

Faculty Senate

[Faculty Senate](#) » [Committees/Councils](#) » [Online Education Committee](#) » [Annual Reports](#) » 2004-2005 Annual Report

Distance Education Committee

2004-2005 Annual Report

Membership

Mark Wilson '06, Chair	Botany & Plant Pathology
Jeff Hale '05	College of Liberal Arts
Deborah Healey '05	English Language Institute
Debbie Coehlo '06	Cascades Campus
Ron Stewart '07	Information Services/Media Services
Melora Halaj '07	SMILE

Ex-Officios

Kim Calvery	Budgets & Fiscal Planning Committee
Lynda Ciuffetti	Graduate Council, Exec. Committee Liaison
Joan Gross	Curriculum Council
Maureen Kelly	Library
Bill McCaughan	Extended Campus Dean
Sarah Williams	Extended Campus

Distance Education Committee Standing Rules

The Distance Education Committee reviews and recommends policies on matters pertaining to distance education that promote the educational mission of the University. It provides policy recommendations regarding faculty relations as they pertain to the creation, implementation, delivery, rewards, and intellectual property rights related to distance education courses and programs. It advises in the long-term planning and financing of distance education courses and programs, including student marketing, recruitment and retention issues in order to ensure a sustainable student base. It advises on distance education curriculum priorities, development, standards and evaluation, and reviews certificate programs to insure high quality offerings. The Committee monitors standards of academic quality for all distance education courses to ensure the quality and uniformity of degree offerings. The Committee maintains a continuing examination of the impact of distance education on the educational mission of individual programs, departments, colleges and the University. It provides reports and recommendations to the Faculty Senate and operates in an advisory role to the Dean of Extended Campus.

The Committee consists of six Faculty, at least three of whom shall be from units or programs with existing or developing distance education courses, and two Students (preferably with distance education experience), one of whom shall be a graduate student, ideally to provide a broad representation of academic disciplines. In addition, ex-officio, non-voting members shall include one representative from each of the following: Budgets and Fiscal Planning Committee, Curriculum Council, Graduate Council, Valley Library, and the Dean of Extended Campus, or designee.

Activities for 2004-2005

The Distance Education Committee met six times during 2004-2005. The first order of business was to set the scope for Committee activities based on the Committee's standing rules, mission, and goals. Mission and goals were developed were developed for this purpose.

The Committee agreed that its mission was to recommend policy rather than to develop or implement. The Committee agreed on the following *draft mission statement*:

Through broad representation from the University community, the OSU Faculty Senate Distance Education Committee supports high quality distance learning opportunities to Oregonians and others nationwide by providing guidance and recommendations on policy, practices, and standards.

The Committee identified five goals that it supported through guidance and recommendations on policy, practices, and standards:

- The standards and practices of distance education at the University create compelling learning experiences.
- Students and faculty involved with distance education are fully integrated into the programs and mission of the University.
- Faculty contributions to distance education are fairly acknowledged in promotion and tenure decisions.
- Delivery of distance education is efficient.
- The University anticipates emerging trends that affect its distance education.

Based on the draft mission statement and goals, the Committee identified six activities to undertake in 2004-2005.

1. *Encourage a survey of faculty involved with distance education*

The purpose of this survey is to assess the current needs and satisfaction of faculty with support, rewards, and other issues. The Committee met with Paula Minear on February 25, 2005 to discuss the existing Ecampus surveys. The past and planned surveys cover some information the Committee wished to obtain. The more detailed information of interest to the Committee, such as comparison of teaching methods, financial support, development, salary, isolation, satisfaction, P&T, and effectiveness in teaching, would require a separate survey, targeted less at customer satisfaction.

2. *Develop the capacity to provide valid and reliable statistical information on the operations of OSU's distance efforts*

The purpose of this activity is to provide a basic understanding of the who, what and when of distance education in the University and to provide a framework or establish a policy that sets forth benchmarks to measure success. These efforts support the goal of creating compelling learning experiences. The Committee discussed using the data from higher-education institutions presented in an NEA study, "Quality on the Line," for benchmarks of success against which OSU can be compared. The Committee decided to postpone further action until the Center for Teaching and Learning was fully operational.

3. *Insure that all distance education offerings are fully accessible to persons with disabilities*
Committee discussed several underlying issues

- How our policy will fit with the campus-wide effort. The Committee sought to coordinate its efforts with the University-wide group developing guidelines for accessibility. Rather than wait, however, the Committee proceeded.
- Impact of funding, new courses only or retrofit. Costs to make a website fully accessible are 10% or higher of other development costs; retrofitting is much more expensive. The Committee agreed on the solution to design new courses well and only retrofit on demand.
- Focus on outcomes (ensure accessibility) versus on procedures. The primary role of the Committee is setting policy in support of its mission and goals. Therefore, we should not be heavily involved in procedures.
- Policy language. The Committee wanted a policy on accessibility to clarify its role, while realizing the legal and administrative implications of a formal declaration. The Committee agreed on the following internal, draft policy: "Oregon State University distance education will develop or adopt guidelines to ensure equal and equivalent participation by persons with disabilities in programs, services, and operations. OSU seeks to be at the forefront in the creation of a complete and compelling learning experience for all students. Therefore, an educational and programmatic goal for OSU distance education will be full and equitable use by persons with disabilities, exceeding simple compliance with minimally accepted accessibility standards."

The Technology Access Program was considering an "accessibility contest," in which colleges and departments submit distance education courses to be judged by outside experts on implementation of full access to the course. The Committee strongly supported this effort as a way to demonstrate our policy and to provide data on implementation. Committee members promised to contact the Provost Office and the IT Access Committee to ask their financial and other support of the contest, and to inform the Curriculum Committee.

4. *Address promotion and tenure issues*

This important topic was tabled until 2005-2006.

5. *Establish a "policy on policies"*

Because the Committee is a policy making body, we should record and track those policies. Policies that have implications beyond the internal operation of the Committee should be forwarded to the Executive Committee for possible consideration and vote by the Faculty Senate.

The Committee reviewed policy statements from past minutes and annual reports. The Appendix lists the policies approved to date by the current Committee.

6. *Serve as the faculty advisory board for the Dean of Extended Education*

The Committee advised the Dean of Extended Education both directly, in response to specific requests, and indirectly through meeting discussions. The Dean was present at all Committee meetings.

Other activities

Each meeting included the exchange of information about distance education or about University happenings pertinent to distance education.

In response to an inquiry by the Computing Resources Committee, the DE Committee agreed to be involved with a planned review of Blackboard.

Priorities for 2005-2006

The Committee reviewed the list of must-do activities developed by the committee at the beginning of the 04-05 year. The Committee agreed to continue the following activities:

- Serve as Faculty Advisory board for the Dean of OSU Extended Campus
- Review and compile Committee policies
- Insure that all distance education offerings are fully accessible to persons with disabilities

The Committee agreed on three high-priority tasks for next year:

- Make recommendations to, or collaborate with, the Center for Teaching and Learning about services and materials for faculty relating to distance education, such as training on distance education, tip sheet of best practices, basic standards, and other resources.
- Address promotion and tenure issues.
- Conduct a survey of faculty, once its objectives have been clarified.

Appendix. List of approved policies

The Committee reviews and recommends policies on all forms of distance education within the University and values both competition and cooperation. (Proposed in the 03-04 annual report; approved 24 Jan 05)

The Committee recognizes the Cascades Campus as an independent entity and does not see their on-campus educational services as "distance education." (Proposed in the 03-04 annual report; approved 24 Jan 05)

The Committee monitors the curricular process to assure that it is correct and efficient. The Committee will not be directly involved in the curricular process itself. (Proposed in the 03-04 annual report; approved 24 Jan 05)

Oregon State University distance education will develop or adopt guidelines to ensure equal and equivalent participation by persons with disabilities in programs, services, and operations. OSU seeks to be at the forefront in the creation of a complete and compelling learning experience for all students. Therefore, an educational and programmatic goal for OSU distance education will be full and equitable use by persons with disabilities, exceeding simple compliance with minimally accepted accessibility standards. (draft proposed and approved 20 May 05)