Online/Hybrid Course & Program Delivery: Guiding Principles

Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

May 21, 2013

Introduction

The rapidly shifting terrains of higher education and technology necessitate clear and current guidelines for online/hybrid course[1] and program delivery at New Paltz. Several states, many school districts and some colleges around the country now require students to take an online course before graduation, and businesses increasingly rely on online modules for training, development and work activities. Students must be prepared to operate in this new learning environment.

There is increasing evidence that online instruction – because it can accommodate a variety of learning styles and schedule preferences while providing a high level of interactivity and access to resources – meets some students' learning needs more effectively than traditional face-to-face instruction. Increasing opportunities for our students and others to take components of a class online, an entire class online, or even a complete program online will be essential if our campus is to maintain its academic leadership in the region and state.[2]

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[1] Online courses are those that deliver *all or most* course content online; there are typically no face-to-face meetings. Blended/hybrid courses combine online and face-to-face instruction, delivering *a substantial proportion* of the content online and typically using online discussions and a reduced number of face-to-face meetings. Web-facilitated courses use web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Instructors may use a course-management system or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments. (These definitions are adapted from those published in *Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States,* the January 2013 Sloan Foundation Report on Online Education.)

[2] The guidelines presented here are not intended to supersede any online and distance-education policies or requirements established by the external agencies that accredit certain academic programs at New Paltz. Faculty associated with accredited programs may find it helpful to refer to the accrediting agency's website for additional guidance and information related to online instruction, data keeping and reporting.

General Principles

1. The purpose of online/hybrid instruction at New Paltz is to deliver high-quality courses and programs that are consistent with the College's mission and that meet the academic needs and interests of New Paltz students and other student populations.

2. Online/hybrid courses may be offered by the college throughout the year if they meet an important unfilled need, particularly one related to enrollment (e.g., adding a section to meet student demand) or curriculum (e.g., offering a course taught by an instructor with important credentials/experiences who is located far from campus).

3. Online/hybrid programs may be offered by departments and schools if the programs fulfill a demonstrable academic and market need in the College, region or state. Self-sufficiency or revenue generation will contribute to such programs' success.

4. Before offering online or hybrid instruction, faculty must demonstrate their understanding of relevant pedagogical and technological issues. Ongoing professional development related to online teaching and learning will be offered[3], and faculty are strongly encouraged to participate regularly in such activities.

5. All academic policies and procedures applicable to faculty and students engaged in face-to-face instruction apply equally to faculty and students engaged in online/hybrid instruction. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

    a. Academic Integrity Policy (www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies_integrity.html)
    b. Assessment (course and program evaluation)
    c. Faculty office hours and on-campus presence (See *Faculty Handbook*.)
    d. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities (www.newpaltz.edu/drc/manual_policy.html)
    e. Review and approval of proposals for new or revised courses or programs
    f. Student learning time ("time on task") – NYSED guidance is available at http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/ded/policies.html#task
    g. SUNY copyright and intellectual property policy (www.suny.edu/provost/academic_affairs/FacultyOwnership.cfm)

6. The Online Identity Verification Policy applies to all online/hybrid courses and programs: www.newpaltz.edu/advising/policies_onlineverification.html.

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[3] The Teaching & Learning Center, whose role is "to articulate measurable competencies appropriate to technology-based course delivery, to provide training to faculty, and to assess the success of this effort," will play a key role in such professional development, as will Instructional Technology and Instructional Design staff members.