The goal of distance education is to provide Alaskans access to quality learning opportunities. Building on the “Distance Education Desired End Results - Actions to Achieve Results” submitted to SAC on March 4, the sentiments of the Distance Education Core committee are that increasing program accessibility via technology assisted instruction and system-wide collaboration is achieved by focusing on the following foundations for future growth:

- Faculty Preparation and Support
- Student Preparation and Support
- UA Distance Education Gateway and Banner

Implementing the following proposed short-term action steps systematic enhances and builds upon successful MAU collaboration that assists in guiding future intermediate and long-term actions.

**Faculty Preparation and Support**

- build upon the cumulative knowledge of DE programs by hosting at each MAU an inter-MAU DE instructional team consisting of lead instructional designers and experienced faculty that will;
  - design and implementing a quasi “train-the-trainer / peer development” model that is customized by the local campus to address a dominate delivery mode of instruction and experience level of participants (introduction through advanced)
  - identify innovative practices faculty are currently using and develop ways to spread information about what they are doing and enlist them to train/prepare/develop skills of other instructors;
- task and support the inter-MAU DE instruction team to design and implementing follow-up (after-care) instructor support and best practice clinics for each MAU;
- task each MAU DE instructional team to offer repeat sessions at the MAU, encouraging the development and access of program offerings.

**Students Preparation and Support**

- inventory and catalog the resources that are currently available for DE students across the MAU’s and link this site map to the DE Gateway,
- conduct a gap analysis of the inventory of resources and fill the identified needs,
- promote awareness of the resource available to program advisors who are primarily in contact with students,

**UA Distance Education Gateway and Banner**

- task the DE Core committee with reviewing and updating the recommendations of the September 2007 DE Reporting Definition Workgroup (Banner recommendations) and suggesting implementable actions step, (appendix A)
- revitalize the “UA Distance Education Gateway” with reliable and valid data and at a minimum linked to institution registration documentation. The web designers and
code developer will expand search results to include additional details on each course listed. Incorporate the inclusion of convenient quick links, course fees, textbook titles and access to course syllabi (if/where available).

- provide documentation for registrars that outlines how to get courses listed in the Distance Course Search website. This documentation will also include information such as Campus and Section codes and what they mean, where to add additional information about course, and how to correct information that isn’t displayed properly. Part of this work will involve Banner training for the Website Coordinator to better understand the Banner system from the front end perspective.

- inventory resources across the MAU's in the areas of distance education and establish a "UA Distance Education resources site map", for students, instructors, registrar, etc., - link the resource site map to the UA Distance Education Gateway,

- capture and measure failed course search queries to better understand what users are looking for while using the Course Search features. Mechanisms for user feedback will also be placed in selected areas of the site to capture additional feedback (includes implementation of a “Suggest a Course” mechanism)

- establish a matrix of measurable DE statistics similar to what would be expected in a research methodology.

General Recommendations:

- continue advancing toward a unified general course management system with UA Statewide funding the software license of Blackboard; with the caveat that,

- the desired features of an ideal course management system should be further identified.

Prepared and submitted by DE Core Committee to Statewide Academic Council on Wednesday, May 6, 2009

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