

UH Hilo Distance Learning Report AY 2016-17

Kirsten Møllegaard, Distance Learning Liaison

History:

UH Hilo has not had a Distance Learning Coordinator since August 2013, when Candace Wheeler retired. From 2013-2016, Janet Ray was Distance Learning Liaison and chaired UH Hilo Distance Learning Advisory Committee. I signed on as Distance Learning Liaison for AY 2016-17.

Terms and Responsibilities for the UH Hilo Distance Learning (DL) Liaison AY 2016-17:

- The appointment is for one year: AY 2016-17
- Act as liaison between UH Hilo and the UH system by attending CDC (Council for Distance Coordinators) and DLPG (Distance Learning Planning Group) meetings and report on them to Faculty Congress and the VCAA.
- Act as DL contact person for students and faculty
- Convene and chair a committee under Faculty Congress to develop a rubric and /or policy proposal regarding DL courses. This proposal should aim at establishing a list of possible criteria to ensure that DL courses correspond in quality and content to face-to-face courses and can be assessed accordingly. In addition to addressing WASC concerns, the ultimate purpose of this rubric and/or policy is to establish an applicable UH Hilo policy on DL that will help departments ensure that their DL courses meet student learning outcomes and related standards. The drafted rubric and/or proposal will go to Faculty Congress and the VCAA for discussion and approval.

AY 2016-17 Distance Learning Programs at UH Hilo:

- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program (by videoconferencing)
- Master of Arts in Indigenous Language & Culture Education (by videoconferencing)
- Master of Education (M.Ed.)
- Registered Nursing (RN) to Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN)

In addition to these five 100% DL programs, approximately 70-80 courses are offered online or via ITV (interactive video) in Spring, Summer and Fall semesters respectively in the following programs: Agriculture, Anthropology, Art, Business & Economics, Communication, Education, English, Filipino Studies, Japanese Studies, Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education, Kinesiology & Exercise Science, Ke‘elikōlani Hawaiian Language, Linguistics, Marine Science, Nursing, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Gender & Women's Studies.

For data on DL trends at UH Hilo over time, see:
<https://hilo.hawaii.edu/academics/dl/FastFacts.php>

Distance Learning Policy Committee members, AY 2016-17:

- Zheng An - Communication (on sabbatical Spring 2017)
- Linda Connelly - Pharmacy
- Alice Davis - Nursing
- Kimberly Furumo - College of Business & Economics
- Mahealani Jones - Graduate Division and Articulation Specialist
- Kirsten Møllegaard - English (committee chair)
- Scott Saft - Ka Haka 'Ula
- Amy Saxton - Distance Learning Librarian
- Cindy Yamaguchi - Online Teaching and Learning Specialist

Committee's task: Develop a rubric or policy proposal for Distance Learning at UH Hilo for review by Faculty Congress and the VCAA. The purpose of this rubric or policy is to ensure that Distance Learning courses meet academic standards and integrity. The policy should be applicable to both undergraduate and graduate level courses.

Summary of the committee's work:

- Review of UH Hilo's Quality Online Course Design Guidelines
- Review of UH Hilo's Distance Learning website:
<https://hilo.hawaii.edu/academics/dl/>
- Review of E5.204 Distance and Online Learning (document from CDC Catherine Kawada, UH System) which is currently awaiting UH President Lassner's signature to make it an official UH policy
- Review of WASC's Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)
- Review of various kinds of screencasting software for Distance Education
- Development of an online survey to gauge which DL policies or criteria UH Hilo departments currently have in place and which criteria they would like to see included in a campus-wide policy.
- Review of data provided by UHH Office of Institutional Research, which summarizes the total number of students enrolled in DL courses in Spring, Summer, and Fall 2016 (same time period as the survey). Grand total: 1397 students in Spring 2016; 950 in Summer 2016; 1267 in Fall 2016.
- Analysis on results from online survey with additional input from Nursing and Psychology, who had not initially responded to the survey.
- Complete draft of UH Hilo Distance Learning Policy and present it to the VCAA and Faculty Congress by April 21, 2017

Limitations to effective DL course delivery at UH Hilo:

In the process of reviewing and analyzing the information listed above, the committee notes that UH Hilo has unique geographical and demographic circumstances that limit what we can do with DL:

- rural communities with limited access to WiFi
- students who cannot afford the equipment needed for DL
- lack of a tech support center on campus
- lack of DL Coordinator

Survey:

The survey's purpose was to give the committee a better understanding of existing DL programs and policies at UH Hilo and to solicit input from faculty on what they thought should be included in a campus-wide DL policy. We used SurveyMonkey. The survey opened on January 18 and closed on January 25, 2017. There were twelve (12) respondents. Kirsten followed up with interviews with two of the large units that deliver DL courses and programs: Nursing and Psychology.

The survey also functions as a DL self-study that assesses how the respondents perceive the current level of institutional and departmental support for DL courses and programs, student learning outcomes, the extent to which the Quality Online Course Design is used, oversight and evaluation of DL courses, and whether DL figures as part of the MQs or DQs for new hires.

In comparing the data from the respondents to the total enrollment of DL students, it is evident that Nursing, Psychology, and Communication offer the largest number of DL classes and serve the most students.

Based on responses to the survey, the Committee notes the following:

- There does not seem to be much attention paid to DL instruction on the departmental level, nor to assessing SLOs in DL courses. 63.64% responded NO to question #9: "does your department or program currently track or assess student learning outcomes in DL courses?" 70% responded NO to question #10: "Does your department or program currently review DL course design and/or content?"
- The chronic problem of low DL student response rates on course evaluations makes it difficult for DL instructors to demonstrate competency in teaching for contract renewal and tenure/promotion purposes
- Few departments have policies in place for reviewing SLOs and instructional methods in DL courses
- DL courses are assumed rather than demonstrated to be equivalent to face-to-face courses in regard to SLOs and course content
- DL courses depend significantly on the availability of tech support and help desk, and there are not enough resources allocated to either
- It is a disadvantage for UHH students that there is no IT office on campus

- The Online Learning Readiness Check for students (which the majority of respondents do not use) may be in need of an update as new technology becomes available
- A full-time DL coordinator is needed to organize venues for DL faculty development, support programs' DL objectives, and promulgate best practices for DL courses.

Along with the review of institutional guidelines from the UH system, WASC recommendations, and review of other universities' DL policies, the committee drafted a DL policy for UH Hilo. We note that the use of the term *distance education* is more common than "distance learning".

Mandatory Student Fees for Distance Education:

This email message was sent from the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs on April 10, 2017:

Mandatory student fees are clustered into two major types: mandatory student fees and campus-based fees (for a list of these fees, please refer to EP 6.208. Mandatory student fees will be assessed to all students, regardless of course modality. Campus-based fees will only be assessed to students enrolled in courses physically located on a campus.

This means that students taking distance courses (identified via the course instructional mode in Banner) will only pay mandatory student fees (student government, student publication, technology and campus communication/student broadcast) to the campus for which they are enrolled in for each respective distance course.

For students taking courses from multiple campuses, for some their fees will increase due to having to pay the mandatory student fees at each of the campuses from which they take courses, while for others, their fees will decrease since they will no longer be assessed campus-based fees for courses that were not consistently identified in Banner as distance (via the instructional mode).

EP 6.208 can be found at <http://www.hawaii.edu/policy/?action=viewPolicy&policySection=ep&policyChapter=6&policyNumber=208>

Policy Draft: see attachment

Recommendations (campus-wide) for AY 2017-18:

- Hire a DL Coordinator
- Develop a more effective mechanism for soliciting DL student course evaluations
- Review and update the Online Learning Readiness Check for students
- Review and update the Quality Online Course Design certificate

- Encourage academic units to develop criteria and assessment of their DL as needed
- Encourage academic units to review the UH Hilo DL Policy (once it has passed through FC and the VCAA)
- Adapt the term *Distance Education* instead of Distance Learning

Attachments:

- DL Responses
- DL Survey Data
- DL Students for 2016
- DL Policy Draft