Hybrid Course Definition Change

What follows presents a rationale for a change in the hybrid course policy that currently appears on p. 158 of the Faculty Handbook.

**Overview of Proposed Changes:** 1.) Modify the prescribed ratios of face-to-face to online instruction that currently appear in the Faculty Handbook. 2.) Include language in this section that enables pedagogically-driven decision making on the structure of hybrid courses, which will remain subject to existing governance decision makers.

**Rationale:** The existing guidelines for hybrid courses established in the Faculty Handbook, specifically the ratio of face-to-face to online instruction, are not adequate. There are several practical concerns that warrant changing the existing language:

1.) Existing language does not meet the needs of established course scheduling structures (e.g., 50 min, 75 min, or 150 min courses).
2.) Existing language is founded on the assumption of unstated, inherent differences in courses taught at different numbered levels (i.e., 100-level, 200-level, etc.). Additionally, there is no flexibility to adjust ratios based on the actual content of the course.
3.) Existing language lacks clarity and enforceability.
4.) Existing language does not construct pedagogical standards generalizable to departments across the University.
5.) Existing language limits the ability of faculty to develop innovative course structures to best employ the hybridization of face-to-face and on-line instruction.

The proposed changes produce several benefits over existing language:

1.) Proposed language allows for conformity with established course scheduling structures.
2.) Proposed language creates an appropriate model for the design and teaching of hybrid classes where the ratio of face-to-face to online instruction is concerned.
3.) Proposed language supports the spirit and intent of the hybrid course model, which is the embrace of what traditionally works well (face-to-face) with the innovations enabled by online instructional tools.

**Practical Effect:** Most hybrid courses will continue to be taught in a manner that apportions 50% of the credit hour required time to face-to-face instruction and the other 50% to online instruction.
WCSU Online Policy

I. INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ISSUES

A. Purpose:
The purpose of Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) Online Learning Policy is to assure high quality in online/distance learning with regard to instruction, procedures, and support. Unless otherwise stated all academic policies and procedures apply to both on-campus and online courses. Nevertheless, the particular nature and circumstances of online learning necessitate a clear explication of policies and procedures on key areas. All Online Learning policies are generated and executed in accordance with the mission of WCSU.

B. Principles Of Good Practice For Electronically Offered Academic Degree And Certificate Programs:
Distance learning activities at WCSU comply with the NEASC Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education & On-line Learning and with the Guidelines of other accrediting bodies.


WCSU's goal is to ensure that online courses meet the same quality standards as courses taught on campus. Additionally, some online learning may address the needs or topic in ways that on-campus classes cannot.

C. Definition

Online Course: Defined as one in which course content is delivered online via the University's web-based course management system, whether synchronously or asynchronously. Students submit course work and participate in discussions with faculty and other students via the Internet. Many online courses contain media-rich presentations that reinforce important concepts. Students in these courses communicate with faculty and fellow students using e-mail, discussion boards, and submit assignments to faculty through the University’s web-based course management system.

Hybrid Course: Defined as one in which regularly scheduled classroom time is comprised of both face to face meetings and online learning. All face to face meetings for a hybrid course will be announced prior to registration. The online component is delivered via the University's web-based course management system. The following schedule applies to hybrid courses:

- 100/200 level classes, hybrid is 70% face-to-face and 30% online
- 300/400 level classes hybrid is 50% face-to-face and 50% online
- 500 level classes and above hybrid is 30% face-to-face and 70% online

D. Review Of Distance Learning Policy:
The responsibility for evaluating and revising the Online Learning Policy resides with the Senate Distance Learning Committee, as specified by NEASC.

II. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. Academic Integrity Of Online Learning Courses:
Online learning courses are comparable to campus-based courses in terms of:

- Syllabi
- Office Hours
- Expected learning outcomes
- Readings and assignments
- Grading
- Methods of evaluation
- Student Opinion Survey

Online learning courses are subject to the same policies as stated in the Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs for campus-based courses. Faculty members must also follow the regulations described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the guidelines in the Faculty Handbook.

B. Oversight Of Courses:
Like all academic activities, online learning at WCSU operates under the purview of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, CUCAS and Grad Council. WCSU adheres to the policy that all courses of the same prefix and number are equivalent, regardless of mode of delivery and/or period of delivery. It is the responsibility of the faculty to ensure that the rigor of programs and quality of instruction are maintained within their courses.

C. Online Learning Course Offering Process
For new online offerings, the faculty member must complete the Online Education at WCSU course offering form. Form approval must be
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Hybrid Course: Defined as one in which a course is comprised of both face-to-face meetings and online learning where the online component does not exceed 50% of the designated instructional time. All face-to-face meetings will be announced prior to registration. The online component is delivered via the University's web-based course management system.

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