
ONLINE EDUCATION: 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

The 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education was approved by the Board of Governors at its November 2015 meeting. Two committees were formed to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan – the Implementation Committee, composed of representatives of each SUS institution, and a Steering Committee, composed of a group of provosts. In December 2015, an initial meeting with these committees was held to discuss the process of implementing the 49 tactics contained in the strategic plan. Subsequently, seven workgroups were established, each responsible for completing a number of action steps related to the tactics. These workgroups are: Quality Workgroup, Professional Development Workgroup, Affordability Workgroup, Data Workgroup, Student Services Workgroup, Infrastructure Workgroup, and Online Programs Workgroup.

The Implementation Committee and the Steering Committee have met twice since their initial meeting, in March, 2016, and June, 2016. During these meetings, progress on completing the tactics contained in the strategic plan was discussed, recommendations approved, and next steps planned. This report details the progress in addressing the tactics to date. Dates for deliverables were staggered and sequenced to ensure completion in a timely manner. Approximately one-third of the tactics have been addressed. Out of 15 tactics associated with Quality, five have been completed and significant progress has been made toward one. Out of 18 tactics associated with Access, five have been completed. Out of 16 tactics associated with Affordability, five have been completed.

The Professional Development Workgroup, Affordability Workgroup, and Data Workgroup had deliverables due June 2016. Other workgroups -- Quality Workgroup, Student Services Workgroup, Infrastructure Workgroup, and Online Programs Workgroup -- have been meeting and formulating surveys, reports, and recommendations, but their first deliverables are not due until December 2016.

Below is a summary of the progress to date in implementing the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education.

DATA COLLECTION

Many of the tactics required data that needed to be collected from SUS and Florida College institutions, such as current methods and processes used to certify the quality of online courses, support services offered to online students, online faculty development, and online student success. A survey, designed by the Data Workgroup, was sent to all SUS institutions in the spring of 2016. Twenty-three institutions (10 SUS institutions and 13 Florida Colleges) completed this survey and the results are being used by the various workgroups to complete their assigned tactics.

In addition to administering the survey, the Data Workgroup has reviewed current system-wide terms and definitions related to online education along with current data definitions for identifying fully online and primarily online degree programs and determined that no revisions need to be made. With data definitions in place, the 2015-16 online education accountability

report can be prepared and the system-wide inventory of fully online and primarily online degree programs can be created.

The Infrastructure Workgroup has designed a survey to collect data on the technology infrastructure in place at each SUS institution that will be distributed through the FLVC in fall 2016. The purpose of this survey is to assess current processes and/or technology practices at the different institutions. The data collected will help in the development of the Workgroup's final recommendation. The survey will also request SUS institutions to confirm that students, including students with disabilities, can easily access online courses.

The Student Services Workgroup has designed a scorecard to measure how student support services normally offered to campus-based students are provided to fully online students. A survey will be distributed to SUS institutions through the FLVC in the fall 2016 so that data for each SUS institution can be used to populate the scorecard.

QUALITY CERTIFICATION OF ONLINE COURSES

Having all SUS institutions use the same (or equivalent) system to assess quality of online courses will enable identification of best-in-class courses for incentives and recognitions. The recommendation made by the Quality Workgroup related to this issue was approved at the June 2016 meeting. The approach approved will use Quality Matters or a newly developed set of standards, complete with a rubric and process to support it, specific for Florida colleges and universities, to certify quality and high-quality courses. In addition, institutions with a quality certification process already in place will be able to provide a matrix of how their standards/process meet the new Florida standards. Having a standard process of identifying quality and high-quality courses will allow the Quality Workgroup to proceed to address the coding of quality and high-quality courses in the FLVC course catalog and to address the state-wide recognition of exceptional online courses.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All three tactics associated with the goal of “Expanding support for professional development” have been addressed.

The Professional Development workgroup, in collaboration with the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC), will establish an instructional designer network (community) that provides access to resources and educational content to instructional design professionals across the State of Florida. SUS and State Colleges will collaborate using a variety of materials, communities and support systems to share best practices, current research and upcoming events to support instructional designers in developing their skills and knowledge to assist faculty in incorporating new technologies. These materials will be available via listservs, discussion board, webinars, and blogs.

The FLVC, in collaboration with the Professional Development Workgroup, will develop and host a resource tab on their website titled “professional development for online leaders. This tab will be monitored by an appointed representative of the FLVC Members Council. In addition to monitoring and posting relevant professional development opportunities (i.e. conferences, workshops, research), a coordinated statewide half-day session will be held in conjunction with one of the three annual FLVC meetings. A professional development opportunity will be offered on the day preceding the standing meeting. This professional development opportunity will be

designed to coincide with one of the SUS/State College initiatives focusing on Quality, Affordability, and Access.

On March 2016, the Professional Development Workgroup gained the approval from the Council of Academic Vice Presidents to fund UCF to develop a tool kit, called Teaching Online Preparation Toolkit (TOPkit), and to offer a two-day annual workshop for institutional staff who are responsible for professional development activities for faculty who teach online courses. In addition, an Online Learning and Faculty Development Community Practice will be created and housed within TOPkit. The CAVP agreed to fund recurring costs for four years after the first year startup. The Florida Virtual Campus agreed to fund first year start-up, nonrecurring costs. The kickoff meeting for this project was held April 15, 2016. The project is on track for completion of the online toolkit by February 1, 2017 and the inaugural workshop March 22-23, 2017. The pre-launch page (topkit.org) gives visitors the opportunity to sign up for regular updates along with a bi-weekly TOPkit Digest, which provides a brief preview of some of the content that will be contained in the toolkit. To date the TOPkit Digest has over 370 registrants. A state-wide advisory board has been appointed. The next advisory board meeting on September 26, 2016, will be a final review of the TOPkit site content.

UF ONLINE

The strategic plan calls for support for the development and delivery of affordable, high quality, fully online baccalaureate degree programs by UF Online in accordance with section 1001.7065, Florida Statutes.

The Implementation Committee, with the concurrence of the Steering Committee, recommended the formation of an expert consortium in the design and deployment of STEM labs for online students in support of UF Online efforts and those across the SUS. This Virtual Labs Task Force, comprised of SUS faculty and academic affairs experts, will be charged with evaluating options for deployment systemwide in the areas of Chemistry, Biology, and Physics for undergraduates. Members for this task force are in the process of being identified.

REGULATIONS

The strategic plan called for the review of four Board of Governors regulations that could potentially impact the provision of online education. These regulations have been reviewed and proposed changes to two regulations were approved by the Steering Committee at the June 2016 meeting. The Steering Committee approved exploring through the Board's process for amending regulations the proposed revisions to Board Regulations 6.016 Summer Session Enrollment and 7.006 Limitation on Non-Resident Student Enrollment, acknowledging that the process will allow for the language to be fine-tuned before going to the Board of Governors for consideration for noticing.

The Implementation Committee recommended and the Steering Committee concurred that no changes be proposed for the two remaining Board regulations, Regulation 7.001 Tuition and Fees and Regulation 7.003 Fees, Fines and Penalties.

AFFORDABILITY

The strategic plan called for the determination and definition of the elements that should be

included in a model for determining the distance learning fee, to obtain and analyze data from institutions using this model, and to develop models to achieve cost savings and cost avoidances in the development and delivery of online education. The Affordability Workgroup has been working on these tactics since the beginning of the year. A preliminary cost model was discussed at the June 2016 joint meeting of the Steering Committee and Implementation Committee, and the Affordability Workgroup is on track to present the Cost of Online Education report to the Innovation and Online Committee at its October 18 meeting.

COLLABORATION

The strategic plan called for the creation of a statewide online education research consortium with members from Florida institutions interested in sharing and presenting research, determining research needs in online education, and identifying collaborative research projects. UF Online has taken the lead in organizing the consortium. Members from each SUS institution have been identified and the consortium has already had an introductory conference call and is planning a face-to-face meeting this fall.