

# Distance Education Committee

## Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2023

3:45 via Zoom

Approved

Members present:

- [Carol Hernandez](#), Co-Chair, Assistant Dean Center for Teaching & Learning
- [Cynthia Eaton](#), Co-Chair, Faculty Association Representative
- [Lauren Tacke-Cushing](#), Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs\*
- [Liz Spagnola](#), Co-Chair, Campus Dean Representative
- [Andrew Stone](#), Ammerman Senate Representative
- [Vera Hu](#), Ammerman Senate Representative
- [Trudy Christ](#), Eastern Congress Representative
- [Kellie McCartin](#), Eastern Congress Representative
- [Josh Wolfson](#), Grant Assembly Representative
- [Scott Votke](#), Grant Assembly Representative
- [Robin Hill](#), CIP Representative/MID Representative
- [Jeanne Durso](#), Continuing Ed Representative

\* nonvoting member

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### Call to order

- Meeting called to order at 3:46 pm by **C. Hernandez**.

### Introductions

- **C. Hernandez:** New assistant dean for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Coming from Stony Brook University and before that Long Island University; before that I was a journalist so that's my academic field. My academic research is on educational development at the individual level, course level, and organizational level. I also do research from a critical race perspective. One goal for the CTL is to be more present on all three campuses, so we will focus on that as we move forward.
- **K. McCartin:** Assistant professor of marine biology at Eastern, so representing Congress. My area of focus has to do with fish and I've done a great deal of research projects with students about fish in local waters. In addition I am teaching an asynchronous biology course for the first time.

- **A. Stone:** Representing Ammerman Senate, I am associate professor of cybersecurity. I am in my sixth year of teaching now and before that I was in IT for six years as well. Looking forward to learning more about teaching and learning and distance education.

### Approval of the minutes

- **C. Eaton:** I neglected to send you the May 4 minutes so I will send both that May 4 and these September 14 minutes for your review in time for the October 5 meeting. I apologize.

### Campus governance reports

#### Ammerman Senate • V. Hu and A. Stone:

- **V. Hu:** No Senate report at this time. Still early in semester.

#### Eastern Congress • T. Christ and K. McCartin:

- **T. Christ:** I have a follow up on the YouTube blocking issue that we discussed in May. A faculty member in history needs assistance dealing with how YouTube now flags and blocks videos he has long used in his history classes. Difficult to discuss things like racism, death, other very real parts of American history when this happens (e.g., when teaching Civil Rights Movement), and often videos make history more *present* for students. I had a meeting regarding Kaltura, which is used at Nassau CC, with the faculty member, D. Kahn, and C. Eaton.

The faculty member was able to find an alternative solution for now, other than Kaltura which is very expensive. Need to have a solution for faculty.

**R. Hill:** If faculty's own video/own content and relatively small file size, can upload directly into Brightspace but for larger file sizes, better to post on YouTube and link if they won't get flagged or blocked. **T. Christ:** Is there a size limit in Brightspace? **R. Hill:** I think it's 2.95 GB overall but there's some suggestion the institution might be charged by size of each course so better to find alternative if large files due to video, images, PPTs.

#### Grant Assembly • J. Wolfson and S. Votke:

- **J. Wolfson:** There are still faculty very upset about how the BIO195 special topics course was handled. It was put online, filled with students, and *then* DEC was asked to vote on it. Being special topics does not exclude it from DEC procedure. Not proper process. Also, faculty upset because special topics can be put through by chairs without a departmental vote so plan to tighten up that process. **C. Eaton:** Those proposed changes would go

through governance but it is useful to keep DEC in the loop so we know.

## **Center for Teaching & Learning introduction and mission**

- **L. Tacke-Cushing:** The college re-envisioned what we were calling Center for Innovative Pedagogy (CIP) and it is now called Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The mission is to focus on teaching across all modalities, not just distance education, because we know that Brightspace is being embedded through on-campus web-enhanced courses more and more fully and we have six different course modalities now:
  1. Fully on campus / traditional
  2. Blended (some portion on campus, some asynchronous online or RTOL)
  3. Sufflex (special classrooms; some students on campus, some RTOL)
  4. Real-time online (synchronous DE using Zoom for all meetings)
  5. Combined online (synchronous DE using Zoom for some but not all meetings, rest of coursework done asynchronously)
  6. Fully online / fully asynchronous

The purpose of CTL, then, is to support faculty in all of their teaching, assessment, pedagogical strategies with an eye toward improving access and retention.

- **C. Hernandez:** The three things I would like to highlight about CTL to build upon what had been done as CIP are these:
  1. Working more closely with faculty across the college in all modalities
  2. Broaden out from just DE modalities so we address effective teaching in traditional, on-campus courses now
  3. Emphasize inclusiveness and equity in all of our teaching
- **L. Tacke-Cushing:** We just did the strategic plan and one of the six main strategic goals includes more focus on research-based pedagogical practices in all areas, so we need CTL to be about good pedagogies in all modalities too. Students are changing, college is changing since the pandemic, modalities are changing, students want more flexibility and options. So this is all aligned with the official college strategic plan.

The eLearning Academy still is there, of course, and CTL will still address DE of course, but you will see a bit of a shift in the workshops being offered, including workshops on artificial intelligence, assessment, and other issues that cross modalities. C. Hernandez will be spending time on each of the campuses to get faculty input as well.

- **C. Eaton:** We have two changes in our current contract proposal that impact distance education as well so be aware of those.
- **J. Wolfson:** Are we still offering separate real-time online training? **R. Hill:** Yes.

- **C. Eaton:** Another thing we in the FA have been working on is trying to get the college to revise the NORA form so that adjunct faculty can indicate which modalities they can (based on certifications) and would like to teach. Right now they only see Ammerman, Grant, Eastern, and Online. This causes a lot of confusion because adjuncts will choose “online” if they want to and are certified to teach real-time online, but they are not certified to teach fully asynchronous. There’s not a clear way for adjuncts to indicate and for chairs to always know – because adjunct seniority is collegewide – in which modalities adjuncts are interested from semester to semester. Our adjuncts think it would make their lives easier to have all the modalities in the NORA form.

## Subcommittee updates

### Student readiness assessment

- **L. Spagnola:** For the new reps and as a reminder, President Bonahue had approached L. Tacke-Cushing about our student readiness tool. It was clear that it needs updating as it mostly asks about technology. Our subcommittee summarized eight categories for assessment and researched tools at other institutions, finding one at Penn State most useful as a model. We made a decision not to ask demographic info of our students. We will develop a draft for DEC to consider.

**L. Tacke-Cushing:** There’s an update to the location of this tool. Ed asked why it was in the Explore Academics section of the website since students at the point of onboarding will likely be in the Apply/Enroll section of the website. So we are tracking if this would be more visible for students. Usage numbers for current tool are fairly low.

**L. Spagnola:** We will meet again about implementation. **J. Durso:** Can we test on a few students, check validity of questions to make sure they are clear on what we are asking? **J. Wolfson:** Because we’re an HSI, would we make a bilingual version? **L. Spagnola:** We are very focused on the language we will use. October 5 is our next meeting.

### Academic integrity and DEC

- **C. Eaton:** In the spring this subcommittee had agreed to focus on the following areas. We have not had a chance to reconvene yet, but will do so later this semester.
  1. Educational materials aimed at students and helping them develop more appropriate expectations for their college classes
  2. Resources, hints, tips & tricks aimed at helping faculty
  3. Policy proposals that could go through DEC, the academic integrity committee, or both

4. Proctoring solutions developed by faculty and/or by the college

### **Pedagogical Advice Manual**

- **C. Eaton:** Also have not met yet but late in the spring semester, I presented the Pedagogical Advice Manual website to the English department at Ammerman and received useful feedback and did the same at our last Congress meeting.

### **Modalities definitions chart**

- **C. Eaton:** We had multiple meetings, including Liz Spagnola, Anna Flack, Cheryl Eldridge, and me. I can share the latest draft in DEC website for everyone. [*Uses screenshare to review what it looks like with committee.*] Feedback?

**C. Hernandez:** A best practice is to make it available sooner and make it simpler and more student focused. **C. Eaton:** We originally were arguing for only five modalities [*uses screenshare to show previous chart with modalities on left-right continuum from fully on campus to fully online*]. Originally, we wanted only these five:

1. Fully on campus
2. Blended (some on campus, some online – whether Zoom or fully asynch)
3. Sufflex
4. Real-time online (includes combined online)
5. Fully online

We felt that presenting as a continuum from “always meets on campus” on the left to “never meets on campus” on the right would help students better comprehend the distinctions. That is, we feel students understand what fully on campus classes are and students understand what fully online classes are, so then they could better SEE that we have three modalities where there’s a mix of these two “extremes.”

However, the reps from the registrar feel very strongly that we present the chart in their format because it’s focused on what Banner looks like and they want this in Banner. I think we could have both versions of the chart. Need to discuss. **C. Hernandez:** We really should be asking students these questions.

### **Old business**

- **C. Eaton:** Liz already covered the student online self-assessment project status.

### **New business**

- **C. Eaton:** Just an information piece about DE certifications for faculty: The college has a list of 476 fully DE certified faculty, 110 real-time online certified faculty, and 45 faculty

pending final certification (e.g., still need two semesters and/or observation).

- **C. Eaton:** There is a proposal for ENG012 to be offered fully online but that's a developmental course and there's a college policy against having developmental courses online. Chairs on other two chairs were notified on May 2 by email.

**L. Spagnola:** We need feedback within two weeks. K. O'Donoghue sent an email to department, and they might be sending that to us or the governance reps. **S. Votke:** Is this one of those corequisite courses like they are doing with math? **C. Eaton:** Yes.

- **C. Eaton:** In the interests of time, we can save the item about substitutes for the next meeting.
- Group expresses gratitude to outgoing reps **J. Wolfson** and **D. Prather Davis**.

## **Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:03 pm made by **S. Votke**, seconded by **J. Wolfson**. All in favor.

*submitted by Co-Chair C. Eaton*