

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Distance Education Task Group

January 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Mary Kay Shartle-Galotto, Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Services

FROM: Distance Education Task Group

SUBJECT: Resolution of Issues Concerning Faculty Training and Demonstration of Competency

This fall the Distance Education Task Group identified and addressed issues related to faculty training and demonstration of competency in distance learning. Training and verification of technical competency are the responsibility of the Office of Distance Education. Faculty and deans developed a list of questions that focused on the issues identified over the past several years and asked the Office of Distance Education to respond. Faculty and deans discussed and amended the information provided by the ODL, and ultimately we are satisfied with the answers. Here are the highlights.

Training

An issue when the DETG was initially formed was the one-size-fits-all training model. Currently the Office of Distance Education is offering or is in the process of developing four training tracks. The tracks are:

- Supplement to a Face-to-Face Course
- Teach a Common Course
- Online Teaching Without Course Development
- Online Teaching With Course Development

In addition, the Office of Distance Education is in the process of developing program options for advanced training, including a MC Master Online Teaching certificate that includes Teaching in the Virtual Classroom, Online Course Design, and other courses. Furthermore, the Task Group asked the Office of Distance Education to develop a separate training for hybrid courses, and after a discussion they agreed to do so. Finally, the Office of Distance Education expressed a need for a course on Elluminate that the Task Group agreed would be useful for online teachers. As a result of these discussions, the Task Group is satisfied with the breadth and variety of training being offered or in development.

Demonstration of Competency

MC requires that all distance learning faculty be able to demonstrate technical competency before teaching online. The determination of technical competency and the authority to verify this competency has been a concern of faculty. Historically the SunGard consultants and a member of the ODE staff have worked together to determine what skills are needed to develop and deliver an online course. Demonstration of technical competency for online teaching is based on a pre-determined checklist of skills currently based upon the Quality Matters rubric, a nationally recognized course design rubric. Faculty members who already have online teaching experience can opt to complete a competency demonstration of the skills checklist on an individual basis. Faculty members without online teaching experience complete the Online Teaching with WebCT course, which emphasizes the checklist skills.

In either scenario, faculty create a course prototype, which is evaluated by the SunGard *Online Teaching with WebCT* facilitator and the Office of Distance Education. Faculty are provided extensive feedback on each skill from the checklist. If only a few technical skills are not demonstrated, the faculty member can work individually with SunGard staff and ODE to determine a plan to improve the missing skills to complete the competency demonstration. Other options include: continuing to use a WebCT site to supplement on campus courses, retaking Online Teaching with WebCT, or deciding not to teach online. Experienced faculty can independently complete the competency demonstration (contact ODE for the procedure). The Task Group supports this method for determining competency and for providing faculty with opportunities to work through individual difficulties with the demonstration. The Office of Distance Education agreed to notify deans and department chairs when a faculty member passes the competency.

At this time the Distance Education Task Group is satisfied with the training opportunities being offered or developed by the Office of Distance Education and supports the process to demonstrate online teaching competency.

Thank you.