A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
WITH TECHNOLOGY

TEACHING, LEARNING, AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Howard University

Revised February 22, 2005

(excerpt)

Distance Education

27. By August 15, 2006, using satellite campuses for evening or weekend courses, faculty will develop at least three hybrid degree programs that become revenue generators by June 30, 2008.

In recent years the most successful providers of educational opportunities for evening and weekend students have been the private, for-profit operations, such as the University of Phoenix, Kaplan, Strayer, and DeVry. While each offers programs in purely distance-learning formats, their largest enrollments are in hybrid programs that combine face-to-face classes with delivery of some course content via the Web. To facilitate this combination, these highly successful operations have established multiple "campuses" throughout their regional and/or national markets. As envisioned in SFAI, the University can establish a Metropolitan College that makes courses available to this evening/weekend market in the Washington, DC region by utilizing its satellite facilities (e.g., Silver Spring, Van Ness, and Beltsville) as well as its main campus. Beyond this, serious consideration should be given to opening a satellite facility in Northern Virginia because Northern Virginia has proven to be a highly lucrative location for the for-profit operations.

To implement this plan, the TLT Committee should work with Howard University Continuing Education (HUCE) to identify at least three deans and chairpersons interested in offering hybrid degree programs. Hybrid programs should be scheduled to serve the special needs/preferences of non-traditional students, i.e., older students interested in taking evening and weekend classes on a part-time basis. HUCE should provide online registration services for these programs. In addition, HUCE should help faculty members convert some of their course materials into online formats.
28. By August 1, 2007, each department will set benchmarks for offering distance-learning courses that meet accreditation standards.

Careful study of the rapid evolution of the most successful for-profit educational providers shows that most began by offering non-credit courses, but subsequently offered courses toward accredited degrees as quickly as possible. It makes sense for the University to capitalize on its initial base of daytime for-credit courses by encouraging each department to establish benchmarks for developing courses for non-traditional students who wish to pursue their education via distance-learning or hybrid formats. This objective can be achieved through collaboration:

a. The TLT Committee will work with chairpersons and deans to identify whatever standards, if any, have been specified by the appropriate accreditation bodies for distance-learning courses.

b. Chairpersons and deans, in consultation with the faculty, should identify an initial group of courses to be offered in purely distance-learning formats, after assessing the potential demand.

c. If these courses are to be offered to traditional students (i.e., full-time students enrolled in degree programs), then CETLA should assist chairpersons and deans in formulating achievable benchmarks for delivering these courses. On the other hand, if these courses are to be offered to non-traditional students (i.e., part-time students taking classes on evenings and weekends), then HUCE should help chairpersons and deans formulate benchmarks that will meet these students’ special needs and preferences.

29. By August 1, 2008, the Provost will set University benchmarks for offering a distance-learning program.

Howard’s undergraduate programs usually require students to take a substantial number of courses outside their major departments. Therefore, initially these students will not be able to complete all graduation requirements online. However, once more required courses are offered in distance-learning formats, the University will be better prepared to launch purely distance-learning programs. As departmental standards for distance learning and/or hybrid courses evolve, the Provost will be able to mandate acceptable benchmarks for developing accredited distance-learning programs.

Regardless of whether these courses and programs are hybrid or wholly online, because of the time and difficulty involved in creating effective, high quality distance-learning courses, deans and chairpersons must assign administrative and technical assistants to support the development of such courses and programs.
Although CETLA will provide training for faculty who plan to teach distance-learning courses, deans and chairs still need to relieve these faculty members from some responsibilities to allow them to dedicate sufficient time and effort to make their distance-learning projects work. Faculty who are tasked to spearhead such endeavors should be given supplemental compensation as directors of programs or other financial and staff support.

Finally, the *Howard University Distance Education Policy* should be reviewed periodically by those involved in distance learning and updated by the TLT to reflect their experience.