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Institutional Context and Commitment

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Commitment to Distance Learning

Tradition, Transition, and Transformation, the University's 2009–2014 strategic plan, provides the foundation for all distance and electronic learning policies, procedures, and activities. Delivery of high quality electronic courses contributes to achievement of an expressed University core value – “the creation and dissemination of knowledge that elevates the stature of our community of scholars and contributes to the betterment of our world.” Distance and Electronic Learning is aligned with strategic imperative 3 – “Facilitating quality teaching and learning” and cited in Objective 3B – “To enhance the classroom experience” through offering “distance learning to select markets and assure high quality delivery” and creating “increased opportunities for active learning and community engagement.” The pervasive language used throughout the University’s strategic plan clearly expresses the University’s commitment to this mode of instructional delivery.

The University Vision

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette will become a premier provider of electronically delivered courses and degree programs based on the University’s core values, its strategic imperatives, and the guiding principles of anytime – anywhere, student-focused, and learning-centered education. The result of leveraging technology to its best capabilities will enhance the reputation of the University, increase intellectually stimulating opportunities for students, and improve retention and graduation rates.

Electronically delivered courses and degree programs will be accessible by students through a personal learning environment with integrated and relevant support services. This environment will facilitate meaningful, consistent engagement with highly-trained faculty in a dynamic community of learners with activities leading to mastery of course and program learning outcomes while maintaining academic integrity. By adopting nationally established best practices, the University’s colleges and departments will employ the appropriate learning technologies to offer a variety of delivery alternatives. These varied formats will address differing student learning styles, needs, and preferences, thereby attracting and serving more contemporary learners.

The University will provide access to electronic learning technologies and training on new pedagogies. Integration of these new instructional tools and techniques by faculty and staff will improve the overall quality of teaching and learning and enhance student engagement and success at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Note: The University Council adopted the vision in the spring 2010 semester.

Goals of the Office of Distance Learning

- Create college courses and programs through alternate delivery methods in order to offer educational opportunities to students unable to accommodate a traditional class schedule.
- Ensure the technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the academic programs.
- Expand educational opportunities in a financially responsible manner through synchronous and asynchronous electronic learning.
- Provide technical training to university faculty in the use of e-learning instructional techniques and in the use of associated technologies.
- Facilitate student success in distance learning courses and programs by providing and promoting an

Facilitate student success in distance learning courses and programs by providing and promoting an environment of equal opportunity.

Commitment to Academic Quality and Rigor in Electronic Environments

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette places great emphasis on the consistency, continuity, and integrity of the learning environment. All electronic academic courses at the University are considered equivalent to traditional courses, are taught by regular faculty as well as approved adjunct faculty, and adhere to all the same standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses. Equivalency means the "totality of learning experiences for each learner should cover the same area, even if individual experiences might be quite different" (Simonson, 2007). Regardless of the delivery format, LEARNING is the primary aim with achievement of stated course and program learning outcomes as the primary assessment measure.



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