

**Report
of the
Howard University
Distance Education Task Force**

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May 18, 2000

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I. Introduction

Charge to the Task Force

The Howard University Distance Education Task Force was charged with examining issues surrounding distance education and with developing a proposed policy for the University. The Task Force was created in part because of the recognized need of the university to engage in distance education to further the strategic plan goal of continuing to improve Howard University's position of leadership in America and the global community.

Scope of the Task Force's Work

This Task Force Report includes a number of recommendations, identifies some areas in need of further development and consideration, and notes some of the gaps which were identified as needing attention, but which the time constraints for the Task Force did not permit to be fully addressed.

In addition, the Task Force recommends that this report and the proposed policy submitted with it be widely circulated for comment and suggestions from the various university units, both those involved currently in distance education and those not.

The Task Force met almost weekly from March 7, 2000 through May 17, 2000, reviewed hundreds of pages of documents relating to distance education, reviewed policies of other

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schools and of divisions of Howard University, and contacted people at other educational institutions for information concerning distance education issues.

Components

The Task Force is submitting two documents: a proposed set of policies and this report which supports the policies.

Overall Structure of This Report

This report is divided into several sections. The introduction includes some general principles and contextual information. Later sections consider issues relating to course-related matters, faculty, technical and human resources support, and administrative matters.

Types of Information in the Report

The information in this Task Force Report is generally of three types: (1) contextual information; (2) policy statements or recommendations; and (3) explanatory comments.

The first type of information, contextual information, is general in nature. The contextual information introduces an issue or cluster of issues and articulates certain overarching principles.

The second type of information is either a more specific statement of policy or a recommendation for action (or no action). The policy statements are formal policies which the task force recommends that the University adopt. Some of the policies are general; some quite specific. These have been gathered into another document submitted with this report, the Howard University Distance Education Policy. The recommendations generally recommend a course of action, but are not matters that the Task Force considered should be included in the formal statement of the university distance education policy. Some of them recommend further study; some recommend that no action to be taken with respect to the specific issue addressed; and some recommend particular actions to be taken by the appropriate person or persons.

The third type of information consists of comments on a proposed policy or recommendation. The comments explain the most salient reasons for the proposed policy or recommendation and provide a some limited cross references to related policies and provide some limited references to sources for further reading on the subject.

General Principles and Concerns

This report should be read in light of the general principles and concerns noted in this section. Furthermore, no section or recommendation or policy should be read in isolation; the policies are intended to work together to advance distance education at the University.

Working Definition of Distance Education

For the purposes of this Task Force Report, distance education is defined as a formal educational process in which the students and teacher are not at the same location. The method

of instruction would typically center around computer and network technology, but may well include audio, video, and hard-copy correspondence. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Distance education can include courses for which college credit is offered as well as certificate courses for which students receive a certificate for completion of the course or set of courses, but the courses do not count toward a degree or toward college credit. For the most part, this Task Force Report addresses the former sort of course (college credit toward a degree) unless otherwise noted.

Broad Involvement in Developing the Policy

The Distance Education Task Force commends the Provost for his inclusive approach to addressing the concerns of the Howard University community with respect to setting distance education policy. The Task Force strongly recommends that this inclusive, broad-based approach be continued.

To this end, the Task Force further recommends that the proposed policy be widely distributed to the Howard University distance education community. The Howard University distance education community includes those individuals, schools and colleges, and other university units involved in or potentially involved in or affected by distance education policy. It is anticipated that the first draft of the Howard University Distance Education Policy will need to be revised after comments are received after wider distribution of it.

Rapidity of Change

The Task Force strongly emphasizes that any University policy relating to distance education should be reexamined annually (or at least biannually) because of the rapidity of change in the field. Some unanswerable questions relating to intellectual property rights are likely to be resolved as time goes on and the technology for distance education is certain to change rapidly in the coming years. Furthermore, as faculty and students and potential students become more familiar with distance education, issues of scale and the possible need for additional policies and the likely obsolescence of others are likely to arise. Proposed policy changes should be circulated for comments from the University community. Upon finalization by the reviewing committee, the new policies should be distributed to everyone at the University in a timely manner.

Technical Support Requirements

One of the major concerns of the Task Force is that there be provision of sufficient physical, financial, and technical resources including proper hardware, software, personnel, and training to implement effective distance education programs. To borrow a phrase from politics, there should be no unfunded mandates. That is, the university and the university units must take into account the resources necessary to accomplish what is being undertaken. The Task Force recognizes that some of the distance education initiatives will be undertaken simply as part of the ordinary course of business of the university and the various university units. However, the start-up as well as maintenance costs associated with conducting effective distance education

cannot be ignored or merely shifted downstream. Training for faculty and staff, technological support, and technological infrastructure all need to be factored into any policy to be adopted and any actions to be taken.

Educational Integrity

The educational integrity of distance education is important, particularly for degree-granting programs. By its very nature distance education is not the same as on-site education. But the same is true of each of the disciplines in the university - engineering is not taught the same as law and both use different methodology than history and the school of business. The university and university units ought not shy away from distance education merely because it is new or different from what has been done before, but they must act in such a way as to insure the integrity of the distance education programs within the scope of applicable accreditation mandates.

The Task Force believes the underlying principle of equivalence should play a prominent role in developing and assessing distance education courses and programs.

Decentralization

The Task Force recommends that for most aspects of distance education the university adopt a decentralized approach and leave most of the decisions and support decentralized. The Task Force recognizes that there are certain infrastructure matters for which centralization and uniformity make sense, that certain functions can be handled best through a central office (e.g., obtaining intellectual property clearances), and that some centralization can have positive effects in sharing and disseminating information among university units. Nonetheless, the Task Force strongly recommends that the University be guided by the principle of decentralization of responsibility for distance education.

II. Course Issues

This section of the Task Force Report covers matters pertaining to any distance education course or program offered by Howard University. These policies do not pertain to a student taking a course from a provider of distance education outside of Howard University and seeking to transfer credit for it to their program of study.

Distance Education Course and Program Design and Evaluation

- 1. Policy: Responsibility for the development of new distance education courses and programs and for the review of existing courses and programs rests with each academic unit's committee which is responsible for overseeing the academic unit's curriculum.**

Comment: Each academic unit should retain responsibility for maintaining the academic integrity of its distance education programs. Each unit should set its own internal policies (1) on distance education generally; (2) on how distance education will be incorporated into degree programs; and (3) on academic course requirements. When distance education is undertaken, each academic unit must assume responsibility for the quality of the courses or programs offered.

- 2. Policy: When selecting courses to offer, procedures for evaluation of the organization, content, and delivery of distance education courses may be different from, but must be equivalent to, those used by Howard University for evaluation of course organization, content and delivery in on-campus courses. This must be determined by each academic unit offering distance education courses or programs.**
- 3. Policy: Each academic unit which offers distance education courses must use the same or equivalent course evaluation procedures to assess the courses as are used for on-campus courses. At a minimum, students in distance education courses should be requested to complete a student assessment sheet for each of the courses taken. The assessment sheet must be developed and disseminated by each academic unit.**
- 4. Policy: Distance education courses and programs must be subject to regular ongoing assessment by the academic unit and by the University. Periodically, the offering college or school must evaluate the effectiveness of the offerings and reconsider whether the course or program is appropriately taught by distance education instruction.**
- 5. Policy: In the event that Howard University seeks to contract with a provider from the outside to supply an entire distance education program, the provider must be a college or university that is accredited by the applicable regional accrediting agency (Middle States) and, if appropriate, by the nationally recognized accrediting agency pertinent to the field of study offered by academic units offering distance education courses or programs.**

Student Performance Evaluation and Student-Faculty Interaction

- 6. Policy: Each distance education course must include procedures for monitoring and assessing student performance. These procedures must be at least equivalent to those used in comparable on-campus courses. Criteria for student success in distance education courses must be at least as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in on-campus courses.**
- 7. Policy: Each distance education course must provide timely feedback to students regarding their progress and performance by methods equivalent to those used in on-campus courses.**
- 8. Policy: Each distance education course must provide sufficient opportunities for interaction between students and the faculty member responsible for the course in ways which would analogous to or substitutes for office hours and class-contact hours.**
- 9. Policy: Whenever the enrollment in a distance education course substantially exceeds the number of students who can be effectively taught in the distance education context, or exceeds the number of students enrolled in a similar class on campus, Howard University will either assign additional faculty or assign appropriate faculty/graduate assistants to provide adequate student access to an instructor.**

Distance Education-Related Contracts for Courses and for Course-Related Services

10. Policy: Howard University may from time to time choose to provide (or at times may need to provide) a distance education course or program to or for another university or college, or may receive a distance education course or program from another university or college. In either of these instances, the Task Force recommends that an agreement should be worked out between the two institutions which addresses, at a minimum, the following matters:

- a. *Accreditation.* If applicable, evidence of the appropriate accreditation(s) should be provided.
- b. *Administrative Structure of the Program.* Delineate which administrative officers are responsible for the course or program and which entity will grant credit.
- c. *Course or Program.* Describe the purpose, intended clientele, and student admission and retention requirements.

In the case of a course, the agreement should further provide a description of the course, the number of credits to be earned, beginning and ending dates, instructional methodology and assessment methods.

In the case of a program, in addition to providing the information specified above for each course in the program, the agreement should describe the complete program fully, including course distribution requirements, options, and the total number of credits required for completion. In addition, the agreement should indicate the anticipated schedule of course offerings and, if applicable, provide

evidence that the program satisfies state or national licensing or credentialing requirements.

- d. *Student Costs, Services and Rights.* Describe complete costs to students, refund policies, complaint procedures, and all student services that will be available and which entity will provide them.
- e. *Faculty.* Describe the faculty who will be teaching the course or courses, including field of preparation rank, highest degree earned, full-time/part-time status. Agreements between entities must address faculty compensation, workload and intellectual property issues.
- f. *Instructional Resources.* Describe instructional equipment, instructional support equipment, instructional support personnel, and library facilities, and delineate which entity will supply these.
- g. *Facilities.* Describe classroom spaces and other physical resources and which entity will supply these.
- h. *Fiscal Responsibilities.* Outline the total costs to the entity receiving the course/program and when and how reimbursement will be made.

III. Faculty Issues

This report divides faculty issues into four sections: (1) who may teach distance education courses; (2) faculty rights and responsibilities; (3) workload/compensation issues; and 4) intellectual property issues. For the most part current university policies toward faculty will not need to be modified to accommodate distance education in the short run. Nonetheless, there are some special aspects of distance education and faculty engaging in it which ought to be addressed and there are likely to be some additional issues arising in the future such as the possibility of a Howard University faculty member having a remote office and providing courses to Howard University resident students on campus. These latter sorts of issues are not fully addressed in either this report or in the policy statement. To the extent they are addressed, the Task Force has taken a generally conservative approach to them.

Who May Teach Distance Education Courses

11. Policy: Distance education courses for credit toward a degree must be taught only by regularly-appointed Howard University faculty member, including full-time, clinical, visiting, and adjunct faculty members who are hired under the policies and procedures used by the Howard University's schools/colleges for the appointment of adjunct/clinical/visiting faculty responsible for on-campus instruction.

Comment: Faculty members teaching distance education courses must be as qualified as those teaching on campus and must have the same status as other faculty. Indeed, there should be no distinction among faculty based upon whether they teach on campus or via distance education. The Task Force recognizes that issues are likely to arise in the future regarding appointment of faculty to the Howard University faculty where the faculty member lives elsewhere and may conduct nearly all aspects of his or her relationship with the University via remote communication technologies. The Task Force considered this issue briefly, but did not elect to attempt to develop any policy or policies to address it here.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

12. Policy: Issues of teaching methodology are to be determined by the schools and colleges and by the individual faculty members preparing and teaching distance education courses.

13. Policy: The general rules regarding faculty conduct, office hours, and faculty responsibilities in general apply in the distance education setting.

14. Policy: Procedures for evaluating faculty responsible for distance education courses may be different from, but must be equivalent to, those used by Howard University for evaluating faculty teaching on-campus courses.

15. Policy: Whenever the enrollment in a distance education course substantially exceeds the number of students who can be effectively taught in the distance education

context, or exceeds the number of students enrolled in a similar class on campus, Howard University will either assign additional faculty or assign appropriate faculty/graduate assistants to provide adequate student access to an instructor.

This policy is the same as Policy No. 9 above where it was stated in the context of student-faculty relations in distance education courses.

16. Policy: Faculty teaching distance education courses are responsible to develop adequate facility with the distance education technologies and techniques to be effective teachers.

Comment: The greatest barriers associated with the development of distance education programs concern the management of faculty-specific issues regarding conditions of appointment, incentives, rewards, release time for course development, and opportunities for faculty development

The lack of Instructional support structures and faculty development programs may contribute to faculty resistance to distance education, especially those that involve new Only 54.6% of American colleges have some form of resource center designed to support the use of technology in instruction (Green, 1996b) As a result, attempts to incorporate innovative methods in instruction are accompanied with frustrations from attempts to use new technologies or methodologies that prove to be unreliable or difficult to master.

Workload/Compensation

The 2000 Howard University Workload Policy addresses the general issue of faculty workload for the various schools and departments. The Workload Policy sets general guidelines for the university and for each school and department, but leaves the details to each school and department. Indeed, the Workload Policy mentions distance education as a special sort of teaching to be taken into account in determining workload. The recommendations and policies below continue that approach.

1. Recommendation: The task force recommends that the University continue to leave work load policy implementation issues specifically related to credit for teaching, to service, and to scholarship in the area of distance education to each school or college rather than creating a university-wide policy on such matters.

Comment: Faculty can engage in service by reviewing online materials for others or for online consulting or online professional work. Similarly the creation and publication and distribution of online course materials could, if general scholarship guidelines are otherwise met, be considered as part of the scholarship of the particular professor. The Task Force did not address these issues in detail, but considered noting them to be appropriate so that they would not be deemed inappropriate by omission.

2. Recommendation: The task force recommends that the University Workload Policy continue to permit schools and departments to adjust the workload of faculty engaged in

distance education as appropriate to recognize that some distance education requires significantly more time for materials creation and for teaching than do regular classes. Since this will not be universally true, discretion should be left at the college or school or department level, as the case may warrant.

17. Policy: Schools and departments are required to report annually to the Provost the written policy of the school with respect to release time and other workload adjustments for creating and teaching distance education courses. If the school or department does not have such a policy, the lack of one should also be reported.

Comment: The aims of this reporting requirement are to develop information concerning the experiences of the various university units to share with other units and, if appropriate, at a future date possibly to develop some university-wide policies.

Ownership and Use Issues/Intellectual Property Concerns

Many possible intellectual issues arise relating to distance education including:

1. Ownership of the educational materials;
2. Use of copyrighted materials prepared by others; and
3. Rights to use, transmit, display, etc., works of others.

Though not all issues can be resolved at this time, the Task Force has attempted to develop policies which are fair and which will function as useful guidelines but which are also designed to permit flexibility and to permit adaptation to ever-changing circumstances as technology and institutions change.

18. Policy: The faculty member who authored the work owns the work.

Comment: This should be the policy of the university for all educational materials regardless of the funding arrangements for creation of the work. This would be a modest change from current university copyright policy under which the university asserts ownership of works authored by faculty for which the university provides special payment. The general rule should be that the faculty member owns the work unless the university specifically contracts with the faculty member in a writing which contains explicit provisions regarding the ownership rights and use rights of the faculty member and the university. It is the consensus of the Task Force that this sort of ownership structure will best serve the interests of the university by having clear responsibility for the quality of the work and for encouraging faculty to develop works for distance education. However, as will be apparent from subsequent sections, this ownership right is not absolute; the university has certain rights with respect to the works.

19. Policy: With respect to works which the faculty member owns, the University has the following rights:

- a. **To assign or otherwise permit other faculty to use the work for teaching the course, e.g., if the unit wants to offer multiple sections of a course and wants or needs more than a single person to teach it;**

b. To use the work for up to two years without an additional license arrangement with the faculty member:

- 1) **If that faculty member is no longer teaching the course;**
- 2) **If an additional or other faculty member is assigned to teach the course during that two year period from the time the course is first created and taught; or**
- 3) **If the owner of the work is no longer employed by the university.**

Comment: The University is granted a two-year license during which it can continue to use the work as developed by the faculty member who owns the work. This period of time should allow the university sufficient time to create another work to replace the one owned by the author or to negotiate a license arrangement for use of the work by the university after the two year period. The license arrangement could be for the creation of a derivative work (e.g., a substantially changed version of the course based on the work of the original owner or the work or a more modestly changed version, e.g., updated research or modified lectures), or for continued teaching of the course from the work in a substantially unchanged fashion. The two-year limit is imposed because the work could well become stale after a short period of time and because of the possible negative impact on the author of it if it is used after a period of time, particularly if the information in the field has changed.

20. Policy: The faculty member has an unlimited right to use the work at another school or for other purposes if the faculty member ceases employment with the university, provided the specific contract for the creation of the work does not provide otherwise.

Comment: The faculty member should be able to use the works he or she creates. Limiting a faculty member's use of such works would unduly hamper faculty mobility and ability to pursue a career in teaching. The value to the university of any particular course would not give such a competitive advantage to the university as to warrant intrusion on this right. The university may consider requiring a notice concerning where and how the work was created, e.g., "This work [is derived from a work which] was created in 2000 at Howard University under a grant from"

3. Recommendation: As issues arise regarding ownership of works for courses, the general analogy to be used to determine the respective rights of the University and the faculty member for distance education materials online should be to print textbooks.
4. Recommendation: Particular arrangements can be made with individual faculty members which could alter this arrangement.

Comment: For example, the University could hire a faculty member for additional compensation to create a distance education course for the University and allocate the rights differently than the standard approach recommended here.

5. Recommendation: The rights should be spelled out, not left to the current unsettled law.
6. Recommendation: The University should obtain or have prepared an information booklet on copyright issues related to distance education and conduct in-house seminars for faculty engaging in or contemplating engaging in distance education regarding copyright issues.
7. Recommendation: The University should create an office at the university level charged with obtaining all necessary intellectual property clearances for distance education works as well as for traditional coursepacks.

IV. Technical and Institutional Support Issues

Unlike most current modes of instruction at the University, the success of distance education programs is critically dependant upon the reliability of the technologies employed for distance education. The reliability is determined largely by the speed with which services are provided to correct technical problems that are inherently associated with communication over the Internet.

This section addresses certain institutional matters. Most of the statements are in the form of recommendations rather than in the form of more concrete policy statements.

Vision Statement and Integration of Distance Education

8. Recommendation: The University should develop a clear vision for the role of distance education in the University's mission and incorporate that vision into the strategic planning of the University particularly with an eye to advancing the University's position leadership for America and the global community.
9. Recommendation: In developing and implementing distance education policies, the University should treat distance education as a system of multiple interacting factors, not as a stand-alone aspect of the University's activities and mission.
10. Recommendation: The University should strive to integrate distance education activities as a part of normal university operations.

University Support

21. Policy: The University will develop and maintain institutional support of distance education including the online eGuide (as noted in Recommendation 17 and Appendix B.).

22. Policy: The University will provide comprehensive faculty and student support services for teaching and learning to schools providing distance education programs.

Comment: This policy may be implemented in part through school-level personnel, but may also through university-sponsored or university level coordinated training. The university should involve faculty in decisions regarding the implementation and installation of technology suitable for distance education. The university should facilitate dissemination of lessons learned through the distance education experiences of various schools and colleges. And the University should provide support, but should mandate the use of particular technologies to the exclusion of others at this early stage of distance education development.

23. Policy: The University will provide student academic support services in a manner equivalent to those provided to resident students.

24. Policy: The University will not require a university unit to implement distance education policies without insuring that there is sufficient financial and technical support for the affected unit to implement the policies effectively.

Comment: This recommendation is an application of the idea of no unfunded mandates. The Task Force recognizes that within certain schools and colleges technical support can be accomplished through reallocation of human resources, but in other schools or colleges additional financial support and additional positions may need to be authorized by the university.

11. Recommendation: Each school or college should appoint or hire at least one Instructional Technologist and at least an Instructional Technician. These two people will work closely with faculty or content specialists in the design, implementation and delivery of distance education programs as well as with respect to other technology-related matters.

Comment: Appendix C includes a brief, tentative job description for each of these two positions.

12. Recommendation: Each school or college should develop and implement a technology administrative support structure which would include administration of distance education support structure technologies and staff.

13. Recommendation: To achieve continuous improvement in the quality of delivery and management of distance education programs, the Provost should appoint a **Distance Education Advisory Council**. The Distance Education Advisory Council shall comprise representatives from each of the twelve schools and colleges in the University and from such other units as the Provost deems appropriate (e.g., university technology support staff). The Council's functions are:

- a. To receive and review comments and suggestions concerning facilities and resources which affect distance education at the University;
- b. To make recommendations to the Provost concerning facilities and resources which affect distance education at the University including the creation of an online eGuide (see Recommendation 17 below and Appendix B.);
- c. To solicit information from the various schools and colleges on their respective distance education programs;
- d. To assist Schools and Colleges to develop evaluation criteria and to prepare instruments (surveys, etc) to evaluate their respective distance education programs; and
- e. To review results of evaluation instruments and make recommendations to the Provost for an effective university distance education program.

14. Recommendation: The University should establish university-wide computer literacy standards for distance education students. It should also develop methods to determine the proficiency of distance education students and should develop materials and methods of providing training in the skills needed by students to participate effectively in distance education programs.

Comment: This recommendation recognizes that the proficiency of students wanting to use distance education is likely to vary widely.

Effective teaching via distance education technologies requires proficiency on the parts of both the faculty involved and the students.

15. Recommendation: The University should establish an ongoing program for instruction for faculty and staff in distance education technologies and techniques either through the Leadership Academy or Center for Teaching Excellence or some similar program.

Library Access Policies

There are a number of special problems related to provision of library services in distance education. In this section the Task Force stated a number of policies relating to library access. Nonetheless, this portion of the report is not complete; it is anticipated that much more work on these issues would need to be done by the library in conjunction with schools and colleges as the schools and colleges engaged in distance education learn more about what their needs are and as the library services become more automated and electronically focused over time. Some of the problems which exist for which solutions can certainly be found include: (1) contracts with electronic services vendors which base their pricing on the number of full time equivalent students (how does one count distance education students for these contracts?); (2) use of online-services by resident Howard students; (3) access to services by non-Howard students and pricing of the access; (4) issues concerning security and the attitudes of the libraries and the university toward security; (5) developing consortia/relationships with other university libraries; (6) development of "EBooks" services; (7) use of scanning/streaming/other online technologies for providing materials; and (8) a host of issues relating to fees and means of providing information to students.

25. Policy: Schools shall collaborate with University administrators and library managers to ensure that appropriate library services are available to all Howard University affiliated distance education students and faculty.

26. Policy: A special and separate allocation shall be earmarked for distance education library services inasmuch as equitable distance education library services involve personalized information assistance and document delivery above and beyond that provided through traditional on-campus library service. The components with fiscal and legal implications include:

- a. reciprocal or contractual borrowing arrangements with libraries and other interlibrary loan services;**
- b. prompt document delivery via a courier system, Federal Express, UPS, and/or electronic transmission;**
- c. access to course reserve materials in accordance with copyright law.**

Comment: The cost of mailing books from the circulating collection may be borne by Howard University at-large, the School in which the borrower is enrolled, or the borrower himself/herself. The borrower is always responsible for the cost of returning books to a Howard University library.

27. Policy: The University will pursue arrangements with other libraries to allow access by distance education students to those libraries, perhaps on a reciprocal basis or pay-per-use basis or other basis as may be appropriate.

16. Recommendation: The University should pursue arrangements with digital libraries for providing “EBooks” for distance education students to the extent practicable for the work to be undertaken by the distance education students.

28. Policy: Howard University is responsible for assuring that its distance education library programs meet or exceed national and regional accreditation standards and professional association standards and guidelines.

Comment: The phrase "distance education library services" refers to those library services in support of college, university, or other post-secondary courses and programs offered away from a main campus, or in the absence of a traditional campus, and regardless of where credit is given. These courses may be taught in traditional or non-traditional formats or media, may or may not require physical facilities, and may or may not involve live interaction of teachers and students. The phrase is inclusive of courses in all post-secondary programs designated as: extension, extended, off-campus, extended campus, distance, distributed, open, flexible, franchising, virtual, synchronous, or asynchronous. This policy is derived from the Association of College and Research Libraries Guidelines for Distance education Library Services. www.ala.org/acrl/guides/distlrng.html

On-line eGuide

17. Recommendation: The University should establish an on-line eGuide Help Page to provide pertinent information for students and faculty participating in various forms of distance education.

Comment: A suggested list of items to include in the eGuide is included in Appendix B.

Appendices

Appendix A. Affected University Academic Policies and Procedures

In this appendix various Howard University policies are identified and the assessment of the Task Force as to whether the policy needs to be changed for distance education is stated.

Code of Student Academic Conduct (esp. Cheating and Plagiarism)

No changes are needed to the existing policy. However, additional specific instruction may be warranted regarding application of the Code of Academic Conduct distance education. The need for special care not to cut and paste without full attribution is an ongoing problem for resident students and is likely to be exaggerated in the online context with greater use of online materials.

Equal Opportunity

Current Howard University Policy

Howard University provides quality education for any student, with an emphasis on providing educational opportunities for those students who may not otherwise have an opportunity to acquire an education of the type provided at Howard University. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex marital status, religion, or handicap in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other University-administered programs and employment.

Recommendation: No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Admission

No changes are needed to the existing policy. The University should develop an entirely on-line application process for all levels of study: undergraduate, graduate, professional, and continuing education.

Grading Requirements

No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Residency Requirements

Changes need to be made to the residency requirements. The changes need to be developed by the school/college in which the students are enrolled.

Comment: All students at the University must be accountable for core academic residency. Academic units should be encouraged to devise alternative residency requirements that are commensurate with on-line distance education course offerings that work on the model of short, intensive retreats (several weekends during the academic year, a week or more during the summer, etc.) rather than the traditional number of academic semesters spent on site at Howard University. The Task Force does not make any particular recommendation as to what specific changes need to be made. Those decisions would require further study, particularly at the academic unit level.

Time Limitation to Obtain Degree

No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Degree Requirements

No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Financial Aid

No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Incomplete Grades

No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Accreditation

Howard University is fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Higher Education, and by more than 20 additional professional bodies germane to the 50-plus degree programs offered in the University's 16 schools and colleges.

Changes

Any changes to the existing policies must be based on the accrediting standards for the particular school or college by the appropriate accrediting agency for that school or college.

Academic Advising

No changes to the existing policy are needed other those related to on-line residency, e.g., mode of contact with the advisor. The academic units should establish a system of assigning advisors and notifying students and faculty of the assignment. A process should be devised that will allow students the flexibility to receive academic and other advising (financial aid, grievance, etc.) on-line. Such a process should be developed by the academic units.

Attendance

Attendance must be required and must be determined by the academic units in which the students are enrolled. Attendance also must be adequately evaluated at the completion of a course by the instructor. Just what attendance means in the distance education context is not clear and could mean a variety of things and could vary by the nature of the course. Developing detailed policies regarding attendance is best left at the level of the academic unit rather than at the university level. A general university requirement of attendance would be sufficient for a university level policy.

Probation, Suspension, and Readmission

No changes to the existing policy other those related to on-line residency.

Intra-University Transfer

No changes to the existing policy other those related to on-line residency.

Reporting of Grades

No changes to the existing policy other those related to on-line residency.

Transfer of Academic Credit

No changes to the existing policy other those related to on-line residency.

Disabled Students and Students with Special Needs

No changes to the existing policy other those related to on-line residency.

Withdrawal from a Course

No changes are needed to the existing policy. The University should, however, develop a process that will enable students to make changes in their academic programs on-line as opposed to in person or via the voice communications.

Dropping Courses

No changes are needed to the existing policy.

Appendix B. Suggestions for University eGuide Online Content

1. For distance education students

- a. FAQ
- b. Phone access to expertise
- c. Access to library resources
- d. University admissions (requirements and procedures)
- e. Degree or CEU seeking
- f. Support for learners
- g. Hard and software requirements
- h. Facilities
- i. Computer and Information literacy requirements and enrichment programs
- j. Course Registration
- k. Financial aid
- l. Online resources (e.g. electronic text)

2. For distance education faculty

- a. FAQ
- b. HU Bookstore
- c. Phone access to expertise
- d. Access to library resources
- e. Support for instructors
- f. Course design considerations
- g. Exemplary practice models
- h. Media and methods
- i. Hard and software requirements
- j. Facilities (video conferencing, photocopying, mail)
- k. Centralized purchasing

Appendix C. Basic Competencies for Instructional Technologists and Technicians

1. Instructional Technologist

- a. Course development
- b. Preparation of media and materials
- c. Distance education tools
- d. Exemplary models with immediate faculty
- e. Training

2. Instructional Technician

- a. Requirements (Hard and software)
- b. Trouble shooting
- c. Infrastructure specifications
- d. Bandwidth access issues