

Distance Learning Task Force Meeting
4/14/05
Meeting Minutes

Present: Abbott, A., Francois, R., Gulitz, B., Perrin, K., Liller, K., Mlynarek, S., Rolfe, J., Sanchez-Anguiano, A., and Srinivasan, S.

Absent: Mortimer, J

The meeting started at 12:45 pm in the Executive conference room and adjourned at 2:30 pm. The following is a summary of the meeting/discussion.

Item # 1: Discussion on allowing international students to participate via the online program.

- ✓ Sandhya Srinivasan gave a brief history of where the College had been with regards to the participation of international students. Dr. Liller mentioned that it was time for a change in this policy and that she and the Dean would like to see international students participating in the online MPH program. The members of the task force confirmed that students based outside of the Continental US and those present within the US have to understand that they need to meet all technology requirements, are responsible for purchase of their books and need to meet all the admission criteria. International students have to understand and accept the risk of being denied admission to the US for the Public Health Practice Seminar course in addition to that help desk support hours are based on Eastern time zone. It was suggested that the Public Health Practice committee should look at alternatives for the Public Health Practice Seminar course. The alternatives should be comparable and approved by curriculum committee. Dr. Gulitz also suggested that the Public Health Practice seminar course could possibly be hosted in an off-shore location such as India or Belize where visa issues are not as restrictive as that of United States. Dr. Gulitz also mentioned that the Public Health Practice committee should look at Field Experience requirements for international students. Specific guidelines for international students should be posted on the Field Experience website. It was agreed upon that all international students would now have to take the TOEFL and perhaps the TSE as part of their admission requirements. Dr. Gulitz suggested that students sign a contract of rights and responsibilities so they understand the expectations. She suggested that this contract should be included in the College catalog and that all students in all departments must comply.
- ✓ Dr. Perrin and the rest of the group felt that we should immediately lift the policy for US citizens who are presently stationed on an international military base. It was suggested that for those issues such as Issuance of I-20, application processes, verification of credentials and recommendation letters, health insurance requirements etc, we would need to meet with International Student and Scholar Services office and iron out the details. Once these details were known, the policy would be lifted. It was discussed that a new policy would be placed in the College Catalog about all online students meeting technology requirements and a specific policy for international students participating in

the online program which detailed the special considerations they will need to be aware of. The group decided to aim for Fall admittance for this group of students.

- ✓ Based on a recent case with a student, Dr. Francois was concerned in removing the present policy from the website without informing the General Counsel's office. He mentioned that he would like to pass on the change in policy to this office and request a review and recommendation. The group felt that this was unnecessary. The College did not consult with General Counsel on any of the Academic Policies and that should still be true for this scenario as well. Dr. Mlynarek suggested that we may want to run the new catalog policies by General Counsel's office for comments only. Dr. Abbott did not agree with asking General Council for their opinion. The committee agreed that Dr. Liller will send an email to the attorney involved with the student case to thank her for her work for the College and as an FYI let her know that we are pursuing removing the policy that states international students cannot participate in online courses or programs.

Item # 2: Comprehensive Exam: Requirement to register for 2 credits during current semester and conflict with DL schedule.

- ✓ It was suggested by the task force members that since this is an academic issue, specific to the public health practice DL students, it should be reviewed by the Public Health Practice committee. It was suggested Dr. Francois place this on the next meeting agenda.

Item # 3: State Employee Tuition Waiver Policy and other schools in Florida accepting state employee tuition waivers

- ✓ Sandhya Srinivasan reviewed what the other public health programs in Florida are doing with regards to State Employee Tuition Waiver. As newer programs crop up, we could lose a potential market if we continue to deny these waivers. Dr. Liller suggested that the future may be looking at number of degrees granted rather than FTE generated and therefore allowing this group may be worthwhile. Dr. Gulitz felt that if we started to accept these waivers, we should talk about a substantial technology fee that all students would be responsible for. Dr. Liller mentioned that the Dean is interested to add this technology fee as well. Dr. Mlynarek asked if we could limit enrollment of state employees. Sandhya stated that the way registration for state employees is listed; there is no way to cap the number of such waivers. Drs. Liller and Gulitz suggested that online certificate program courses, undergraduate online courses and weekend MPH courses will not take waivers.
- ✓ Dr. Liller questioned the philosophy of accepting these students when in fact they may not bring any funds attached to FTE to the College and in turn increase work load for faculty and staff. Dr. Gulitz suggested that a change in the current policy may affect all departments and all courses, it is best to present this issue to Ex-Com and seek their advice. Dr. Liller suggested that a one-page document be created with the pros and cons of accepting the waivers for online courses and submitting that to Ex-Com for recommendation.
- ✓ Sandhya suggested that we may want to think about opening a State Employee section for every online course and capping the section to a manageable number. This would allow

only X number of students to register with the waiver. Dr. Gulitz said this would be a recommendation of the task force to Ex-Com for review but that it was entirely possible.

Item # 4: Academic Common Market – Should we participate and allow out of state students to register with in-state tuition rates?

- ✓ Dr. Liller said that we should pursue being a part of the Academic Common Market for the on line MPH in PHP. Each state will decide if a student can study with us using in-state tuition.
- ✓ Sandhya would talk to Marie Boyette in Educational Outreach to make the change on the Academic Common Market website.

Item # 5: Elluminate Update: COPH uses for online, hybrid courses, distance learning student advising, TA advising etc.

- ✓ Sandhya went over the details of new synchronous software that USF had a site license on, Elluminate Live! A handout was distributed that explained the main level features and uses of this software. The DL program would visit each department faculty meeting and present an introduction of this program and encourage usage within the College. Sandhya mentioned that apart from being used for content delivery in online or hybrid courses, the software could also be used for helpdesk support, research collaboration, online student advising and virtual meetings. This was for the task force's information only.

Next Steps

- ✓ **Technology Fee:** The task force members supported the idea of a technology fee. Sandhya explained that a review of current fees by other colleges had been submitted to the Dean's office. Dr. Gulitz said that the DL budget is part of the discussions and that we will push working with the Dean's office on this issue so that the fee would be added for Fall courses.
- ✓ **Future Initiatives:** Dr. Gulitz mentioned that in a conversation with Dean Petersen, the Dean would like for the task force to continue its work. It was suggested that we add one graduate and two current students of the program as part of the task force. In addition to the current tasks, Dr. Gulitz mentioned that the Dean encourages the task force to look at a policy that explains minimum requirements that all online COPH courses should meet if they are offered by the College. Technical Support for online courses is also an issue that needs to be addressed. She also suggested that a timeline has to be set up for course development but this is dependent on the goals of each department regarding online courses.
- ✓ The group agreed to meet once before the end of May. Meeting dates will be announced via email.