

Faculty Senate

[Faculty Senate](#) » [Committees/Councils](#) » [Online Education Committee](#) » [Annual Reports](#) » 2006-2007 Annual Report

Distance Education Committee

2006-2007 Annual Report

Membership

Mark Wilson '07, Chair	Botany & Plant Pathology
Mark Dinsmore (v. Stewart) '07	Technology Across the Curriculum
Paul Primak '08	International Programs
Penny Diebel '08	Eastern Oregon University
Brett Jeter '09	CAS Student Advancement
Kay Stephens '09	College of Education
Ghadeer Filimban	Graduate students

Ex-Officios

Tom Shellhammer	Budgets & Fiscal Planning Committee
John Lee	Curriculum Council
Maureen Kelly	Library
Bill McCaughan, Mark Merickel	Extended Campus Dean
Sarah Williams	Support
Maira Dempsey	Executive Committee Liaison

Activities during 2006-2007

Scope

The committee met five times during the academic year. We started the year by revisiting the definition of "distance education" and, therefore, the scope of the Committee. We reaffirmed that "distance education" at OSU should be defined more broadly than as "courses offered by Extended Campus." After much discussion, the Committee approved this internal policy statement:

Distance education, for the purposes of this committee, is the learning that occurs when instructor and student are separated by space or time and communicate primarily via the application of technologies. Excluded from this definition is asynchronous course delivery for the on-campus environment.

Discussions later in the year with members of the Curriculum Council and with others point out that the Distance Education Committee is being asked for advice about asynchronous course delivery for the on-campus environment. This topic has become important and sometimes heated on campus. The Committee should reassess whether it should broaden its scope to include asynchronous course delivery for the on-campus environment.

Other Internal Policies

During the year, the Committee continued to discuss the internal policy statements that had accumulated informally from the past. After suitable revisions and deletions, a [full set of internal](#) policies was approved.

Policy on Promotion and Tenure

The Committee ended the previous year by asking for comments on its proposed policy on promotion and tenure from the FS Promotion and Tenure Committee and the FS Faculty Status Committee. These comments were received over the summer and incorporated during our fall meetings.

The [final policy statement](#) was accepted in April by the FS Executive Committee, Academic Affairs, and the FS Promotion and Tenure Committee. The policy statement will be appended to the University Promotion and Tenure guidelines as a link for the clarification of distance education issues.

Policy on Course Assessment and Review

Penny Diebel presented her revised policy statement on distance education course assessment and review. Changes were discussed and accepted. Supporting materials were reviewed and revised by members Filimban and Stephens. Dinsmore created a Web site to host the supporting materials that maintain the look and feel of the Faculty Senate Web site, is linked from the FS Distance Education Committee page, and is controlled both by individuals on the Committee and by Vickie Nunnemaker.

The final policy statement and its supporting materials are available on the Committee's new supporting Web site (<http://oregonstate.edu/groups/dec/>).

The Committee identified several parties on campus with interest in course assessment and review, such as Academic Affairs, the FS Advancement of Teaching committee, the FS Computing Resources committee, the FS Curriculum Council, and the FS Promotion and Tenure committee. The next step is to solicit comments from these parties.

Intellectual Rights

In April, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee asked the Distance Education Committee to examine the topic of intellectual property rights and distance education instruction. The Committee had discussed this topic earlier in the year. Because the Oregon Administrative Rules already cover the broader issues, the Committee had decided then that its pending policy was moot. In light of our earlier decision, the EC put our involvement in the issue on hold until they resolved some questions.

Exchange of Distance Education Courses

Paul Primak introduced the idea of starting a program for the exchange of distance education courses with institutions abroad. OSU has been approached by other institutes already. The Committee agreed to support exchange programs. The Committee also agreed to be ready to think about policy implications, for example in curriculum and finance.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

Paula Minear of Ecampus addressed the Committee about their concerns with new policies for student evaluation of teaching. They worry that the Committee, in its policy on course assessment and review, is requiring a rate of return that equals the rate in face-to-face courses. The Committee stated that its policy statement was intended not as a hammer but as a lever: by stimulating changes to campus policy and by increasing resource availability rates of return for Ecampus courses should increase.

Syllabus Template

After hearing a presentation from Ecampus, the Committee approved the following statement: "The FS Distance Education Committee endorses the 'Syllabus Guidelines' developed by Extended Campus (June 2007). The Sample Course Syllabus is an effective tool to help instructors provide information essential for students. The guidelines also include the elements required of every OSU syllabus, as set by the Curricular Procedures and Policies within the Academic Programs Web site. The Detailed Course Syllabus Template is a useful collection of syllabus elements tailored for distance education courses."

Reorganization of Extended Campus and the Extension Service

The Committee discussed the reorganization of Extended Campus and the Extension Service into a single Division and how this reorganization might influence the Committee. The Committee reached no conclusion.

Liaison

The Distance Education Committee has no known liaison responsibilities with other Faculty Senate committees. Mark Wilson attended parts of two Curriculum Council meetings at the invitation of its chairman, John Lee.

A topic for future discussion is whether the Distance Education Committee should provide ex-officio participation in other Faculty Senate committees.

Recommendations from the 2005-2006 Annual Report

Last year's annual report identified two next steps for continuing projects. The recommendation for the promotion and tenure project was "to incorporate the comments of these committees into a revised policy statement and present it to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee." The activity was completed in 2006-2007. The recommendation for the course assessment and review project was "to gather comments on its draft policy from shareholders across campus" and "to present a final policy statement to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee during the 06-07 year." These activities were not completed in 2006-2007.

Summary of Major Accomplishments During 2006-2007

- Completed revision and approval of [internal policies](#)
- Gained campus acceptance of its [policy](#) on promotion and tenure
- Finished final wording of its policy on course assessment and review; developed supporting materials (see <http://oregonstate.edu/groups/dec/>)
- Endorsed the Ecampus Syllabus Template

Recommendations for 2007-2008

Although the Committee accomplished much this year, several tasks remain unfinished.

- *Scope and liaison.* The Committee should reassess whether it should broaden its scope to include asynchronous course delivery for the on-campus environment. The Committee should discuss with the FS Executive Committee the benefits of serving as liaison members on other FS committees.
- *Promotion and tenure policy.* The Committee started discussions about ways to help faculty document their accomplishments in distance education. Examples mentioned include electronic portfolios. Because these issues are largely specific to distance education, it is appropriate for the Committee to continue to find ways to encourage the development of these new tools.
- *Promotion and tenure procedures.* At one time the Committee and the Dean of Extended Campus had an informal agreement to develop an external peer-review process for evaluating online textbooks used in distance education courses. This initiative should be renewed.
- *Course assessment and review.* The next step in this project is to solicit comments from parties with interest in course assessment and review. At that point, the Committee can present the resulting final policy statement and supporting materials to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
- *Committee functioning.* In 2005-2006, the productivity of the Committee was hindered by the transfer from OSU of some members, the inconsistent participation by others, and the technological difficulties of having three participants off campus. The first two problems were resolved in 2006-2007: Committee members participated regularly, and ex-officio and external members enriched committee discussions. The third hurdle, technological problems, continued to hamper the Committee. For example, one meeting planned for 90 minutes accomplished perhaps 15 minutes of work because neither video conferencing nor speaker phone worked. A task for the next year is to identify meeting facilities that possess adequate technological support.

Submitted by Mark Wilson
July 2007