



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

**NO. 2 20.00**

**COORDINATED BY:** Office of Academic Affairs

**EFFECTIVE:** September 3, 2004

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**REVISED:**

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**SUBJECT:** DISTANCE LEARNING

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### **I. PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for the successful management of the delivery of academic credit through a variety of technologies and formats.

### **II. POLICY**

The defined mission of Louisiana State University in Shreveport includes the statement that the university is to create and maintain “a stimulating and supportive environment in which students, faculty, and staff participate freely in the creation, acquisition, and dissemination of knowledge.” In response to this charge and in recognition of the diversity of students, their lifestyles, and their learning styles, LSUS enhances student access to educational services through diversity in delivery methodologies.

Distance learning requires an extensive level of faculty and institutional preparation, including faculty training in the pedagogy of new delivery systems, consideration of copyright and ownership issues, and planning of delivery systems for fundamental student services such as advising, library access, and technical support.

### **III. ADMINISTRATION**

1. The Distance Learning Council (DLC) shall be appointed by the Provost & Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and shall be composed of the Director of the Teaching, Leadership and Technology Center (TLTC), representatives from each of the academic colleges, the Noel Library, the Division of Continuing Education and Public Service, and Computing Services.
2. The duties of the Distance Learning Council are to:
  - a. Develop, review, and recommend policy regarding the delivery of academic credit through various formats and technologies;
  - b. Review, refine, and recommend proposals for various courses to be offered via distance learning technologies;

- c. Review and recommend the kinds of support services provided for courses offered via distance learning; and
  - d. Review and recommend the training for and assessment of distance learning instruction.
3. The Office of Academic Affairs, assisted by the Distance Learning Council and the Division of Continuing Education and Public Service, shall administer academic credit courses offered through distance learning. The modes of delivery of distance learning include Internet (online), Compressed Video, LPB Telecourses, and any combination of these.

#### **IV. Courses and Curricula**

1. Courses offered through distance learning at LSUS shall maintain the same standards for content and evaluation as onsite courses. Verification of the validity of course content shall remain the responsibility of the department.
2. A course proposed for distance delivery should follow a dual-development track: academic content and technological pedagogy. These tracks are best pursued simultaneously to allow for a timely offering of the course. Academic content of an online course is to be validated in the same manner as an onsite course. Approval should be obtained from the chair, through the dean, through the college and university Courses and Curricula Committees. Technological pedagogy is defined as (1) the ability to use the hardware and software tools of distance learning, and (2) the understanding of the unique pedagogical aspects of distance learning. This second track is pursued in partnership with the DLC and the TLTC and consists of training (described below) and consultation that lead to successful course design in a distance mode of delivery.
3. Courses offered through distance learning shall be subject to student evaluation instruments comparable to the instrument administered in onsite courses. Additionally, both distance students and faculty shall evaluate the effectiveness of technology support each semester.
4. Both existing courses and previously approved courses are subject to periodic review by the DLC and the appropriate academic department.

#### **V. Fiscal**

1. Tuition for courses delivered through distance learning shall be the same as for onsite courses.
2. The university may implement a fee associated with distance learning courses that would be used to support costs for instructional training, technology, delivery incentive, and support services for distance learning courses.
3. For students taking online courses, certain fees, such as parking or student activity fees, should be waived in recognition that these students typically do not use the

services for which these fees are charged. Students registered in both online and traditional onsite courses at LSUS shall be charged fees appropriate to onsite course enrollment.

## **VI. Faculty**

1. In order to ensure the delivery of quality courses through distance learning, the university imposes strict standards on the preparation of the course content and the delivery competencies of the faculty. In recognition of these requirements and in an effort to encourage these forms of delivery, the university may provide incentives. Incentives, such as a reduced teaching load or additional compensation, are particularly important when a new course is delivered for the first time.
2. Faculty members proposing delivery of a distance learning course shall submit an overview of the course and shall demonstrate to the Distance Learning Council that the proposed course adheres to the principles of “Good Practice” in distance learning (such as documented in “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” by Chickering and Gamson, 1987) through a sample class session. Any modifications to the proposed course or the pedagogy recommended by the Distance Learning Council shall be implemented before approval is granted to offer the course.
3. Faculty members proposing delivery of a distance learning course shall enroll for training opportunities as provided by the institution and recommended or required by the Distance Learning Council.
4. The level of compensation for a course delivered by distance learning and taught either by adjuncts or full-time faculty teaching as an overload should reflect a spirit of entrepreneurship.

## **VII. Legal**

1. LSU System Permanent Memoranda shall govern issues of intellectual property in courses prepared for delivery through distance learning at LSUS.
2. Faculty members offering courses through distance learning shall recognize that copyright in this area is a particular responsibility of the faculty to monitor. However, adherence to copyright is so crucial to delivery of distance learning that the university will designate a staff member in the Office of Academic Affairs to research use of materials and request permissions as necessary.

## **VIII. Student Support Services**

1. The Distance Learning Council shall advise the university regarding the resources and services that are required to offer courses via distance learning. In order to be successful, the DLC must seek input from the Division of Continuing Education and

Public Service, Noel Library, Computing Services, Office of Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Bookstore, Counseling Center, and various academic administrators and advisors.

2. Students enrolled in courses offered via distance learning will be provided, as much as possible within policies, technologies, and budgetary constraints, the full array of service available to students enrolled in onsite courses.

**IX. Technical**

The reliability and capacity of the systems that support distance learning at LSUS must evolve and progress with the needs of the users.

**X. Cultural**

1. Both administrative and faculty endorsement and commitment are necessary to make distance learning a viable contributor to the university's future. A change in institutional culture within the university can happen only when shared values and vision about distance education exist among the faculty, including a commonly held set of standards and assumptions about how to achieve effective teaching and learning at a distance.
2. The policy structure of the university, including faculty reward and tenure policies, is critical to helping create and sustain such an environment. Also, faculty must have access to support personnel, including instructional designers, and computer and other media specialists, to facilitate experimentation, awareness, and adoption of distance education.
3. The university shall recognize in its faculty evaluations the effort and creativity requisite to establishing successful distance learning courses and shall incorporate this recognition into tenure, promotion, and salary recommendations.
4. The university shall give special recognition to distance learning developments that bring in new students to the university.

AUTHORIZED

**Stuart E. Mills**  
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Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

**9-7-04**

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Date

APPROVED

**Vincent J. Marsala**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chancellor

**9-7-04**

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Date