**Faculty Senate Online Committee**

**Meeting Minutes 11/09/2016**

In attendance:

Hesham Ali

Joseph Cilli (Chair)

Peter Clarke

C. Delano Gray

Shane Landrum

Joseph Riquelme (Interim Assistant Vice President of FIU Online)

* The meeting started at 2pm.
* The Chair asked for a volunteer to take minutes at the meetings and Peter Clarke accepted the position of minute taker.
* The Chair stated that the committee needs to come up with a schedule for the year and said that he will send out another Doodle poll in the coming days to identify the best time for meeting during the week.
* The committee’s goals for this year were taken from the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education. There are three main items in the plan: Quality, Access and Affordability. The committee will focus on Quality and Accessibility. The strategic plan can be found at the following URL:

<http://www.flbog.edu/about/taskforce/strategic_planning_online_ed.php>

* + **Quality:** The focus will be to come up with a plan that can be used to improve the quality of the online courses offered at FIU. It was stated that some of the online courses are very well designed and some are not. The problem with the varying quality of courses can be problematic in the following scenario. A student takes a top quality course then takes a course of a lower quality. It is possible that the student will lose interest in the second course and may not perform well.
  + **Accessibility:** The issues with accessibility are related mainly to compliance issues (e.g., ADA compliance). For example, if the course uses a video format for course material then closed caption should be available.
  + **Affordability:** There was some concern of how UF’s online program would impact the cost of programs at FIU, specifically since UF was opening a location in Brickell (downtown Miami). This impact may have a detrimental effect on the online course offerings at FIU.
* Quality
  + It was stated that one way to improve the quality of online courses was to use appropriate student and faculty evaluations.
  + It was suggested that there should be a collection of exemplary courses used for quality standards and available to faculty for review.
  + A member of the committee pointed out that some employers don’t like to hire students that take fully online programs. This further bolsters the fact that the FIU faculty needs to ensure the online courses are of a high quality.
* Affordability
  + The topic of affordability was again discussed and a member of the committee stated that the FIU online program was around before the UF’s program and maybe FIU should be offering the online program for the SUS.
* There was some discussion on the online, hybrid and face-to-face courses.
  + The future expansion plans of FIU, with respect to the number of students, will depend heavily on more online courses being offered (as stated by the Provost at the Faculty Senate meeting on 11/08/2016). The focus will be on converting existing face-to-face courses to online courses. The committee was reminded that the target for the university is having 30% face-to-face, 30% hybrid and 40% online by 2020.
  + The committee was informed that if faculty wants to teach an online course they should first contact the supervisor in their unit (Department Chair or School Director).
* The committee discussed teaching load as describe in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA). It was stated that there are parameters on teaching load presented in the CBA for online courses. See Section (10) Instructional Technology, page 56 of CBA <http://hr.fiu.edu/uploads/file/ELR/2015_2018_UFF_Collective_Bargaining_Agreement_FINAL.pdf>
* The CBA describe overload assignment of face-to-face and hybrid courses. See section (11) using the URL above.
* Training for hybrid courses was also discussed:
  + It was noted that training for hybrid courses is not mandatory. Some committee members felt that training should be mandatory.
  + There is an incentive for faculty to teach hybrid courses. However, it was mentioned that there appears to be capacity issues with the training and that the training should be more flexible to accommodate faculty at the BBC.
  + With respect to the effort required to convert a course to online, Joseph Riquelme stated that FIU Online provides resources to assist with the development of these courses.
* The committee further discussed the involvement of unit supervisors in scheduling faculty to teach online courses. The focus was specifically on how knowledgeable unit supervisors are of the scheduling and administration of online courses. It was stated that in some units the associate chairs or associate directors are the ones who are more knowledgeable of the class schedules. In addition, some of the chairs appear not to be too enthusiastic about encouraging faculty to teach online courses.
* The final comment of the meeting centered on the quality of online courses - quality drives student engagement and funding for programs and needs to be taken seriously.

**Action item for committee members:**

* The committee chair requested that all committee members should check what is in the literature and online with respect to the development of quality online education. It is expected that the committee members will come to the next meeting prepared to discuss quality of online courses.

The meeting ended at 3:00pm.

Prepared by:

Peter Clarke