

## Office of the Chancellor

320 Signers' Hall, P.O. Box 757500, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-5000

### MEMORANDUM

Date: October 14, 2014

Date Revised: October 28, 2014

To: Paul Layer, Dean CNSM  
Martha Mason, Director OIT  
Todd Sherman, Dean CLA  
Teisha Simmons, Director IAC  
Nickole Conley, CEM Chief Financial Officer  
Phillip Patterson, Associate Professor, Special Education

From: Brian Rogers, Chancellor

Re: eLearning Special Program Review Revised to include Phillip Patterson

#### Background

UAF has a long history of providing distance delivery options for many of its academic courses. The College of Community and Rural Development really led the way in developing options to address the needs of students who wanted alternatives to attending person-on-campus classes. UAF now offers synchronous audio and video conference courses, asynchronous fully online courses, and hybrids of these and traditional in-person classes.

In recent years, we have seen, both at UAF and nationally, an explosion of student interest in taking asynchronous fully online courses. In 2011, to better respond to the demand for more online courses from all of UAF's schools, we created UAF eLearning as a centralized resource in the Chancellor's Office for development and delivery of all asynchronous online courses and created an eLearning Advisory Council. Courses that are not fully asynchronous or fully online are generally managed from the respective schools or colleges offering those courses.

UAF eLearning operates primarily as a support unit. Prior to 2010, eLearning retained tuition and paid for instruction in the courses they offered. Between 2010 and 2012, eLearning agreements with individual schools and colleges resulted in a variety of tuition splits. In 2013, in consultation with the eLearning Advisory Council, I modified the eLearning funding model

All instructional costs, including faculty/adjunct salary for course development and course instruction, are borne by academic departments.

In spring 2014, the FY 2014 Planning and Budget Committee was tasked with identifying spending reduction and revenue enhancement steps that could be implemented to address UAF's budget gap. In its final report, the PBC noted that "Distance delivered programs represent a significant growth opportunity for UAF. If degrees are made fully available online, enrollment and tuition revenue is projected to increase. A different model might promote or incentivize schools to move full degree programs online. In the current model schools may not get direct support to move more programs fully

- Another important element of the eLearning review should be to consider how this service delivery modality assists/hinders UAF's effectiveness in meeting larger objectives:
- Do students enrolled in eLearning classes appear to have different characteristics than students enrolled only in traditional classroom based courses in other forms of distance delivery? Is UAF reaching certain segments of students more effectively with the expansion of eLearning courses?
- Are outcomes for eLearning students different in any way than for traditional students or for students enrolled in other forms of distance delivery (e.g. do retention patterns look different for these students, do they graduate at slower/faster rates, etc.)
- Do programs that offer entire degree programs online seem to be serving more students in total, rather than the same students via a new modality?
- How do eLearning and the schools/colleges prioritize which courses are developed into online courses?

### Recommendations

- Please identify ways in which eLearning may be most likely to increase enrollments and revenue for UAF.
- Based on the assessment of the distribution of costs/revenues, please make recommendations about a funding model for eLearning that is most likely to
  - o meet UAF's enrollment and revenue goals
  - o provide stable funding for eLearning operations
  - o enable transfer of tuition revenues to central budget to help pay for centrally delivered services.
- The eLearning special review should offer recommendations on other issues as you deem appropriate.

### Review Committee

I am appointing the following individuals to serve as members of the eLearning Special Program Review Committee:

- Nickole Conley, CEM Chief Financial Officer
- Paul Layer, Dean CNS, Chair
- Martha Mason, Director OIT
- Phillip Patterson, Associate Professor, Special Education
- Todd Sherman, Dean CLA
- Teisha Simmons, Director IAC

### Process

The goal of this special review is to make recommendations regarding changes that could be implemented with the new fiscal year. Because the eLearning unit and the departments may need lead time to plan for implementation of changes, final recommendations are due from the Special Review Committee to me and Cabinet by January 9th

The Office of Management and Budget and Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research will assist the Committee in identifying sources of data that might be useful in its work. Sylvan Robb (907-477-6104, [ssrobb@alaska.edu](mailto:ssrobb@alaska.edu)) will serve as a OMB/PAIP point of contact for the eLearning review committee. Kari Burrell, UAF's Executive Officer, (907-477-4489, [kari.burrell@alaska.edu](mailto:kari.burrell@alaska.edu)) is also available to the Committee as a resource in thinking about goals and approach.

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the eLearning Special Program Review Committee. I.i1.2(3.8(h2Kre f BTv)n)-3(c