

## Comments on the Distance Learning Restructuring Plan by the FSW committee

### Meeting of FSW Committee, February 25, 2011

Present: Ira Altman, Lisa Brooten, Scott Collins, Jyotsna Kapur, and Mike Lydy. Diane Muzio sent comments via email.

There was unanimous agreement that distance learning as well as online technologies in all forms of learning is a growth area and we should be on board. With that said, we have the following comments:

1. **Educational Mission:** The committee felt unanimously that the document needed to have a preamble/vision statement outlining the educational values of Distance learning and its compatibility with SIUC mission. We would like to refer Dr. Logue to our previous comments on the Overload and Distance education policy which we are reproducing here:

One fundamental question we discussed has to do with the entrepreneurial nature of the language of both this report and the Overload Policy (we saw them as interrelated), and whether or not we agree with the basic premise they provide. We had concerns about the language and the way the Distance Education report presents the initiative as purely a revenue-generating exercise with no reference to the educational mission of the university and the educational merits of such a project. We note, for example, on p. 7 the statement that “the goal is to increase enrollments and new sources of revenue.” We recommend that the goal of this program be conceptualized in a much broader manner to include goals beyond revenue-generation that correlate better with the overall mission of the university. For example, how will this project help in forwarding our mission to serve underserved populations, contribute to global citizenship and help prepare students for the job market? Also, given SIU’s high profile role in serving military populations, how will this project contribute to this aspect of the university mission?

Along the lines of emphasizing the education mission we also think that a certain amount of funds should be made available for innovative use of online technologies in education that may not necessarily generate income but would be of value as education—for example, extending to underserved minorities or global education or in research. These might later on become profitable but should be supported for their educational value.

We also highly recommend having on the committee faculty actively engaged in distance education and were not sure how well they were represented currently.

2. **Fee and student access:** We were concerned about the differential fee structures for in-state and out of state tuitions and wonder why when these fees were being brought in line for our regular students these were being introduced for on-line students. An increase such as this not only goes against our mission to serve underserved populations it will severely undercut existing programs, as in healthcare in CASA. It also impacts international enrollment.

Clarification needed on P 5 –are the student fees above the course fee to be charged per-credit hour or as a flat fee?

3. **Curriculum issues:** We appreciated the centralizing of teaching support and hope that it will lead to better management and maintenance of infrastructure. We also appreciate that the proposed Center for Teaching Excellence does not separate distance learning from our regular teaching; that it will support both; and we can see this as helping build innovative hybrids as well as develop each area.

Clarification needed on what constitutes a program-- p15. It is our understanding that current procedures in relation to designing new courses or programs will apply, including the FS overview of programmatic changes, as now.

Could you develop a glossary of terms to accompany this policy? For example, many of us are not clear about the distinctions between ILP vs web based seminar.

4. **Revenue sharing:** Both revenue and credit generation as outlined in the policy should go to the department or program unit that generates these credits and revenue (not to the college).
5. Finally, we would like to forward a detailed analysis of the policy prepared by Professor Scott Collins and comments he received from other colleagues.

Comments on the

“Restructuring Plan for Distance Education at SIUC”

Thank you for asking faculty to give input regarding this restructuring plan. The following includes questions/comments I have with the document based on my experience with distance education.

Overall, I see the restructuring as a good thing as long as the costs associated are reduced for everyone. I have had a very positive experience in running the Medical Dosimetry Program through the Division of Continuing Education (DCE). The staff within this branch have always been very helpful and prompt in completing tasks. Hopefully this restructuring plan will maintain or increase efficiency even further.

SIUC has an excellent opportunity to grow as it attempts to pursue more distance education programs. However, there must be incentives to do so. If all incoming funds are to be used as upper administration and college administration wants, then very few programs will be developed. SIUC must promote and reward individuals who want to be entrepreneurial. One can say they support, but if all administration wants is the income from the program, then that is not support. The majority of the revenue must come to the program that generates it.

Page 3- Technical specialists- Hopefully, with staffing recommendations, a backup person is available for all positions to include video conferencing personnel. It is very difficult to replace tacit knowledge if a person leaves.

Page 4- I am not sure why there is a need for web development personnel. All colleges/schools/programs have accurate web sites for marketing, so why is there a need to add extra staff centrally? From my experience with Blackboard or Desire 2 Learn, course templates exist and work well for course presentation.

Page 4 –DCE does not provide support for all online students. They perform mostly clerical work for the Dosimetry program.

Page 5 – Tuition and Fees are of great concern to me. The main purpose of offering distant education programs is to reach students who do not have a program in their region, no matter where they live. We should not have in-state/out-of-state tuition rates for distant education courses. Individuals who live outside the in-state tuition region should not be penalized for where they live and have to pay more. This defeats the purpose of trying to grow our programs nationally or internationally. Just because many other colleges within Illinois charge out of state tuition and fees for distant programs doesn't mean we should. This will add a tremendous cost to the students and result in the demise of the program. I suggest a professional tuition/Program Delivery Charge (PDC) rate that applies to all students in a specific program. Currently 78% of the dosimetry program's enrollment is outside the in-state tuition region. Many of these students would not attend SIUC if out-of-state tuition was required.

If the fees are used to support infrastructure for all programs, then they may be acceptable. For example, the video conferencing infrastructure at SIUC needs to be enhanced as many pieces of equipment are on end of life and cannot be serviced. This creates a major problem if it quits functioning and students cannot attend a video session. We must be proactive and have all equipment under service agreements versus reacting when the piece goes down.

For the dosimetry program alone the additional fees of approximately \$70/credit hour will add \$2100 to the program cost (30 credit hours). The current cost is \$12,000 no matter where you live, in-state or out of state. The extra fees increase the cost by 17.5%.

Currently, there are 14 accredited dosimetry programs across the nation and we were the third to become accredited. The average cost of all programs is \$10,619 with a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$25,372. If our total cost goes to \$14,100 we will be the third highest priced program in the United States. Currently we are the fifth highest. We do not want to price our programs above where they need to be (market rate) or we will lose enrollment. We have seen a decrease in enrollment for very expensive programs on our campus.

I believe a flat tuition rate should be used for all distant education programs. For example, we use \$400 a credit hour with a PDC of \$285.60. Then DCE takes 5% of the remaining 71.4% for their services and the remaining amount goes to the program to operate from.

I do not understand the need for the extra fees as central administration currently takes 28.6% of the gross income. Where is this money going and how is it being used? This should be reviewed prior to the implementation of fees. Can this amount be used in place of the fees? Not sure if this is possible.

Page 6- When discussing the IT processes for off-campus programs and military programs, shouldn't this be completed via Banner? There should not be separate systems.

Page 6- Keeping with the current 8 or 16 week semesters is not doable for the dosimetry program. We currently operate on 20 week semesters for the fall and spring and then a 10 week semester in the summer. The lengthened semesters are needed to ensure students receive enough clinical training to become competent dosimetrists. It has worked well in the past.

Page 6- Advising- is the term "academic units" meaning faculty or admin/AP advisors? Currently I do the advising for all dosimetry students.

Page 7 – When using the term "shift resources", who determines this? Currently, the dosimetry program uses its' resources to operate and pay all necessary fees associated. Other programs in CASA have expenses and the Off Campus Programs within CASA (OCAP) does not share the income to pay these fees. This is not right.

Page 8 - There needs to be redundancy structure in place for video conferencing equipment as well.

Page 10 – Workload should be voluntary. Minimum workloads should be set by the university and maximum workloads should be voluntary.

Page 10 – Not sure what is meant by “credit activities”? I definitely believe that academic units should be able to count student numbers for enrollment purposes.

Page 11 – Proposed tuition revenue distribution. This looks like a reasonable breakdown as currently the program receives 67.83% of the revenue with the model it is using. With 70.5% going to the college, there has to be some guarantee that the program generating the revenue receives the bulk of that revenue. A general statement saying the college/Dean has complete control of the 70.5% does not protect the programs and therefore takes away the incentive to create such ventures. The reason this is stated is due to the fact that CASA currently operates the OCAP system and none of the revenue generated goes back to the program that creates the income stream. This is not acceptable! If this is the model that is going to be used by our college, I doubt many new programs will be created. Why work extra for SIUC/CASA just to have the income generated go to some other program that is not doing the extra work? This is not a way to reward the individuals/programs who want to produce more. A set percentage (small percentage) for the college and department/school has to be designated/agreed upon and then the program receives the rest. This agreement cannot be changed every time there is a change in administration.

Page 12 – Start up funding is good as long as it is repaid. What happens to programs that receive start up money and cannot repay? Does their college have to pay? They should.

All money that is currently in the accounts generated by specific programs should come back to the program and not be used for the start up funds. The dosimetry program has money in the DCE account and has been saving the money for a large purchase. If this is swept into another fund, who will pay for the equipment?

I am not a real believer in good programs having to foot the bill for programs that are not producing income. If it does not make profit, it should not be allowed to continue operation.

Page 13 – Forcing reserves above a certain amount be sent back to the Central Income Fund will force wasteful year-end spending and not allow programs to save for large purchases. This is currently done every year in June and you see many items purchased that are not needed, just used to spend money. This is a very poor way to manage.

Page 14 – What is meant by track faculty effort? Is this to effectively measure workloads?

**Page 15 – The statement saying “It is expected that this revenue will be used for faculty research, development, program reinvestment, and program development” is a GREAT statement. There has to be a guarantee at the college level that the program receives this revenue. It should not be used to fill cut backs that have been made at the college/school level. I suggest this be clarified to state for the “faculty of the revenue generating program”.**

**Just faculty and program do not necessarily indicate the program creating the income will receive the benefit.**

Page 16 – I believe a student should still have the option to take ILP courses at anytime. A circumstance can come up and they have to drop a class but still need a more flexible schedule to maintain enrollment.

Page 18 – Allowing the academic unit (program) to have oversight is a good thing. Everything a program does should come back to the unit regarding head count and income purposes.

Page 19 - I believe the Tuition and Program Delivery Charges need to stay in effect and we should not move to an in-state/out-of-state tuition model. This will limit program growth and make them less competitive in a national/international market. Distance Education can be offered anywhere!

Page 20 – Negotiating rates on a frequent base is not good practice. Once agreed upon percentages are set, each level knows how they must operate. If a specific level cannot operate within the specific percent, then adjustments are needed at that level to become more efficient.

Page 21 – Assessment is a good thing and met by the dosimetry program’s accreditation guidelines.

Page 21 – I do not like the term “Best Practices” as it implies if you do not follow these specific guidelines, you must be doing something wrong. A faculty member must be able to operate with academic freedom as long as quality is maintained as defined by certification/accreditation guidelines.

Page 22 – Distant delivery accreditation approval- this process has to be quicker at the SIUC level. Many times it takes a long time to get out of the college and then it sits somewhere in Anthony Hall. For our most recent proposal, it was in Anthony Hall for at least 2.5 months just to receive permission to fill out the paperwork. (No signature was needed!) This is not good business practice. Everyone at all levels must operate on timelines to allow us to move forward. We cannot control what HLC does but we can improve our efficiency. It should be noted that CASA Radiologic Sciences has also had a program in the works for over 5 years and it is still not approved at the SIUC level. (I know many changes have occurred in Anthony Hall that could affect this but it is an observation.)

Page 22- I agree with the transition to the academic units as long as the program receives adequate funding to maintain a quality operation. Using income from successful programs to support unsuccessful programs kills initiative and promotes the status quo. If there is no incentive/reward to work extra, why do it? Funding percentages must be fair and equitable to all and established for everyone to follow. The percentages cannot be adjustable at any time for administration to take extra when they have a financial need. This will destroy programs.

## **Comments below are from colleagues within the School of Allied Health**

### **Colleague Number 1**

#### **Positive Observations**

I am very supportive of the university's recognition that it is time to provide curricular alternatives to students who are time and place bound via online education.

#### **Concerns**

##### 1) Staff realignment

Having worked with Con-Ed for a number of years, I find that a very small number of employees perform a large variety of tasks. There is a large degree of "cross-over" among the staff to insure all of the services offered are performed in a professional, caring, and expeditious manner. I have yet to hear anything less than positive from a student in regards to the level of service extended. While I understand the university's need to insure all services are in line with the HLC-NCA, I have a concern that the number of people to perform these tasks will actually increase. I find no assurance in the draft proposal that faculty will enjoy the same level of service (ranging from the quick response to faculty requests, to the efficiency of all paperwork involved between the faculty and the university).

##### 2) Completion dates

My concern is that the reorganization will not have sufficient time to organize for the same quality of service to the student or the faculty. This document is still a draft, yet many objectives are to be completed in spring 2011 semester with full implementation targeted for fall 2011. In the absence of detailed communication, organization, and assignment, the initial implementation can have a devastating effect on the university as a whole.

##### 3) ILP

Page 1 states there are several student assistant positions supported by ILP. Page 6 suggests ILP must be formatted to 8 or 16 week courses to conform with implementation through Banner. Many students choose an ILP because a course is needed (after the semester has begun) to graduate on time or to maintain student aid. The advantage of ILP is the open start/finish dates. One must consider how this change might affect student graduation/retention rates.

##### 4) Compensation

The compensation for instruction information (page 10) is extremely vague. A policy is to be in place in February 2011. Given the current date, it is not practical to comment on information that is not yet available.

##### 5) Out of state rates for Con-Ed students

Regardless of what other Illinois colleges do, this differential will likely be a consideration in the student's decision to take a course at SIUC or an in-state institution. If SIUC can offer in-state rates to students from China, surely the same could be done for continuing education students.

### **Questions/more clarity**

- 1) Courses that are not part of program, can they continue to be offered?
- 2) I find the distribution of revenue to the College Dean for further distribution within the college to be extremely unclear. There must be transparency in this new delivery and funding process before I can even pose a direct question. Program Development (page 13) states central administration will hold funds to be redistributed to a new program on a “revolving basis”. What’s to say these funds – which are, as I understand it, being given to central administration from CASA’s productivity – will come back to CASA? Will we be rewarded for our work? Will faculty who are trying to expand and improve current programs by adding additional courses be able to do so on a consistent basis – or will we have to “wait our turn” before future allotments are granted to CASA. In my opinion, if we are producing, there should be incentive for us to continue to produce – thereby enriching and enlarging CASA’s enrollment. I totally don’t understand why “Any reserve in excess of the allowable amount within the college will be returned to the Central Income Fund of the University” (page 13). As I understand it, future Con-Ed courses will be “cost recovery”. If the college excels, why are the funds generated taken away from the college?
- 3) My understanding is that a non-credit course which is being offered multiple times this year will continue to be administered in the same manner as now. Money generated will continue to be held in an account for the program’s future use. Is this interpretation correct?

### **General comments**

This draft contains insufficient information, at this point. It is my hope that the comments submitted will result in further draft development to allow faculty to better understand the administration and implementation.

### **Colleague Number 2**

1. OCAP model isn’t necessarily the model that should be used and should be evaluated for its appropriateness given the new economic climate and distance education emphasis. What worked 30+ years ago when OCAP was created doesn’t necessarily work now.
  - a. Current OCAP structure provides no budgetary or operational control for the Chair of the on-campus program. All budgetary control is given to the Director of OCAP who does not report to the Chair. The Chair has no jurisdiction over the business policies for those off-campus programs (although they are “supposed” to be an extension of the on-campus program) or how revenue generated by the off-campus program is allocated. Chair has no control over the cost-recovery program that goes through OCAP even though the on-campus program that it is supposed to be “part” of is their responsibility. Sets them up to fail and causes many headaches because the actions and decisions made by OCAP end up on the Chair’s desk and grievances are routed to them because they are the only one that has the academic authority to deal with the issues. Chair held responsible for OCAP although they have no control over what they do. Violates even the most elementary management philosophy.



- b. It has been previously explained that all profits from a cost-recovery program are to go back into the actual program. This does not happen with OCAP. Money does not routinely come back to the on-campus program; it is dispersed to multiple programs or the college based virtually upon the sole discretion of the OCAP Director. Programs have no say so in how the money is spent that is generated from their “cost recovery” OCAP programs. Given the Chair doesn’t even get to view the budgetary information we have no idea even how much money comes in from our OCAP programs. OCAP can tell us they are broke anytime they want and we (even the Chair) can’t prove otherwise because it isn’t in our realm of authority.
          - c. The separation of authority (between the OCAP Director and the School Director) is perplexing and causes concern to accreditation/certification bodies. One is a business manager and the other is an academic administrator. There are no clear lines of authority given and no operating paper that has shared governance agreements. There are issues pertaining to academics, curriculum, and faculty that business managers probably do not necessary have the training or qualifications to manage given they aren’t field experts or academically trained. This doesn’t mean they aren’t highly qualified to take care of the clerical issues pertaining to contracts, MOU’s etc. The issue is that it puts up red flags to accrediting/certification bodies which will most likely intensify given distance learning is becoming the national trend. Anytime there is money to be made there will be both ethical organizations and unethical organizations jumping on the band wagon. Accreditation/certification bodies are being forced to increase their scrutiny in order to weed out the unethical ones. The current OCAP structure has the potential of causing great problems in terms of accreditation/certification in especially the medical - related programs. This is happening already. It is very real that an on-campus program could be denied accreditation/certification because of how an OCAP program is ran since there are no lines of authority given to the program or to the Chair of the program.
2. No guarantee that the person or program who created the cost recovery program will benefit from it. Can be taken from them by admin at any time. Revenue is dispersed to other programs to compensate for losses somewhere else at any time. Again, program Faculty and Chair have no control.
3. Current OCAP model eliminates Faculty paid “too much” from being able to teach the courses (recently verified by an administrator when asked). So...the message is clear... here is what could happen to Faculty that create an OCAP program...:
  - a. When they attempt to go up for promotion (especially Full), they could be refused because their salaries would then be too high for OCAP to find acceptable. This is currently 100% OCAPs decision and there are no governing documents (bargaining agreement or operating paper) in place to protect Faculty. Less expensive Faculty and adjuncts are the “business” savvy selection for OCAP. Therefore, it is better for administration to keep our salaries as low as possible, especially in programs where there are minimal Faculty willing to participate in additional OCAP related duties.
  - b. Or...at some point a new junior Faculty will be brought into the on-campus program due to retirement, expansion, etc. Then *they* may become the lower paid “business” saavy selection weeding out the Faculty member that went to the effort to create, promote, and establish the OCAP program.

#### 4. Workload

For those program already governed by OCAP, there is a workload issue present. Although teaching for OCAP is paid at ½ month's salary, additional work such as hiring committees, analysis of work experience packets, and assessment results in trivial "service" points. We don't need any more service. Some of us working with OCAP can't do our required research because we have so much "service" that we feel either forced or obligated to do. Some of us are at 35-40% rather than 10% (but then we are told..."it is our job"). However, when we try to go up for promotion, administration doesn't care that we have worked our tails off doing more than our contracted 10% service. They only care that our research wasn't done – yet they set up a model that knowingly prevents us from doing it.

Suggestion: Dissolve OCAP in its current model and place the authority back under the respective Chairs of those programs that should "own" their cost-recovery programs. Director of OCAP should become the Director of Support Services that reports to the Associate Dean of CASA. All base coordinators, accountants, and support staff should remain under the management of the OCAP Director; however, the OCAP Director should have no jurisdiction over budgetary, curriculum, or faculty issues. OCAP Director should record and "charge back" to the respective departments/programs that utilize their services and be compensated for such. They then have to run OCAP on the amount of monies available. This would clear up many issues including those that can and are being raised by accreditation/certification bodies.

\*\*\* Note: none of this is to say that the current OCAP Director or Staff of OCAP aren't fabulous people that work very hard to do their jobs. They are tremendous individuals. However, we should remove the "faces" of people when we create what the structure should look like. It should only be boxes that can't be associated with an individual. We can't develop a new structure if it is based on who we like or dislike. That isn't prudent management either. Times are too difficult to play games. We have to develop what works...not what is convenient.