

## VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

#### Proposal for a Pilot of Online Fee-based Courses in the Time Schedule

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

#### CURRENT SITUATION AT THE UW

- Nearly 70 online UW undergraduate credit courses with approximately 2,000 enrollments per year.
- Current students: 60% matriculated and 40% nonmatriculated.
- Offered on a fee-basis with students paying full fees (\$229/credit) in addition to their normal state tuition/fees load.
- 38% of courses taught by regular UW faculty.
- Recent elimination of the “C” prefix and the “DL” suffix by Faculty Senate make these courses indistinguishable on the UW transcript.
- Most courses moved or moving from asynchronous, anytime/anywhere to quarter-based, group-start classes.

#### NATIONAL SITUATION

- More matriculated undergraduate students taking an online course with their onsite courses.
- In fall 2007, 3.9 million undergraduates took an online course, which represents a 12.9% increase in one year and constitutes 22% of all college-level enrollments.
- Example: In fiscal year 2007, University of Massachusetts Online attracted 26,627 enrollments, an annual increase of 25% in enrollments.

#### PROBLEMS WITH CURRENT UW SYSTEM

- Current system poses a sometimes prohibitive additional cost to students (\$1,145 for a 5-credit class in addition to their regular tuition/fees).
- UW must be able to ensure that the tuition of current undergraduates remains in the state-funded program for the base budget and not be diverted to a fee-based environment.
- No infrastructure support exists for a faculty member to easily develop online classes for matriculated students.

#### PROPOSAL: OFFER ONLINE COURSES AS PART OF TUITION LOAD WITH ADDED FEE

- Matriculated students enroll in online classes through the UW time schedule as part of their normal tuition load.
- Faculty would be identified and selected by the academic units.
- Students pay a special online learning fee (approximately \$350 per course) to pay costs. This additional fee would be set at a rate to allow all costs to be covered.

## Proposal for a Pilot of Online Fee-based Courses in the Time Schedule (continued)

- The fee would fund instructional, UWEO administrative (program management, distance learning design and operational), UW overhead and development/revision costs.
- Faculty could teach these courses for additional compensation (one-month's salary for a class of 40 students) or as part of their load through the current college/school buy-out policy. The academic unit could also suggest adjunct faculty who could teach these classes.
- Financial risks would be assumed by UW Educational Outreach.
- Net revenues would be returned to the academic units offering the classes.
- Number of students needed to break-even in a class: 40 on average.
- Each course would be evaluated by the Office of Educational Assessment.
- As with all other UWEO-administered classes, the academic units would evaluate the educational experience and ensure quality. In the pilot project, UWEO would also undertake a special survey to gauge the usefulness and effectiveness of this experiment from the student and faculty perspectives.

### BENEFITS

- Matriculated students would pay significantly less for an online class than under the current system.
- The online classes would have more visibility in the UW time schedule.
- Online courses would partially decrease the pressing need for classroom space.
- Student FTEs and all student tuition would remain with the state-funded program.
- The academic units would not undertake any financial risk.
- A support infrastructure would be available to faculty who wanted to offer completely online classes to matriculated undergraduates.
- The UW would offer online classes to undergraduate matriculated students easily and in a cost-effective manner.

### IMPACT ON STUDENTS

- Matriculated students would pay significantly less (\$350 vs. \$1,145) for an online undergraduate course.
- Students would have access to online classes, which they have demanded in the past.
- Students could use all financial aid options for these courses, except the part of Husky Promise, which does not fund any fees.
- The online classes would be offered in addition to onsite sections of the same class. No student would be forced to enroll in an online course.

IMPACT ON FACULTY

- The proposal would provide faculty with resources to develop and deliver courses in an online environment.
- Faculty and departments/colleges/schools would have the sole decision to offer an online course or not.
- Faculty could teach these courses as part of load or for additional compensation upon approval of their chair/dean.
- As with all UW Educational Outreach classes, the instructors must be approved by the appropriate academic units.

A PILOT PROGRAM

We would test this concept through a pilot project in Spring 2009. With the approval of the appropriate faculty, chairs and deans, we intend to offer seven online classes in the time schedule as a proof of concept.

The courses and faculty include:

- COM 202 Introduction to Communication II – Lisa Coutu (Senior Lecturer) & Gerry Philipsen (Professor)
- COM 340 History of Mass Communication – Linda Lawson (Ph.D., Patient Service Coordinator, adjunct)
- COM 389 Race, Gender, Sexuality in Media – Margaret Spratt (Ph.D., Research Coordinator, adjunct)
- ENGL 310 Bible as Literature – John Griffith (Associate Professor)
- ENGL 477 Children's Literature – John Griffith (Associate Professor)
- ESRM 100 Basic Environmental Science – Rob Harrison (Professor)
- GEOG 102 World Regions – James Peet (Ph.D., adjunct)

If successful pedagogically and financially, we would offer other classes in subsequent quarters.

## Proposal for a Pilot of Online Fee-based Courses in the Time Schedule (continued)

### STEPS

- Student Groups
  - Have spoken with ASUW President Tyler Dockins and VP Sam Al-Khoury. They assembled a focus group of students who suggested that we should proceed with the proposal.
- Faculty Councils
  - The proposal has the support of the Faculty Council on Educational Outreach. The proposal has been discussed twice by the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting, which has approved this pilot and asked for a follow-up discussion if the experiment would be expanded.
- Discussion with Appropriate Departments
  - The departments have suggested the above-mentioned classes in the proposal.
- Board of Deans
  - We have discussed this issue with the Board of Deans in 2007-2008, and they have approved the proposal.
- Regents
  - The Board of Regents needs to approve the fee for the online course experiment.