Presenter: Eric Simkins, Distance Education Program Manager

*Notes are additional discussions that may not have been on the PowerPoint slide and questions asked during the forum*

- **Overview of Distance Education previously, currently, and for the future**
  - Everything that Eric does is on the website: [www.uwsp.edu/online](http://www.uwsp.edu/online)
    - Can be accessed via the admissions tab and academics tab
    - Wealth of resource information for students and faculty
    - Current online academic offerings, programs, courses, certificate programs
    - Faculty – please explore the website for resources
      - Eric has been working with Kristy Roth, Sean Ruppert, and Mary Mielke to put together training and resources for faculty
      - Templates (course syllabus, welcome email, video welcome message, etc.)
      - Upcoming trainings available to faculty and support staff
      - Course design tip sheets
      - Policies and reports
      - State Authorizations
        - Need to be authorized by each state in order to offer online courses to student residents in those states
        - List of authorized states for UWSP
        - Eric is working on getting authorizations in other states
      - ...and more
  - Meet-back channel available post forum presentation (chatroom)
    - Available in the next 24 hours after the presentation
    - Eric will answer questions in the chatroom

- **Distance Education History – Brief Overview**
  - 2012 - Distance Education Ad Hoc Committee formed
    - Chaired by: Chris Cirmo
    - Submitted report to provost in 2013
    - 13 recommendations for improvement or coordination of distance education at UWSP
    - Currently – Completing work on all 13 of those recommendations
  - 2013 – Moved to 20% online course offerings, prior had to limit online courses to 5% by HLC
    - HLC definition of online is 50% online, does not have to be 100% online to be considered online
  - 2015 – HLC moved UWSP to a different bracket
    - UWSP can offer online courses without any limit
  - 2015 – Eric has been working on the online website
  - 2015 – Eric, Kristi, Sean and Mary developed the online faculty trainings

- Question during this section:
  - What is HLC?
    - Higher Learning Commission – accrediting body that accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in North Central region of the United States
    - UW-Stevens Point is listed on their website
    - [https://www.hlcommission.org/component/directory/?Action=ShowBasic&Itemid=&instid=1716&lang=en](https://www.hlcommission.org/component/directory/?Action=ShowBasic&Itemid=&instid=1716&lang=en)
    - Is there a certain process to make a course approved as an online course?
• At this time, do not need to go through Common Council unless changing the catalog language, offering a new course, or a new degree. Changing modality does not need to go through Common council.

• Eric’s page on *How to put an course online* is his overview of the ideal process to try and put a course online and getting the support needed to put the course online.

• **Graph Data**
  o Graph data and reports on the website and Eric has sent it out on the Faculty Message of the Day
  o For 2016-2017, will have 7 graduate programs and 5 undergrad programs
    ▪ Collaborative programs
  o Steady increase in online and hybrid courses
  o Questions during this section:
    ▪ Why is American Studies not being offered? Is it degree offered through CE or through Political Science?
      • The degree is housed in Political Science
      • Still being offered but not as an online program anymore

• **Current Faculty Support**
  o Website has wealth of information for faculty who are interested in offering online courses
  o Trainings available to faculty and staff
    ▪ Does not have to be just instructors
    ▪ Can be anyone interested the technology to teach an online course

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  o Instructor trainings
    ▪ Self-assessment, self-paced, with feedback (based on Penn State model)
  o Technology Conference May 2016
    ▪ Agenda/Sessions
      • Microsoft 365
      • Teaching online
      • Additional sessions being finalized
  o Website lists of online course examples from across the nation that have won Blackboard exemplary course awards
    ▪ Blackboard is an LMS (learning management system)
    ▪ UWSP uses D2L for their LMS
  o Eric and group – offer individual consultations to help them set up courses, also customized consultations with departments/units,colleges, get whatever support is needed to offer hybrid or 100% online course
  o Tech:hub
    ▪ D2L administrators/experts
    ▪ Resources for online development
    ▪ Devoted to teaching instructors how to use technology tools for effective instruction
    ▪ Group training sessions and one-on-one consultations available
    ▪ [http://www.uwsp.edu/infotech/Pages/techub/default.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/infotech/Pages/techub/default.aspx)
  o CCIT (Center For Collaborative & Interactive Technologies)
    ▪ Kristi Roth is director
    ▪ Provides technologies and support for faculty in the integration of merging technologies
    ▪ Teach faculty to use technology and record lectures
    ▪ Variety of tools available for faculty reservation
• iPads, video-conferencing, Wacom Tablets, AppleTVs, Smart pens, CCIT room
  ▪ Provide individual consultations and training for online instructors

• Current Student Support
  o 2013 report shows a lack in online student support, improvement is needed
  o Website has wealth of information for students to make the most out of their online education experience including tips, tutorials, tutoring, guidelines, etc.
  o Welcome emails are highly recommended to try and connect to students before the start of the online course – include links to tutorials and resources
    ▪ Eric will be doing something similar for Summer 2016, send an email to faculty instructors with links to tutorials and resources/support
  o Questions during this section
    ▪ If Eric is sending out welcome emails, instructors need to be aware of those emails
      • Eric will be doing that this summer
    ▪ What is the strategic goal for Distance Education/online courses? Are there benchmarks for these degree programs? What are we measuring against?
      • Eric is not aware of anything that has been set by the university in regards to goals, speed of growth, target numbers, etc.
      •
    ▪ What are we doing to actively promote the online programs? Any recruitment efforts being done?
      •Currently have an online recruitment campaign which includes advertising UWSP’s online courses via social media, Pandora, etc. Campaign started about 10 months ago.
      • If we are trending towards preference of online course offerings, then the university does need to shift their recruitment efforts to promote more online programs
      • The only thing that may hinder recruitment is the state authorizations as we would need to be licensed/authorized to offer the online programs in the individual states
        o Each state has different policies, processes and fees to be authorized
    ▪ Are there any data of who the students are that are taking the course? Are they students taking the courses because those are what are left to them as freshman/sophomores?
      • Currently no data
      • There is data on how many online course credits students are taking versus on-campus/hybrid credit courses, shows a picture of who those students are in terms of if they are on-campus, off-campus, commuters, out-of-state – does not have all data to show if a student is taking the course because that is a leftover course they are taking to fulfill their degree requirement
  o Comments during this section
    ▪ Without a goal, how do we build a strategy? Little incentive for instructors without a benchmark.
      ▪ The forum is the first step as Eric has done a lot of the leg work in terms of getting processes in place, reviewing policies and laws, getting state authorizations, gathering resources for students and faculty, etc. Setting up the structure of online courses offerings has been the primary goal up until now so that thinking about a strategic plan is the next logical step. Agree that having a strategic plan is important to grow the online course programs. Goal is for recruitment but no benchmark has been set by the university.
      • There are a lot of faculty and/or units on campus that are working to actively recruit faculty and students.
      • What type of goals would the faculty like to see? X number of programs in place?
        o Questioner said yes to question. Attract a certain demographic, especially adult learners who are interested in online course offerings
    ▪ Advisor is seeing traditional on-campus freshman students taking online courses, which are what is available to them even though online is not what they want. Online courses may not be the best way for freshmans to start. What is the logic behind offering GED courses online?
Eric recommends offering some of the courses in the summer
- Get some of the students that need these online courses to take them during summer and to decrease bottleneck courses during regular semesters
- Can come out of the strategic plan in regards to what courses are being offered online and who the target students are
- If we are offering a fully 100% online degree and have a student in Nevada, we need to offer GED courses online. Cannot offer online baccalaureate degree without offering GED courses for those students.
  - Student fair that the UWSP attended, other universities promoted their online programs while UWSP did not. UWSP was passed over by many students because online programs were not available or promoted at the fair. Area of growth.

Pending Changes & Future Plans
- Wisconsin has approved legislation for the state to participate in NC-SARA
  - Membership in NC-SARA will allow the university to have state authorization in member states to offer online courses without having to go through each state’s individual authorization process which includes their individual authorization fees.
  - A majority of the states are already members of NC-SARA. UW-Stevens Point will be part of NC-SARA by Fall 2016. The state still needs to create a portal agency. Once that is done and the application has been approved, the university can offer online courses to any students in the member states.
  - A couple of the non-member states, we do have authorization in already. There are a couple of states that have more difficult authorization processes including very hefty fees and state laws that we cannot adhere to.
- Question during this section
  - How does a state know that a student from an unauthorized state is enrolled with us?
    - The state organization would have to find out that we enrolled one of their students.
    - The agencies that police that are small but as an institution, we need to make sure we are not enrolling online students from unauthorized states.
    - Internationally, there is no policy to hinder students from outside the country to take the online courses.
    - State authorizations are strictly an online authorization issue. A student can be from an unauthorized state and travel to campus daily if they wanted to take all on-campus courses.

Service Fee
- $50 per credit service fee for 100% online courses
- Seg fees are waived for online courses
- Pricing for student varies on an individual level as some students are taking on-campus courses that may have seg fees, in which they do need to pay for.
- Out-of-state tuition charged for online courses offered through other program and departments. Any online courses offered through Continuing Education, the out-of-state tuition is waived.
- UW-Stevens Point is the cheapest for online course offerings for any 4 year UW colleges
  - Each UW colleges have different online fee structures
  - Our pricing model does benefit out-of-state students and 100% online students more than traditional on-campus student. If data and trend is any evidence, online courses are not recommended for targeting on-campus students.
  - Again, pricing for students will be based individually on what they are taking overall.
    - Are they taking any on-campus courses?
    - Are they out-of-state?
    - Are they taking all online courses?

- Question during this section
  - What are the service fees being spent on?
    - Currently, there have been no dollars coming in, will start in Summer 2016
    - Future planning
      - Hire an Instructional Design Support
        - UWSP is the only 4 year university that does not have one
Eric is currently fulfilling this role for the faculty and staff

- The Instructional Design Support position essentially assist the instructor in the design and coordination of quality and engaging online course offering
  - Lesson plans, best practices, technology trainings, SLO, course assessment, student engagement, etc.
  - Extension indicates that there is a need to put 250-400 hours into developing one 3 credit online course

  - **Increase faculty support**
    - Eric is working on getting more funding to expand on faculty support
    - More workshops available for faculty
    - 4, 8, 16 week template available online in the next couple of weeks

  - **Increase student support**
    - Want to offer students workshops that can be a 1 credit course on how to be successful in online classes, helping online students reach their online class goals and to assist them with direction
    - UWSP lacks online student support

- Integrity fees
- State authorization fees
- In future, if funding available, do some market analysis

  - **Will there be stipends in creating online courses?**
    - Eric does not know if there will be stipends in developing/creating an online course. Eric does agree that it will help with the course development, help engage people, help with follow-through of the implementation of the course, etc.

- Post-presentation questions/comments/discussions
  - **What help is available from Eric?**
    - Course development, support and suggestions
    - Meet with instructors or department to discuss online courses
  - **What are the processes that will need to be taken to get the course online?**
    - Online Program Development Process available online under faculty resources
      - [http://www.uwsp.edu/online/Online%20Instructor%20Resources/Online%20Program%20and%20Course%20Development.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/online/Online%20Instructor%20Resources/Online%20Program%20and%20Course%20Development.pdf)
    - Please allow at 1 month or more per credit in terms of course development. Allow time to offer the course effectively, the more time planning, the better.
    - Eric can meet with instructors/departments/units on an individual basis to assist with going over the process