

# Academic Planning Committee Final Report - 2008/09 Academic Year

## Committee Membership

Joe Kastantin	Curt Czerwinski	Tom Gendreau (spring)
Bradley Seebach	Steve Senger, Chair	Ron Glass
Chia-Chen Yu	Gubbi Sudhakaran	Leslee Poulton
		Joe Tiffany (fall)

## Program Proposal Reviews and Approvals

During this academic year the committee received and recommended approval of the following programmatic requests.

- Creation of a Sport Broadcasting Minor in the Communication Studies Department
- Elimination of the Graduate Reading Program (all three concentrations) and the ME-PD Non-Certification (track 3) within the Educational Studies Department
- Creation of a Women's Studies Major in the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department
- Creation of a Archeology Minor in the Archeology Department
- Creation of a Bachelor of Fine Arts program in College of Liberal Studies
- Creation of a Medical Dosimetry Masters Program in the Health Professions Department.

## Special Charge

In addition to its regular duties the charged letter to the committee asked

Review the current status of on-line education at UWL and recommend ways that the University can plan for the long range future of this area of instruction.

The committee devoted several meetings to this topic and consulted with faculty at UWL who have experience teaching courses in an online format. The discussion resulted in the following recommendations from the committee.

**1. Definition of Online Course: Online courses are defined as those courses where 50% or fewer of the contact hours occur as face-to-face classroom activities.**

Discussion: Currently, courses at UW-L are assessed an "online fee" based upon

the extent to which they use D2L for content delivery and work performed (e.g. quizzes, exams, assignments). While this may be an appropriate definition for determining the assessment of a fee used in supporting the technology it is not necessarily a definition useful for academic and program review. The proposed definition focuses on the extent to which online activities replace traditional face-to-face contact hours.

**2. Recommendation: The Registrar's Office should implement mechanisms for tracking offerings of course sections that meet the proposed definition of online courses.**

Discussion: One possible mechanism is to designate a range of section numbers that can be used to indicate that a section will follow an online format. This identification along with the usual data maintained on courses (e.g. term of offering, number of students, distribution of grades or average GPA) and reported for various purposes (e.g. retention and promotion review of faculty as well as program review) will allow programs, and committees such as APC and APR, to better assess course offering patterns and their effectiveness in programs.

**3. Recommendation: The Academic Program Review committee should require programs to discuss the use and effectiveness of any replacement of face-to-face contact hours with online activities.**

Discussion: The last few years have seen an increase in courses that utilize online activities as a substitute for face-to-face contact hours. The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that this shift in offering patterns occurs in a purposeful way and is monitored by departments.

**4. Recommendation: The Academic Planning Committee should add to its list of review criteria a discussion of the use of online courses in proposals for new programs. Where proposals build on existing programs (e.g. moving a minor to a major) prior use and effectiveness of online offerings should be addressed.**

**5. Recommendation: UCC and GCC should develop policies to re-review existing courses that over time shift from a regular offering format to an online offering format.**

Discussion: It is reasonable to expect that for the foreseeable future new courses will be proposed that utilize an online offering pattern and that some existing courses will evolve into an online offering pattern. The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that these two situations are equally reviewed.

**6. Recommendation: APC should re-review existing programs if programs change to the point that 50% or more of the courses in the program are offered as online courses.**