

## **DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – VERSION 1.1**

The technologies for “anytime, anyplace” learning (distance learning) are maturing and increasing in sophistication and reach. The practice and implementation of distance learning is not new. But the sophistication of current technology, combined with the widening reach of asynchronous approaches in many disciplines offer unprecedented opportunities to serve students more effectively.

### **Program Foundations**

USFSP recognizes that in this arena of learning, “one size does not fit all. Different disciplines have varying pedagogical needs. Individual faculty members have varying levels of experience and expertise with distance learning methods and technologies. In addition, USFSP strives to be transformative in its distance learning approaches, rather than simply transferring existing content to digital form. While some incrementalism is expected, USFSP will strive to develop distance learning programs that are both distinctive and are of distinction. As with traditional pedagogies, accountability for a high-quality learning experience is key for synchronous or asynchronous distance learning. Learning outcomes and student performance **must** be assessed and ensured no matter what the modality of delivery (face-to-face or via distance technologies). USFSP will use the best practices of national bodies such as the Sloan Consortium and Quality Matters to inform its implementation of distance learning and will also be guided by the standards and expectations of its programmatic and regional accrediting organizations. Lastly, USFSP’s distance learning programs will be respectful of academic freedom and intellectual property, and will be guided by the provisions of the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement with the United Faculty of Florida.

Faculty who teach distance learning courses are expected to have in place mechanisms to ensure that the students who are enrolled in their course are the students who are actually completing the work and taking examinations, writing papers, etc. In most cases, the secure identification and password protection afforded by the USF System Blackboard Course Management System will be sufficient, but faculty may want to consider additional protections such as proctored (in person) examinations with photo identification check, or even more technologically sophisticated approaches, such as keystroke monitoring, during examinations.

### **Program Statement**

USF St. Petersburg holds as a high value the faculty-student relationship that comes from shared intellectual endeavor. We also want to offer a variety of ways and means that our students can achieve their educational objectives. In addition, faculty members who wish to expand their pedagogical repertoire should be provided with appropriate incentives and opportunities to do so in support of both their own professional goals and of the university’s strategic goals. As a result, the Office of Academic Affairs, with the support of the Deans, has established a multi-pronged program for the development and support of distance/online learning courses and course development.

This program is open to all faculty, including part-time faculty. However, if funding constraints necessitate, the Deans will prioritize proposals for funding. Moreover, this program applies to future course development and delivery. There is no provision for providing retroactive compensation or incentives.

## **Implementation Elements**

There are five elements of this program:

### **1. Distance Learning Course Assistance**

Faculty who are assigned to teach courses in the distance learning modality will be provided with assistance in the form of student teaching assistants according to the following formula:

- For the first 100 (plus or minus 10%) enrollments, 1 TA will be provided for 10 hours per week.
- For 150% plus 1 enrollments above that baseline (i.e., 151 enrollments, plus or minus 10%), 2 TAs will be provided for 10 hours per week each (a faculty member may opt to increase the hours per week for one TA to 20 in lieu of hiring a second TA)
- For 225% plus 1 enrollments above that number (i.e., 226 enrollments, plus or minus 10%), 3 TAs will be provided for 10 hours per week each. The maximum number of hours per week that any single TA can work is 20, therefore, in this instance a second TA must be employed.
- For enrollments higher than 250, faculty members must discuss the course management plan with their department chair and/or dean to ensure that the student learning outcomes of the course can be adequately addressed and assessed.
- This formula applies to individual courses only. Two different courses taught online in the same term cannot be combined to aggregate the enrollment thresholds cited above.

### **2. Course Development Awards**

Faculty who undertake the development of a fully online course, either a new course or the conversion of an existing face-to-face course to an online format, will be eligible for a one-time award of **up to** \$8,000. This does not mean that all awards will be for this amount (see section on budget justification below). Please note that completely new courses (those that are not in USFSP's current course schedule and/or not in SCNS) will continue to require approval through existing processes regardless of method of delivery. The course development covered by this program will be defined as "extra duties" for purposes of this award and the results of these awards (courses, templates, etc) will be defined as "university supported efforts" for purposes of Article 22 of the UFF-USF Collective Bargaining Agreement. Half of the funds will be provided at the time the award is made. The remaining funds will be disbursed **after** the new or revised course has been fully approved by USFSP, has been added to the USF System course inventory, and is underway. Awards may be made as a lump sum payment (in two installments) or may be "banked" for 2 years by the faculty member to take advantage of professional development opportunities related to distance learning that will occur in the future. Funds so awarded but not utilized by faculty by the end of the two-year "bank" period will revert to the university for re-allocation.

Course development proposals must be approved by the faculty member's dean **and**, where applicable, the relevant department chair. In addition, proposed courses must be aligned with department, college, and university strategic goals and objectives. Hybrid courses or courses not meeting the SUS BOG definition of Distance Learning (i.e., face-to-face meeting time in the aggregate exceeds 20 percent of total course meeting time) will not be eligible for these awards.<sup>1</sup>

Initial course development proposals may be submitted for approval for any semester. Following approval of a course development proposal by the relevant department chair (where applicable) and dean, all proposals shall be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs. Proposals will be reviewed for technical feasibility and for alignment with strategic goals. Decisions on funding will be made as soon as possible after the deadlines below, with a target of 30 days for review.

## Course Proposal Deadlines:

Fall Funding: July 1

Spring Funding: October 15

Summer Funding: February 15

**PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR FALL 2010 ONLY, PROPOSALS MAY BE SUBMITTED UP TO OCTOBER 15, 2010 FOR FUNDING IN FALL 2010.**

If the faculty member proposing the course requires the assistance of the Instructional Media Services (IMS) unit of the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library in order to undertake the course development, the proposal must include a separate narrative and budget prepared by Instructional Media Services staff for such support. The Library Support Application form will be posted on the Library's distance learning website at <http://www.dl.usf.edu>. **Faculty should be mindful that discussions with Instructional Media Services must be held well in advance of the course proposal deadlines.** IMS is under no obligation to provide assistance for course development when it has not been consulted in a timely way.

### **Budget Justification**

A budget with justification must be provided as part of the Course Development proposal. The budget should be crafted so that the explicit connection to the course development proposal can be assessed. That said, faculty have wide latitude in budgeting. Examples of uses to which the awarded funds may be put include:

- Purchase of specialized equipment or software in support of online courses, including high-end PCs or laptops.
- Hiring of teaching assistants to facilitate initial online course delivery and assessment (TAs for ongoing courses must be requested as part of Element 1)
- Attendance at workshops or conferences focused on online education
- Faculty remuneration for extra duties (describe the time commitment)

The Course Development Application will be posted on the Academic Affairs website, <http://www.stpete.usf.edu/academics/index.htm> under "Faculty Resources."

### **3. Course Improvement/Refinement Awards**

Faculty who have received initial course development awards as defined above, as well as those who have previously developed and offered an online course before this program was implemented, may be eligible to apply for a *Course Improvement/Refinement Award* after the course they have developed has been offered at least twice. These one-time, lump-sum awards of \$2,000 are intended to enable faculty to "tweak" their courses, make adjustments in response to assessment, and/or incorporate recent technology innovations that were not available at the time of the initial course development.

### **4. Departmental/College Awards**

The departments or colleges of faculty who are successful in developing and offering a new online course will automatically receive a lump sum award of \$4,000 for each course so offered. These funds may be used for professional development for all faculty in that unit, with preference given to professional development activities associated with online learning.

### **5. Training**

USFSP will assist in training faculty (both full-time and part-time) and graduate teaching assistants to facilitate the design, development, and implementation of distance learning courses. Such training will also include emergency preparedness training for alternatives to

existing distance learning course management systems. This training will consist of both on-site (at USFSP) and online experiences. There will be no monetary cost to participants for any such training.

*The implementation of any and all aspects of this program is subject to the availability of funds and all decisions regarding course development awards or TA support are final and not subject to appeal.*

1. The definition of distance learning appears as Recommendation 1 of the Florida Distance Learning Task Force Final Report, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements contained in Section 1 of CS/HB 7105, February 26, 2009 (<http://www.fldlc.org/taskforce/TFFinalRpt10FINAL.pdf> )