

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014

I. Executive Summary

The purpose of this annual report is to give a brief overview of what the Distance Learning Committee achieved in the 2013-2014 year.

II. The Committee's Charge (from the Shared Governance Document)

1. To serve as a general advisory committee for the University's distance learning program.
2. To aid the coordination of distance learning programs by gathering information on such programs across the campus and providing this information to program heads and administrators.
3. To develop recommendations for the improvement of distance learning programs

III. The Committee met on the following dates:

September 25, 2013
November 20, 2013
February 17, 2014

IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charge?

Service – The DLAC serviced the university by providing the university with several recommendations. 1) Learning Management System – CANVAS 2) TEACH Act 3) Investigated the DL policy on Administering Exams-Verification of Student Identity 4) Policy/Statement revision relative to SACS Standard 4.8

Aid – The DLAC aided the university by providing the university with several ways to stay abreast of new DL trends and tools such as: 1) DLAC Annual Spring Conference 2) Lunch and Learn sessions and 3) Special DL topics through virtual conferences

Develop – The DLAC developed a couple of recommendations to the university that were approved. 1) Learning Management System Report – CANVAS and 2) TEACH Act Report

An investigation of the DL policy on Administering Exams-Verification of Student Identity resulted in to a concern about third party providers and how they play a role with identifying the student.

V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

1. New Learning Management System – CANVAS
2. TEACH Act

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish

A. In the coming year?

- 1) DLAC Annual Spring Conference, Lunch & Learn sessions, Special Topic Virtual Conferences
- 2) Implement a new learning management software (CANVAS)
- 3) Create a TEACH Act work group and develop recommendations to the university.
- 4) Review UNA's current harassment policy and make recommendations to Dr. Kimberly Greenway, Director of Student Conduct & Student Affairs Assessment, for additional verbiage to be added to the policy that covers online students

B. In future years?

- 1) Continue to stay abreast of the new trends and tools that are being used in distance learning and use the DLA Conference to provide this information to the campus.
- 2) Continue to promote distance learning consistency to the faculty as to how they set up their CANVAS webpage for the student.
- 3) Continue to find better ways to identify and verify a student's ID when administering online exams in regards to third party providers.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

I had a limited view of the committee; however, I did 'think' that there was a conflict with not having any Educational Technology Service staff as members on the committee. The ETS staff were my "go to" for information when I was chairing the committee. I am not sure if having the ETS staff on the committee is a conflict of interest but if it is not, then I recommend they be allowed to be a member.

A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses?

I am not sure. The conflict of interest in my above statement will need to be investigated, other than that, I say make the ETS staff part of the committee.

VIII. Comments.

Above, I mentioned being consistent with how the faculty person should set up their Canvas web page. I am speaking from a student's point of view – Students do not need to spend a large amount of time trying to figure out how to navigate a faculty persons Canvas webpage. The ETS staff have created templates that would help eliminate the confusion and would make resources such as the 'library link' easy to find because it will be in the same place every time the student views each one of his/her faculty persons Canvas webpage. This would eliminate frustration for the student and I personally believe, help with student retention.