numbers of programs provided through on-line learning courses and programs and/or numbers of students to be enrolled in them.
- c. Plans for on-line learning are linked effectively to budget and technology planning to ensure adequate support for current and future offerings.
- d. Plans for expanding on-line learning demonstrate the institution's capacity to assure an appropriate level of quality.
- e. The institution and its on-line learning programs have a track record of conducting needs analysis and of supporting programs.

3. On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.

Examples of evidence:

- a. The institution's faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its on-line learning offerings.
- b. The institution ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction.
- c. Approval of on-line learning courses and programs follows standard processes used in the college or university.

- d. On-line learning courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis.
- e. Contractual relationships and arrangements with consortial partners, if any, are clear and guarantee that the institution can exercise appropriate responsibility for the academic quality of all on-line learning offerings provided under its name.

4. Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

Examples of evidence:

- a. The curricular goals and course objectives show that the institution or program has knowledge of the best uses of on-line learning in different disciplines and settings.
- b. Curricula delivered through on-line learning are benchmarked against on-ground courses and programs, if provided by the institution, or those provided by traditional institutions.
- c. The curriculum is coherent in its content and sequencing of courses and is effectively defined in easily available documents including course syllabi and program descriptions.
- d. Scheduling of on-line learning courses and programs provides students with a dependable pathway to ensure timely completion of degrees.
- e. The institution or program has established and enforces a policy on on-line learning course enrollments to ensure faculty capacity to work appropriately with students.
- f. Expectations for any required face-to-face, on-ground work (e.g., internships, specialized laboratory work) are stated clearly.
- g. Course design and delivery supports student-student and faculty-student interaction.
- h. Curriculum design and the course management system enable active faculty contribution to the learning environment.
- i. Course and program structures provide schedule and support known to be effective in helping on-line learning students persist and succeed.

5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its on-line learning offerings, including the extent to which the on-line learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.

Examples of evidence:

- a. Assessment of student learning follows processes used in onsite courses or programs and/or reflects good practice in assessment methods.
- b. Student course evaluations are routinely taken and an analysis of them contributes to strategies for course improvements.
- c. Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design curriculum, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning.
- d. The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the academic and support services provided to students in on-line courses and uses the results for improvement.

- e. The institution demonstrates the appropriate use of technology to support its assessment strategies.
- f. The institution documents its success in implementing changes informed by its programs of assessment and evaluation.
- g. The institution provides examples of student work and student interactions among themselves and with faculty.
- h. The institution sets appropriate goals for the retention/persistence of students using on-line learning, assesses its achievement of these goals, and uses the results for improvement.

6. Faculty responsible for delivering the on-line learning curricula and evaluating the students' success in achieving the on-line learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.

Examples of evidence:

- a. On-line learning faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated, and are marked by an acceptable level of turnover.
- b. The institution's training program for on-line learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in on-line learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution.
- c. Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system.
- d. The office or persons responsible for on-line learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery.
- e. Faculty members engaged in on-line learning share in the mission and goals of the institution and its programs and are provided the opportunities to contribute to the broader activities of the institution.
- f. Students express satisfaction with the quality of the instruction provided by on-line learning faculty members.

7. The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in on-line learning offerings.

Examples of evidence:

- a. The institution's admissions program for on-line learning provides good web-based information to students about the nature of the on-line learning environment, and assists them in determining if they possess the skills important to success in on-line learning.
- b. The institution provides an on-line learning orientation program.
- c. The institution provides support services to students in formats appropriate to the delivery of the on-line learning program.
- d. Students in on-line learning programs have adequate access to student services, including financial aid, course registration, and career and placement counseling.
- e. Students in on-line learning programs have ready access to 24/7 tech support.

- f. Students using on-line learning have adequate access to learning resources, including library, information resources, laboratories, and equipment and tracking systems.
- g. Students using on-line learning demonstrate proficiency in the use of electronic forms of learning resources.
- h. Student complaint processes are clearly defined and can be used electronically.
- i. Publications and advertising for on-line learning programs are accurate and contain necessary information such as program goals, requirements, academic calendar, and faculty.
- j. Students are provided with reasonable and cost-effective ways to participate in the institution's system of student authentication.

8. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its on-line learning offerings

Examples of evidence:

- a. The institution prepares a multi-year budget for on-line learning that includes resources for assessment of program demand, marketing, appropriate levels of faculty and staff, faculty and staff development, library and information resources, and technology infrastructure.
- b. The institution provides evidence of a multi-year technology plan that addresses its goals for on-line learning and includes provision for a robust and scalable technical infrastructure.

9. The institution assures the integrity of its on-line learning offerings.¹

Examples of evidence:

- a. The institution has in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The institution makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures. **(Note: This is a federal requirement. All institutions that offer distance education programming must demonstrate compliance with this requirement.)**
- b. The institution's policies on academic integrity include explicit references to on-line learning.
- c. Issues of academic integrity are discussed during the orientation for on-line students.
- d. Training for faculty members engaged in on-line learning includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating.

July, 2009

¹ Institutions are encouraged to consult "Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education," prepared by WCET and available at <http://www.wcet.info/2.0/>



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TO: Tracy Herrmann, Interim Chair, Faculty Senate

FROM: Cynthia Nitz Ris, Chair, Faculty Senate Task Force Regarding Best Practices for Distance-Delivered and Hybrid Courses

RE: Mid-Project Report

DATE: July 30, 2014

In April, 2014, Adrienne Lane, then Chair of the Faculty Senate, constituted a task force consisting of the following: Cynthia Nitz Ris, Chair (A&S/English); Sharon Burns (Clermont); Melody Clark (Provost's Office/Distance Learning & Distance Education); Nikole Hicks (Nursing); Dan Milz (CECH); Debbie Page (Blue Ash); Kevin Raleigh (A&S/Geography); Eugene Rutz (Engineering); and Alan Vespie (Allied Health). The task force subsequently added Drew Boyd (Business). The charge was as follows:

Create a report that addresses Faculty Best Practices in distance education and online teaching (DE-OT). This report should include, but not be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

1. Differentiation of faculty and staff role in development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of courses offered via DE-OT;
2. Faculty Workload Best Practices addressing, but not limited to, such topics as various instructional roles within a course, faculty student ratios, course ownership, workload credit, variation factors among disciplines;
3. Faculty Development for DE-OT, including but not limited to, core knowledge including regulations i.e. FERPA required, recommended administrative and staff (IT/ID) support, suggested knowledge updates for faculty involved with DE-OT; and
4. Program and course curricular alignment, including but not limited to, normalization of grading and other pedagogical practices between instructor of record and other instructors within a DE-OT course and faculty adherence to program and course curricular design.

A final report is due to the Chair of the University Faculty no later than the end of fall semester 2014, with a mid-project report no later than July 31, 2014.

As per the charge, we are filing this mid-project report.

Since the task force was constituted, we have met three times: on April 28, June 19, and July 22. Our goals were to clearly identify the terminology and specific focuses that we would employ; to begin to gather information across the university, within disciplines, and from applicable



research and data relating to our focuses; and to set a plan for the second half of the project beginning Fall Semester. The following is a summary of our outcomes to date:

1. In regard to the general focus, we have adopted the terminology “Distance-Delivered and Hybrid Courses” (DD/H) in order to reflect and be consistent with the Higher Learning Commission’s terminology. This definition states that Distance Delivered courses are those in which 75% or more of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication or equivalent mechanics, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other, while Hybrid courses are those in which between 25% and 75% or more of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication or equivalent mechanics, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other. These definitions are meant to exclude web-enhanced courses or any courses primarily face to face that rely on technologically-enhanced or technologically-delivered course materials, even if these constitute a substantial portion of the manner in which course materials are delivered.

2. Our intent is not to duplicate efforts by other task forces on campus that are considering online education. Instead, our task force is providing a faculty perspective on existing and recommended policies and practices pertaining to the charge in regard to DD/H courses and, more immediately, the gathering of information relating to this. Toward that effort, we are currently addressing information in the following areas:

a. Practices and Policies:

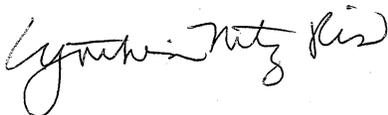
- College and Department Practices and Policies Regarding DD/H Course Delivery
- Compensation and Other Workload Issues
- Disciplinary Best Practices
- Faculty Development
- General Perspectives and Research on DD/H Courses
- IT/ID and Outside Third-Party Roles Relative to Faculty Roles

b. Contract or Other Regulations/Recommendations:

- Collective Bargaining Agreement and Other Contract Information
- Legal Issues (FERPA, Intellectual Property, etc.)
- Resources at UC Relating to Delivery of DD/H Courses

3. Our fall objective is to complete information gathering and move onto analysis of, and recommendations for, best practices and policies. We will do so through a series of regular meetings throughout the term. This may include discussions with invited representatives of pertinent contingents within UC.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me on behalf of the committee.




Online Writing Instruction Report and Recommendations

Michele Griegel-McCord, Cynthia Nitz Ris, Lisa Beckelhimer
Members, Teaching and Technology Committee

Department of English
McMicken College of Arts and Sciences
April 2013

Introduction and Objectives

The goal of this report is to assess the current state of online writing instruction (OWI) in the Clifton campus English Composition Program and offer some recommendations for future progress and OWI enhancement. While this report is not a comprehensive review of the vast amounts of disciplinary and pedagogical research on online writing instruction, we will try to place our program and recent instructional experiences in a larger university and disciplinary context. This report grew out of the Teaching and Technology Committee, formed by members of the Arts & Sciences English Composition faculty actively teaching online, to explore issues related to online writing instruction and provide technical and pedagogical support to faculty.

General Background on Online Writing Instruction

A 2011 survey by the Babson Research Group and the College Board found that 6.7 million students took at least one online course in 2010 and that 31% of all higher education students will take at least one online course in their college career (Allen). Online education is experiencing tremendous growth across all disciplines, and English Composition has been one of those programs that has embraced this new pedagogical environment.

Online Writing Instruction (OWI) is offered in two main formats: fully online courses and hybrid course models.

FULLY ONLINE: These are courses in which students interact generally asynchronously with the instructor and their peers primarily through an online course management system or other online communication services.

HYBRID ONLINE COURSES: These are courses in which students complete some of the coursework in an online environment but also have scheduled meetings throughout the term. The number of synchronous meetings can vary according to course requirements.

As English Composition remains one of the few required courses for all students at most institutions, it is likely that the numbers of online courses in our discipline will continue to increase.

UC Online Writing Instruction

The A&S English Program began offering fully online composition courses in the summer of 2007. Since the initial pilot courses, our English Composition program has offered 99 fully online courses according to the following breakdown

Quarter classes:

ENGL 101 Bridge (6 cr): 1 course
ENGL 101 (3 cr): 23 courses
English 102 (3 cr): 32 courses
English 289 (3 cr): 15 courses

Semester Courses

English 1902 (2 cr): 3 courses
English 2989 (2 cr): 12 courses
ENGL 1001 (3 cr): 12 courses
ENGL 2089 (3 cr): 1 course
ENGL 1012 (3 cr): 0 courses

More recently, the A&S English Composition program has offered approximately 23 -25 fully online courses per academic year. These courses have been taught by approximately eight full-time Educator

faculty and select graduate students and adjunct faculty. The Clifton campus has yet to offer hybrid online writing courses.

UC Blue Ash and UC Clermont both have robust online programs, including fully online and, at UCBA, hybrid offerings.

Preparation and Training

We must be careful not to underestimate the transition in thinking and process that is required in preparing to teach and take online writing courses. Faculty and students need to be properly trained in and oriented to the online environment since such preparations are essential for online writing course.

For Faculty

One of the key misconceptions about online teaching is that it is a relatively seamless and therefore easy process to translate a face-to-face course to the online environment. Most online scholars now agree that teaching online should involve a complete rethinking of pedagogy, assessment, material delivery, communication processes, and technology use. Also, as online teaching moves from the niche to the mainstream, more instructors will be expected to teach online. Online teaching is no longer just the hobbyhorse of the department technophile. Additionally, given the probability of increased numbers of online offerings, it will be necessary to include more faculty in the expectation of teaching such courses. Therefore, there is a need for thoughtful training and preparation of online instructors. The 2011 *State-of-the-Art of OWI Report* by the Conference on College Composition and Communication indicates that most online instructors have fewer than seven years of online teaching experience. Only 48% of the respondents indicated that they had some kind of mandatory training to teach fully online courses while 58% had access to optional training. Additionally, 32% of respondents who taught hybrid courses participated in mandatory instruction and 53% indicated some kind of optional training. Many OWI survey respondents indicated that they received no training, orientation or preparation prior to teaching online courses.

Some universities have provided faculty with substantial support for online instruction. Fasse, Humbert, and Rappold describe the Rochester Institute of Technology's extensive program on online faculty training. Their IT support includes consultation with individual faculty; providing a three-week orientation course for new online faculty; sharing recommendations about successful online practices, demonstrations, and presentations; integrating various services directly in the Course Management System; and having a "student community course shell" that is required of all students (Fasse). This kind of organized training and sustained support is an ideal approach for fostering a strong and robust interest in online instruction—an approach more likely to result in successful courses and satisfied students.

Currently the A&S English Composition program does not require mandatory training of online instructors, although faculty are encouraged to seek out general technical training and pedagogical development on their own. Some resources are currently available for faculty interested in online training and development. The English Department's Teaching and Technology Committee offers one or two workshops a term on various online teaching concerns. Currently Blue Ash College offers a seminar on Distance Learning Design. Now that the university has put more emphasis on online education across all colleges, there are more opportunities for online training. UC's Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning also offers workshops on a variety of technologies and distance learning pedagogies. The Faculty Development Council and University Libraries offer week-long Summer Instructional Technology Institutes for both beginners and advanced users. It is essential that these types of opportunities for online teaching training and development continue to grow. Teaching writing online can pose particular challenges, such as conferencing via non-traditional methods such as Skype and Blackboard Chat, and helping students conduct research when they might not be able to meet the instructor at the library.

Although these offerings are useful on an ad hoc basis, what is lacking in most of these ancillary offerings is training that is uniform and discipline specific. It is advised, therefore, that a mandatory training regimen be put into place to help prepare faculty for teaching online, including training sponsored by the program or department for which the course is offered.

Recommendations:

- Mandatory training required for those assigned to online writing courses (i.e. certified completion of distance learning pedagogy workshops—UC sponsored or elsewhere).
- A discipline-specific pedagogy workshop session organized and funded by the English Composition program and led by an experienced online writing instructor.
- Investment by Arts & Sciences in an instructional web designer to assist in creating a template and various materials for all online instructors.

For Students

A successful online course depends on the expectations and preparedness of the student as well as the instructor. Statistics show that approximately one third of all college students will take at least one online course in their career; it is imperative that students are adequately prepared to succeed in the online environment, as it presents different challenges from a traditional face-to-face course. According to the 2011 *CCCC State-of-Art Of OWI Report*, national student attrition rates for fully online courses were in the 1-10% range, and were slightly higher in hybrid courses offered in 2-year colleges and slightly lower at 4-year schools.

In our own program, there has been an average attrition rate between 20-27% since we began teaching online courses in 2007. While we have not completed a rigorous statistical analysis, anecdotally, students in First-Year composition courses (English 101/1001 and 102/1902) tend to have a higher drop and failure rate than those students enrolled in the Intermediate Composition courses. We should also be aware of the variety of online students we have at UC. For example, some students are enrolled in fully online programs (e.g., Early Childhood Education and Nursing programs). These students are more acculturated to the demands of online learning. Other students take online classes while on co-op. Still others are campus students who take an online course to compensate for a busy work and school schedule, or because face-to-face courses are full. In some cases, online courses may not be a student's first choice or even a preferred one. It is important that the university sufficiently prepare *all* students to learn and succeed in an online classroom. Outside of those fully online degree/certificate programs that have built this training into student orientation, there is a lack of university-wide online orientation or readiness training and assessment for the casual online student. This suggests that the implicit assumption by the university is that students can be as successful at online courses as face-to-face, an assumption that seems to neglect the fundamental differences and challenges of the online course environment.

All of these concerns point to the need at the University of Cincinnati to better orient new students on what to expect from online courses. One side benefit of student success in any online course appears to be that the success rate in future online courses, both in terms of retention and class success, rises dramatically. In a study that investigated online re-enrollment and retention, Hachey et al. note that knowing a student's prior experience with online courses explains the 13.2% variance in retention and 24.8% variance in course success. At the Rochester Institute of Technology, non-traditional students with multiple risk factors (such as work, dependents, part-time status, and so forth) increased their retention rate by almost 25% by taking at least one online course (Fasse). These studies also indicate that if the first online experience is not a positive one, those students will likely avoid online courses in the future; it is all the more imperative, therefore, that students be well-prepared to take their first online courses.

One way to better prepare students is to address popular misconceptions about online writing courses. Many students believe that online classes are easier or less work than a traditional campus class. Students need to be acclimated to the idea that the total time spent on online classes should be similar to their face-to-face counterparts; this would include the equivalent of the 3 hours per week of in-class time in a face-to-face class, as well as time for homework and major writing assignments. In a survey to UC Blue Ash, Clermont, and Clifton English Composition faculty who teach online, faculty were asked about their work expectations for students. Regarding "quantity and time required to complete homework assignments per week," 100 percent of faculty responded that expectations are the same as those for face-to-face classes. Regarding "overall time students should spend working in an online section per

week,” faculty answers ranged from 6 hours per week of class work to at least 12 hours per week total. Many faculty members replied that online courses involve a substantial time commitment on a student’s part, with one faculty member remarking: “It will take most students at least as much time to read and comprehend the course materials without the benefit of face-to-face instruction as it would in a face-to-face course. More often than not, they require much more time to read and process the course material, and tools designed to facilitate this, like discussion boards, are more time-consuming than in-class discussions” (Survey).

Several sources make clear that faculty need to be literal and thorough in explaining to students the time and curriculum equivalencies expected in an online class. The *CCCC The State-of-the-Art of OWI Report* suggests that it is the faculty member’s responsibility to orient students to the nature of an online writing course. Most of those surveyed by the CCCC study “indicated that their students received email prior to the first day of classes to orient them to the course and its online nature. Many fewer respondents indicated their belief that any kind of counselor had interviewed, oriented, or otherwise prepared students for the online setting of the writing course.” For students who had received some kind of orientation, most respondents “indicated that such orientation primarily was text-based although some orientation was provided face-to-face (especially in the hybrid setting) and audio/visual means were used only rarely.” Yet when asked specifically “what expectations are set with students about taking these online writing courses,” 82% of respondents answered “available for frequent, regular, and information contributions to online discussions” and “regular availability via email (to receive class announcements and correspondence from teacher/classmates),” but just 58% responded with “specific number of hours per week to complete reading, writing, response/research assignments.” Furthermore, while 94% of respondents address “how to use the interface(s)” and 85% address “how to contact the instructor” in some sort of student orientation to the online class, only 62% address “how to manage your time in an online class” and just 52% address “netiquette.” Clearly, faculty need to address and support student expectations more comprehensively; this also, clearly, requires more time to do so.

Recommendations:

- Encourage College and University representatives to create an orientation assessment to Blackboard and the UC Library system for all students. One possibility is to require that students achieve a minimum proficiency level to be given credit for the assessment which would then be required in the event they sign up for an online course.
- Create a Readiness Assessment specific to online writing courses that registered students must complete prior to the start of the term. This could be sent out by the instructor of the online course.
- Create a programmatic orientation video featuring online writing instructors and past online writing students discussing course expectations and workload. This video can be posted to individual course BB pages.
- Make available standard student workload and course expectations for English Composition classes that can be included on course Blackboard pages and syllabi.
- Educate and work closely with academic advisors via emails, workshops, flyer, meetings, and other means so they are fully aware of the particular challenges of an online writing class.

Faculty Workload and Evaluation

As this white paper has already shown, there is much preparation involved in creating a successful online course. Since faculty need to devote the time necessary for online preparation, we also need to consider faculty workload issues that arise with this teaching model. The work does not stop once the course is planned; effective online teaching also requires more time and effort during the instructional term. The American Federation of Teachers noted in 2001 that good distance education “generally requires more teacher preparation time than a traditional class as well as more time devoted to interacting with students” (American). Similarly, Lawrence Tomei noted in 2006 in an article from the *Journal of Technology and Teaching Education* that his research indicated online courses include increased time presenting

instructional content, and that advising and assessment were more time consuming in an online environment. For example, his research found that on average, for delivery of instructional content, the impact on teaching load was 59.18 hours compared to 41.25 hours of traditional instruction. For online counsel and advisement, the impact was 40.43 hours compared to 34.75 hours for traditional students. Overall, Tomei suggested that for the course that he was researching, which included quizzes and other test-taking, assessment of which was actually *less* time-consuming online, nevertheless online instruction took a minimum of 14% more hours than traditional face to face courses.

This increase in instructional time is also noted in the 2011 CCCC *State-of-the-Art of OWI Report*, in which the committee found that survey respondents in fully online and hybrid courses “generally saw the online course as demanding a great deal of time on theirs and students’ parts. They also indicated that the online setting required more reading and written communication on their parts, which increased the time required for course interaction. Although they reported that their need to grade, respond to students, and provide writing feedback did not change, the written nature of all of those activities added to their work. Additionally, they cited such activities as commenting on discussion posts, crafting class announcements, and responding to emails and other written questions as increasing their workload.” Reports also show that students tend to have expectations of 24/7 access to their instructors and quick response times to emails and other requests. There seems to be a need for online instructors to be “on-call” more than a face-to-face instructor. Since the parameters of class time are more amorphous in an online environment, it is not surprising that the number of hours devoted to instruction has increased as well.

The *UC Blue Ash English Department Handbook* requires faculty to provide “clear expectations of when, where, and how you will be actively engaged in the course (not just grading their submitted work” (9). Specific expectations include: making the class accessible and ready to go from the first day of classes; establishing clear learning goals and outcomes; replying quickly to emails and other queries; correcting problems as soon as possible; engaging students weekly both as a class and individually; establishing patterns to finish grading and offer students meaningful feedback on homework and more significant assignments; and providing supportive and encouraging messages to students (12-13). While these are all tasks that we expect from faculty teaching in a traditional face-to-face environment, the reality of online teaching requires that these efforts be done on more of one-to-one basis between teacher and student, therefore increasing the amount of time overall that these elements will take to complete.

These workload expectations are especially complicated in a program where many of the instructors are already carrying heavy teaching loads. In the A&S English Composition program, most Composition faculty have large teaching loads of writing-intensive courses: an average of twenty-one credit hours per academic year. Online sections of introductory and intermediate composition have been taught by roughly 30% of full-time faculty who teach 50% or more of their per-semester course load as online courses. In addition to other departmental and professional commitments, these faculty are taking on courses that, as noted above, are more labor-intensive than their face-to-face counterparts. Additionally, these more experienced professors are less available to teach equally important face-to-face courses. Given the time needed to adequately prepare for and execute successful online courses, faculty may be in danger of burning out or spreading thin their attention to these demanding classes and the publication and service obligations that are part of their workload and reappointment and promotion criteria.

Recommendations:

Considering the overwhelming evidence documenting the increased workload for online faculty, we must take steps to ensure that faculty have the time and energy to perform at superior levels.

- *Treat as Separate Course Prep*

Because of the intensive preparation and course design required by online instructors prior to a class and the increased workload during a term, we recommend that online courses be treated as a separate course preparation. Designing and managing an online section of ENGL 1001 is not the same as designing and teaching an on-campus ENGL 1001. While it is the same course content, the delivery of material and pedagogy involved in the online course warrants a separate preparation demarcation.

- Cap Class at Appropriate Size*

Another clear way to ensure the quality of teaching while not overburdening faculty is to limit class size to a manageable amount of students. Numerous studies recommend that class sizes be limited (Rovai 2002; Tomei; American Federation of Teachers; Taft, Perkowski, and Martin 2011, and others). One researcher noted that twenty students in a course would be challenging but manageable “if highly literate, capable and motivated,” but that a class of twenty becomes a full time job where “students cannot write, understand papers, and cannot think analytically” (Sieber). The 2013 Conference on College Composition and Communication *Position Statement on Effective Principles and Practices for Online Writing Instruction* states that online writing courses “should be capped responsibly at 20 students per course with 15 being a preferable number.” In “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education,” researchers Taft, Perkowski, and Martin suggest where instruction is interactive, which it is where instructor feedback is required and which is recommended for all courses in order to provide increased retention, then the recommendation is a small to medium class of 20-25 students. Additionally, in regard to Bloom’s Taxonomy of learning, where a course is one that focuses on application, it should be medium size (16 to 40 students), but where it emphasizes higher levels of learning including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, the class should be small (15 students or less). Finally, in regard to the “community of inquiry model,” where teaching presence is crucial, student-teacher interaction is frequent, regular feedback is required, and in-depth assessment is integral, classes of 20 or less are recommended. Their overall recommendation is that where all these elements favor a small class size, then classes should be restricted to 15 students or less (Taft 193). Based on this data, we recommend that online and hybrid classes be capped at 20 students at most, instead of the traditional 23 for face-to-face composition courses. Smaller classes, when coupled with more robust student orientation and preparation, are likely to increase retention rates in online courses and make for more engaging and interactive online courses.
- Incentivize Instruction and Compensate Equitably*

As the implementation of online teaching varies widely across institutions, there is no consensus on how to best incentivize and compensate faculty for designing and teaching online courses. One recommendation that does seem consistent is that instructors need to be compensated equally for teaching online courses as they are for face-to-face courses. The 2013 CCCC *Position Statement on Effective Principles and Practices for OWI* clearly states that “Online writing teachers should receive fair and equitable compensation for their work.” Moreover, we do not support reduced compensation for online instructors who may be using materials that were designed by other faculties or entities.

We do, however, support additional compensation (monetary or otherwise) for those instructors who takes on the responsibility for creating sharable materials or serving as mentors or trainers for new online faculty. Catherine Schifter, writing in the *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, studied the compensation practices of 160 institutions and found that many institutions have used additional or higher pay for the development and teaching of online courses, reduced course loads, provision or reimbursement of residential internet access, reduction of other workload duties (service, committee work, etc.) and teaching assistant support to encourage high-quality online teaching (Schifter). Recently, the College of Arts and Sciences has offered a competitive training program for faculty looking to develop online courses. Faculty who are chosen for this workshop are promised generous compensation for their work. Unfortunately, the number of faculty eligible to participate in this program is limited. While this is a step in the right direction, it may be more useful to spread compensation more widely—even if not as generously—so that more faculty will be encouraged to participate in such programs.

- Align Expectations with Department RPT and Workload Documents*

Another issue that will have to be addressed as the university encourages more online teaching is how this type of teaching work will factor into the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure process. Because the numbers of online faculty in any given department tend to be low, there is a fear that there will be insufficient recognition and value of online teaching and course development and that such work will not be given the appropriate weight in RPT decisions. For

example, in the English Department's RPT criteria and workload documents, there is no specific mention of online teaching and its unique demands. These documents assume a face-to-face workload which is not necessarily the most appropriate metric for adequately assessing faculty who have moved into the online environment.

Assessment and Data Collection

An important, yet often overlooked, element of successful online instruction is regular and reliable course and faculty assessment. This assessment should take several forms, including internal peer review of online course materials, student evaluations at various points in the term, and more robust data collection. UC 2019 and the Academic Master Plan make clear the importance of assessment and its connection to the goals of overall student, faculty, and university excellence.

Currently UC does offer some programs to help instructors and administrators effectively assess various aspects of online courses. UC is a member of the Quality Matters program, an inter-institutional peer review and assessment system that focuses on online instructional design (*Quality*). Recently there has been a push to educate more faculty on the Quality Matters rubric and evaluation system as a way of regulating and certifying online courses before they are offered to students. However, there is a cost to participate in this program, so it is unclear if this is really a viable option for all departments and online faculty who may wish to participate. Also, Quality Matters looks only at instructional design not instructional delivery.

Another assessment hurdle is distributing and collecting student evaluations. While many colleges and departments already use an online system of student evaluations such as *My Course Eval* or other do-it-yourself online systems, the university does not have a standardized online system to administer, collect and collate course evaluations.

The issue of course evaluations is a particular problem for the English Composition program. We currently still use hard copy evaluations that students are expected to fill out and are then delivered by hand to the department office. This system clearly will not work for online courses. Our program's initial solution of having students email evaluations to the department administrative assistant has not proven to be a reliable or successful collection process for course evaluations. Online instructors have reported very low rates of return of student evaluations. This is problematic in various ways: administrators do not see a representative sample of student feedback to identify any potential issues; instructors have minimal feedback in order to make necessary pedagogical or curricular changes; and this lack of student evaluations may have negative repercussions on an instructor's annual review or RPT dossier. In addition to student evaluations, our English Composition program does not currently complete yearly reviews of students who have completed the composition sequence online, as the program has done for traditional face-to-face courses. We are missing the opportunity to assess how our composition sequence works in the online environment and if any changes or accommodations need to be made to the curriculum. Our program is still oriented to traditional face-to-face courses only, with the online courses and the experiences of those students being more of a secondary concern and up to the individual faculty member to adjust accordingly.

Recommendations:

- Institute a programmatic Peer Review program at least as rigorous as face-to-face observations are and as standard as those observations which faculty must currently seek to have completed in preparation for the RPT review.
- Investigate a university-wide online course evaluation system that is reliable and customizable in an effort to increase the rate of student evaluation responses.
- Begin collecting valuable data at mid- and end-terms to gauge students' challenges and successes in online writing courses.

Final Recommendations

Online courses are already proving to be a valuable addition to higher education. Additionally, UC 2019 and the Academic Master Plan make it clear that faculty and student excellence is a priority, and that the means to such excellence includes promoting learning through technology and the support of such learning for both faculty and students. Together with initiatives to improve flexibility of learning and increase student retention, we can see that the move to online instruction requires careful thought, planning, and support, and particular attention to disciplinary needs and course-specific demands. Such approaches are necessary if this instruction is to effectively represent course learning objectives, help to attract and retain students, and provide both students and faculty with the opportunity to excel.

Therefore, given the writing intensive nature of English Composition courses in particular, we strongly encourage that further development of online instruction in the English Department include primary attention to the following concerns which have been noted earlier in this white paper:

- The need for mandatory training of online faculty and continuing support in course development;
- Course enrollment caps and equitable workload decisions regarding distribution of online courses; and
- Orientation and continuing readiness assessment of students entering these courses.

Such primary focuses can be achieved through attention to the various recommendations in this document, together with regular reassessment of needs as online courses move ahead and increase, as they inevitably will. While it is clear that current online courses are robust and usefully meeting many student needs and course objectives, it is only through a unified and thoughtful approach by faculty and administration, with coordinated university resources and support, that we will be able to maximize the potential promised by online course instruction and enlarge the possibilities that such courses hold for students, faculty, and the university alike.

On the Creation of this Report

This report was written by faculty Michele Griegel-McCord, Cynthia Nitz Ris, and Lisa Beckelhimer, members of the Teaching and Technology Committee (TTC) in the A&S Department of English and Comparative Literature, with input from colleagues and TTC members Molly Brayman, Chris Campagna, Allison Hammond, and Jim Knippling, and based in part on survey responses of other faculty teaching online courses in our department and at the Blue Ash and Clermont campuses. Under the direction of former A&S Composition Director Laura Micciche, the TTC had begun examining the experiences of faculty who were teaching online Composition courses, and the writers sought to contextualize these experiences and to offer recommendations that could assist in future course development. Because online teaching continues to evolve, it is important to note that this white paper is a work in progress, and the authors welcome input and ideas for further considerations and in developing additional recommendations. We appreciate the encouragement of English Department Head Jay Twomey and Acting Composition Director Joyce Malek in producing this report.

Source Notes

Sources that can provide additional information are noted below. Special attention should be paid to the comprehensive study conducted over a six year period that is reflected in the report and statement of principles developed by the Committee on Best Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI), as charged by the National Conference on College Composition and Communication (A&S English Department Associate Professor Lisa Meloncon is a committee member). This effort, which included extensive textual research, national on-site research, and original surveys, includes the initial *2011 State-of-Art of OWI Report* and has been recently updated by the comprehensive *Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction*. It is strongly encouraged that these documents be reviewed as a supplement to this white paper, as the findings there mirror many of the

recommendations we have made in this document, and go beyond to recommend various guiding principles that can be useful guidelines for students, faculty, and administrators.

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Ensuring the Highest Quality in Online Courses and Programs

Reflected through AMP tactics and our daily work is the University's commitment to excellence in education, aligned with research-based best practices and quality standards of teaching and learning. These best-practices and quality standards include student-centered priorities, instructor presence and engagement, and a commitment to continuous improvement practices through data analysis. All courses and programs aim to allow students to acquire knowledge and develop skills and competencies that will make them successful in their chosen field of study. Online courses and programs require additional attention in that the format and means of content delivery and interaction are different than many faculty and students are familiar with. The following table provides broad guidelines for all courses and programs and, in particular, online offerings.

University Level	<p>Provides leadership and support to provide exceptional education for all students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports colleges and programs in development and implementation of quality programs and course delivery aligned with best practices • Provides leadership in innovation and technology and be a central clearinghouse for information and supports for global implementation of best practices in teaching and learning, including online teaching and learning • Provides support to faculty in developing effective interactive digital content • Reviews/approves new courses and programs, including online programs • Provides a Learning Management System (LMS) for course delivery which is in compliance with info security measures and inclusive of analytics to support retention efforts • Provides student services to support admission, financial aid, and degree completion • Provides course development training opportunities and review process aligned with research-based practices and quality standards • Provides leadership and oversight of continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
College/Unit Level	<p>Provides structure and resources to support faculty and student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of curriculum to assure quality in teaching and learning and to facilitate accreditation • Develop standards and protocols for course development and evaluation aligned with university defined best-practices and quality standards • Faculty development is provided and encouraged • Provide student services to appropriately support learners' educational activities • Consistent processes and technologies are used to facilitate student-centered priorities for teaching and learning • Implements continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
Program Level	<p>Programs designed to provide knowledge and competencies that allow students to contribute to the profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program learning outcomes and competencies aligned with course sequences and course-level objectives • Courses and outcomes aligned with accreditation requirements • Curriculum maps detail appropriate pathways to completion of program • Commitment to fostering standards of faculty presence, responsiveness, and engagement • Online programs use appropriate and effective technology to provide consistency to the students experience from course to course • Implements continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
Course Level	<p>All courses incorporate principles of best-practice and quality standards focused on student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement development and review process aligned with College/Unit-defined standards and protocols • Student learning outcomes clearly articulated • Content and activities that are accessible and provide means to achieve the learning outcomes • Assessment directly correlated to learning outcomes and provides students a measure of their progress and attainment of outcomes • Instructor commitment to presence, responsiveness, and engagement to promote an active learning environment • Technology, interactions and activities are appropriate and relevant for the outcomes, content and student population • Implements continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions

University Level

Provides leadership and support to provide exceptional education for all students

- Supports colleges and programs in development and implementation of quality programs and course delivery aligned with best practices
 - Guidance/structure for new program proposals (HLC *Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs*, AOC, Graduate School, etc.)
 - Institutional subscription in Quality Matters (QM), national standards of best practice for instructional design of online courses (Provost Office)
 - Toolset and resources: rubric (principles and standards), collegial peer review process, professional development opportunities
 - Communication/updates
 - Database of QM expertise
 - Assist colleges/units with their plans to adopt/implement QM best practices principles and standards (CET&L, QM Institutional Rep & colleges)
 - Best practices for instructional design infused in support and services provided by universal providers (CET&L, FTRC, Libraries, etc.)
 - Recommend: Formalize ID community of practice (QM network; college representatives/instructional designers, etc.)
- Provides leadership in innovation and technology and be a central clearinghouse for information and supports for global implementation of best practices in teaching and learning, including online teaching and learning
 - FTRC – Assistance in using technology to enhance instructional experience
 - CET&L - Workshops and programs on teaching strategies, assessment of student learning, etc.
 - E-Learning Center/Steger Center (proposed; need funding)?
 - Faculty Development One Stop portal - teaching and research support, faculty development opportunities via universal providers, links to other resources, etc.
 - Recommend: One Stop/website/repository/toolkit for E-Learning (FAQs, tools, resources, models, universal providers, research, etc.)
 - Facilitate sharing best practices in online teaching and learning across colleges (e-Learning listserv)
- Provides support to faculty in developing effective interactive digital content
 - E-Learning Center/Steger Center (proposed)
 - FTRC/PTSG/UCit
 - Libraries
 - Universal providers collaboration
- Reviews/approves courses and programs, including online programs
 - Integrated Decision Making (IDM) paths – review/approval process for fully developed and vetted new program proposals
 - eCurriculum - C-1 and P-1 approval process
- Provides a Learning Management System (LMS) for course delivery which is in compliance with info security measures and inclusive of analytics to support retention efforts
 - IT Governance Committee/Teaching and Learning Committee – facilitate recommendations, decision-making and implementation of academic technology solutions to ensure needs of end-users are reflected; strategy to support excellence and innovation across all teaching and learning, etc.
 - UCit – integrate enterprise applications
- Student services to support admission, financial aid, and degree completion
 - *Admission & Registration* via OneStop - online apply, registration, and pay tuition.
 - *Financial Aid* – UC Financial Aid designee works directly with distance students and serves as liaison between that office and academic units to address the unique needs and circumstances of these students.

- *Bookstore* – Online textbook ordering services.
- *Blackboard* (LMS; portal to other services such as Libraries and OneStop online student services; training)
- *Instructional Technology Help Desk*– Reliable technical support provided online and via telephone for computing concerns, data/phone communications, email, remote access, software site licenses, etc.
- *Library Services* – Online access to the library catalog, electronic resources and e-books, articles and materials that faculty put on reserve for students, 24/7 access to certain online library resources, interlibrary loan capabilities, and access to a research librarian for assistance (through chat, email or telephone).
- *Career Counseling & Placement* – Online access to the University’s Career Development Center, counseling services, and website.
- *Academic Support* – eTutoring (math, science, languages, business, writing, etc.) and online Writing Lab.
- *Disability Services* – academic accommodations for learners.
- *Testing and Exam Proctoring services*
- ***New online student orientation [In development]***- University level orientation (introduction to the university, student resources and services, online learning readiness, minimum technology, university policies, etc.) – primary target: new students (could also serve potential students) – colleges/programs may incorporate in existing orientations
- Provides course development training opportunities and review process aligned with research-based practices and quality standards.
 - Online course design institutes, workshops, web-based resources, individual consultation and leadership through e-Learning based on QM framework (CET&L)
 - Offer regular QM training for faculty (CET&L & colleges)
 - Support colleges and units as they implement QM principles (CET&L, QM Institutional Rep, colleges)
 - Establish/manage QM peer review process for courses and programs that require QM certification (CET&L, colleges, QM Institutional Rep)
 - Recruit QM trainers and reviewers (CET&L & colleges)
 - Recommend: Re-purpose DL website page to include Faculty Resources and support units
- Provides leadership and oversight of continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
 - Institutional procedures/structures in place to collect data used in a variety of ways (HLC/NCA accreditation, state accountability purposes, university-wide assessment practices (benchmarking), program review, specialized accreditation recommendations, etc.)
 - Office of Assessment and Student Learning – strategies related to enhancement of undergraduate student learning
 - CET&L - workshops, resources, consultation on program assessment
 - Office of Institutional Research – reports and analysis at the university and college level to assist informed decision-making
 - Enrollment
 - Demographics
 - Course completions/GPA
 - Time to degree
 - Success rates (defined by the HLC as “registered autumn, graduated by or returned by the following autumn”)
 - Graduate student satisfaction/Graduate Exit Survey
 - Undergraduate engagement/satisfaction (NSSE)

College / Unit Level

Provides structure and resources to support faculty and student learning

- Oversight of curriculum to assure quality in teaching and learning and to facilitate accreditation
 - Recommend appointing Director position/project manager for online programs
 - Online Curriculum equivalent / consistent with traditional programs
 - Qualified faculty have oversight of course content and learning outcomes, course development and delivery
 - Process for review and approval of new and / or modified curriculum
 - Admission to programs consistent with traditional programs
- Develop standards and protocols for course development and evaluation aligned with university defined best-practices and quality standards
 - Recommend: use of course shells designed to assure high quality design standards are met [i.e., QM standards/benchmarks]
 - Process for course development and approval is documented and understood by faculty
 - Appropriate evaluation for course development indicating course is approved by College / Unit
 - Course evaluation process defined, including mechanism for continuous improvement
- Faculty development provided and encouraged
 - Faculty encouraged to participate in CET&L professional development, utilize content creation services as well as other University provided programs
 - Provide program faculty training regarding course development expectations including common course shells, student interaction and communication, use of technology, development of content and methods for assessing learning
- Provide student services to appropriately support educational activities of online learners
 - Prospective student support for program information and application
 - Academic advising
 - Additional academic support services aimed at retention and program completion (are often important for online programs)
 - Library and technical support
 - Recommend: primary point of contact identified at the program level (to help learners navigate processes from a distance, as needed)
- Consistent processes and technologies used to facilitate student-centered priorities for teaching and learning
 - Program faculty should agree on common (not necessarily identical) course shells to be used consistently in each course in program
 - Program faculty should agree on common (not necessarily identical) technologies for student interaction and engagement
 - Program uses consistent approach for resolving technical issues in each course (e.g. contact information for resolving technical issues is the same in each course)
 - New student orientation provided that helps new students succeed in an online format
 - Points of contact identified and made known to students
- Implement continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
 - Course evaluation process defined, including mechanism for continuous improvement
 - Student course evaluations specific to online format
 - Documentation of changes made as result of student evaluation
 - Process and practices consistent with traditional programs to support program accreditation.
 - College / unit office clearly identified that is responsible for continuous improvement processes.

Program Level

Programs designed to provide knowledge and competencies that allow students to contribute to the profession

- Program learning outcomes and competencies aligned with course sequences and course-level objectives
 - E-curriculum P-1 and P-2 and academic committee review process
- Courses and outcomes aligned with accreditation requirements
 - Program review of course development alignment planning map, relative to the C-1, to assure content and activities achieve intended learning outcomes and satisfy accreditation requirements
- Curriculum maps detail appropriate pathways to completion of program
 - Develop and implement use of course sequence maps showing recommended term/yr to support progress and persistence
 - Consistent individualized advising to support student retention, persistence, and success
- Commitment to fostering standards of faculty presence, responsiveness, and engagement
 - Hold regular program meetings and build subject of standards into the agenda
 - Solicit faculty sharing of best-practices
 - Encourage use of university/unit resources to develop engaging content
 - Evaluate student satisfaction data for annual review discussion
- Online programs use appropriate and effective technology to provide consistency to the students' experience from course to course
 - Encourage use of university/unit resources to support intentional use of effective technology specific to the intended strategy
 - Commitment to Quality Matters™ “Bill of Rights for Online Learners”
- Implement continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
 - Evaluate student satisfaction data to identify opportunities for enhancing/improving course design and instruction
 - Evaluate student performance data to identify opportunities for enhancing/improving course design and instruction

Course Level

All courses incorporate principles of best-practice and quality standards focused on student learning

- Implement course development and review process aligned with College/Unit-defined standards and protocols
 - Course developers/instructors guided by program/unit level development and design protocols such as:
 - course alignment and planning maps
 - unit approved or university endorsed online course shell
 - development resources (university, unit, program)
 - quality review process prior to “going live”
 - commitment to Quality Matters™ “Bill of Rights for Online Learners”
- Student learning outcomes clearly articulated
 - Course uses learning outcomes from the university approved C-1 forms
 - Module learning outcomes are present, measurable, and align back to course learning outcomes
- Content and activities that are accessible for all students and provide means to achieve the learning outcomes
 - Content is current and clearly related to learning activities
 - Contribute to achievement of learning outcomes
 - Content and activities are accessible to students with vision or hearing? impairments and other disabilities under §504 and the ADA
- Assessment directly correlated to learning outcomes and provides students a measure of their progress and attainment of outcomes
 - Alignment to course learning outcomes evidenced through course alignment and planning map
- Instructor commitment to presence, responsiveness, and engagement to promote an active learning environment
 - Clearly stated and honored response times for grading and electronic communication
 - Clearly stated and honored availability (office hours, etc.)
 - Consistent and timely presence within the course outside of instructional presence through regular announcements and other communication that is constructive as well as motivational
 - Presentations and activities that engage the student with the content/course and promote active learning (i.e., interactive presentations, situational based outcome modules, scaffolded assessments, PRS technology, presentations with intrinsic self-assessments, purposeful discourse through discussion prompts that encourage critical thinking and progression from exploration to integration and resolution, etc.)
- Technology, interactions and activities are appropriate and relevant for the learning outcomes, content and student population
 - Alignment with outcomes evidenced through course alignment and planning map
 - Purposeful discourse through discussion prompts and other collaborative activities that encourage critical thinking and progression from exploration to integration and resolution
 - Intent of technology, interactions, activities, and their relevance clearly outlined for student
- Implement continuous improvement practices using data analysis to guide decisions
 - Monitor successful strategies/tools and note areas for improvement or enhancement throughout the duration of the course for the next iteration
 - Conduct in-course survey’s to gauge student response to or effectiveness of specific strategies implemented and use data to influence further development
 - Utilize Bb test analytics to evaluate student performance and identify future modifications/improvements
 - Review CoursEval data for feedback to affirm current strategies or inform future improvements to enhance student satisfaction and success