

MINUTES

Faculty Senate On-Line Review Committee

February 7, 2012

In attendance: Leonard Bliss, Steve Bernstein, Jose Longoria,, Brian Peterson, Lorna Veraldi

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM.

Minutes of the Nov. 14, 2011 meeting were approved.

Proposed online policies. The committee discussed two proposed policies forwarded to the committee for review and recommendation by the Faculty Senate: "Policy for Required On-Campus Visits in Online Courses," and Proctored Exam Policy for Online Courses." Both policies have been proposed by Dean Joyce Elam and, if adopted, would take effect in Summer 2012, and are attached to these minutes.

1. To the extent that required on-campus visits or proctored exams diminish one of the major reasons that students elect to take online courses—the scheduling and site flexibility that are offered by truly asynchronous learning—the committee agrees that the University should continue to explore technology that eliminates the need for proctored exams and on-campus visits to reduce concerns about the integrity of online testing.
2. The decision to require any on-campus visits or proctored exams should be a limited option for instructors, rather than required in every online course. In this respect, the policies as written appear to allow (but not require) instructors to schedule up to two on-campus visits (at least one of which may be a proctored exam), and the committee believes such instructor discretion is important and appropriate.
2. The committee recommends that the University adopt a policy that would offers students residing in Miami-Dade and Broward County the same options as students residing outside these two counties for equal virtual opportunities for those students who chose not to make required on-campus visits. For many local students, even though they may live relatively close to campus, a lack of transportation, disabilities or scheduling flexibility may make on-campus visits as burdensome as they are for more distant students who would find travel costs and time prohibitive. Local students choose online options for a variety of reasons, but among the most compelling are scheduling and site flexibility. Therefore, the committee recommends that both policies be changed to allow any student, regardless of place of residence, to elect "equal virtual alternatives" in place of on-campus visits.
3. The committee did not feel either policy clearly addressed the need for advance notice of specific information students need to decide whether to take an online course. In this respect, the committee recommends that the policy require the instructor, working with FIU Online and the Office for Academic Space Management, to commit to specific dates, times and locations of required on-campus visits for proctored exams or other activities in advance of the drop-add period and to make those details available to students in the syllabus prior to the end of the drop-add period, in time to get a full refund

of fees or to change to another course if they are unable to schedule visits and do not wish to pay additional extra costs to arrange for a virtual alternative.

4. The policy on proctored exams appears to require the instructor to provide information as to the costs of virtual alternatives; because multiple options and sites are involved, we feel the responsibility of researching costs and details about availability of virtual options needs to be shared by FIU Online and students seeking such options, rather than the instructor.

It was agreed that Committee Chair Lorna Veraldi would send the Faculty Senate written recommendations of the committee reflecting these concerns.

Strategic plan. The committee began to discuss the proposed Strategic Plan distributed by Brian Peterson via email in December, and decided to schedule a second meeting in February to continue that discussion.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 3:30, in DM 353, unless a different location is announced.

At 4:30 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.