E-Learning Support Fund

Policy for Expenditures of Departmental Revenue Share

The University Council authorized the creation of a fund to support the growth of distance learning in the fall 2010 semester. In order to grow the fund, an additional cost for hybrid and online courses was initiated in the summer 2011 semester as follows:

- For undergraduate hybrid and online courses, a minimum of $30 per credit hour.
- For graduate hybrid and online courses, a minimum of $50 per credit hour.

Revenue Share

The University has endorsed a revenue share model in order to stimulate innovation in electronic course design, online degree program development, and distance support services offerings across the University. Appropriate investment of the e-learning support fund into areas that directly impact student access and student performance is critical to increase and sustain high quality hybrid and online courses and program delivery.

Principles of Revenue Share

- Gross revenue of the course fees collected should be shared with academic departments and supporting units that offer courses, programs, and key services.

- A fixed financial mechanism is the most reliable tool to sustain gains in electronic course and degree program offerings.

- Revenue share localizes decision making by allowing academic departments and support units to strategically invest in the growth and improvement of electronic courses and support services that directly impact student achievement of learning outcomes.

    (Principles were adapted from AAUP 2009 Study: Online Learning as a Strategic Asset)

Academic Departments that provide hybrid and online course offerings are eligible to receive 25% of the gross fee revenue generated from each student enrollment in a course offered by the department. Department funds are placed into separate *E-Learning Support* accounts to fund e-learning activities aligned with offering hybrid and online course sections.

Administration, Oversight, and Transparency

The Office of Distance Learning in collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will administer the revenue share plan. Both the Director of Distance Learning and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs will approve all E-Learning Support Fund account expenditures. The Distance Learning Leadership Council will have fiscal oversight of the plan and will receive annual reviews of revenues and expenditures. They will recommend

changes to the revenue share procedures and communicate the benefits and outcomes of revenue share investments to all stakeholders.

Approval Process

All E-Learning Support account expenditure requests, whether entered electronically or routed in paper form, should be transmitted from the faculty member to the department head then on to the dean for approval. The request then come to the Distance Learning office for approval.

A routing cover sheet is required to be attached either electronically or with a paper request and must be filled out with a detailed justification linking the expenditure to the support of distance learning.

- Electronic examples: Purchase Requisition, Travel Request, Contract, Special Meals forms
- Paper examples: Purchases you plan to make on your LaCarte card, Personnel Action Form, Interdepartmental Charge form, etc.

Levels of review are intended to achieve the administration, oversight, and transparency plan approved by the University Council when the additional course costs and revenue share plan were adopted. The Office of Distance Learning maintains these records for auditing purposes.

Potential Use for Fee

The following list of items is by no means comprehensive but does provide some acceptable expenditure of funds from departmental E-Learning Support Accounts. In all cases expenditures should be reasonable and necessary to achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the department and the University.

> *Acquiring Talent.* In order to sustain and grow the University's e-learning enterprise, academic departments need access to funds to attract well-prepared adjunct and/or full-time faculty. These faculty members may fill roles that enable existing faculty to increase the department's hybrid and online course offerings or directly fill a role as adjunct and/or full-time faculty member with a significant hybrid or online teaching load. Therefore, distance learning funds may be used for activities to recruit faculty in support of expanding a department's capacity to offer hybrid and/or online courses when all other sources for this type of activity have been exhausted.

> For hybrid and online courses in which an expert or panel of experts would enhance student acquisition of learning outcomes, a stipend may be paid for the experts participation, if services cannot be secured for no charge.

> *Adjunct and Overload Pay.* Funds may be used to pay an adjunct faculty member to teach a traditional course section so that a full-time faculty member may teach hybrid or online course section(s). Funds can be used to pay a full-time faculty member an

overload to teach an online course only when load has been sufficiently met. These funds are not meant to provide extra pay for faculty teaching hybrid and online courses, which would establish unnecessary competition with face-to-face courses.

Course Development. The fee may fund course development or significant improvements to existing models at the rates and under the provisions as established in the Distance Learning policies. Providing a partial course design fee is an acceptable expenditure as well. See the Office of Distance Learning website for more information on stipend rates for course development and significant improvement categories.

Electronic Library Resources. Funds may be used to acquire electronic resources that support student learning outcomes of departmental programs. These resources may include, but are not limited to, subscriptions to electronic journals, databases and streaming media platforms that provide faculty with the necessary resources to best instruct hybrid and online courses. Requests for electronic library resources should be submitted to the Dean's Office at Dupré Library for initial funding consideration. If a partial or no funding recommendation is determined, then departmental distance learning funds are an acceptable source for offsetting or fully funding the cost of electronic library resources.

Facilities and Supplies. Funds may be used to upgrade facilities and workspaces that support distance learning activities. Some examples of these expenditures may include: purchasing supplies, equipment and/or furniture and/or making modest renovations for SMART classrooms where hybrid courses are taught, computer labs where tests for online/hybrid classes are proctored, and/or classrooms where lecture capture or lecture streaming software is needed.

Open Educational Resources. Funds may be used for the selection, assessment, integration, and upkeep of open educational resources in online or hybrid courses. A course must fully utilize OER at no cost the student in order to qualify for the stipend. Open Educational Resources (OER) are free and openly licensed educational materials that can be used for teaching, learning, research, and other purposes. Examples of OER include digital textbooks, journal articles, video lectures, notes, lesson plans, worksheets, activities, homework assignments, courses, websites, and whole courses. The Edith Garland Dupre Library Distance Learning Librarian has experience with the sourcing and selecting of OER resources and is available for faculty assistance if contacted. See the Office of Distance Learning website for more information on OER stipend rates.

Program Marketing and Recruiting. Funds may be used to engage in marketing hybrid/online courses and programs in coordination with the Office of Distance Learning. Types of activities may include, but are not limited to, the purchase of digital and print advertisements, service providers to manage campaigns, graphic design services, and/or recruiting at professional events. All marketing activities must be

approved by the Communications and Marketing department to ensure compliance with brand and messaging policies and procedures. Office of Distance Learning staff are available for consultations on digital marketing for enrollment.

Student Research. Funds may be used for supporting online and hybrid student research projects. Types of research activities may include, but are not limited to, online labs, scholarly databases, journal indexes, meta-analysis data sets, or survey tools. Discipline-specific projects are encouraged to promote student experiential learning.

Technology Acquisition. Funds may be used to provide computers (as replacements for existing machines and for new hires) to faculty actively engaged in the design and teaching of hybrid and online courses. Other software and external hardware may be purchased as well.

Travel. Funds may be used for travel for a faculty member who is attending a conference dedicated to distance learning and/or a discipline-specific conference with a distance learning component or track. Discipline specific conferences may be considered if a faculty member can demonstrate that new, significant information regarding subject matter will be shared and can be used in improving hybrid and online course content. Distance learning funds may be used to supplement remaining travel costs when other sources have been depleted.