E-Learning and CAS Sustainability
CAS Strategic Initiatives E-Learning Strategies Team Report

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Establish an E-Learning Office in CAS, with a Director and an Advisory Council
2. Establish an interim finance committee to develop a revenue distribution policy that includes generating cost estimates and determining baseline revenue-sharing to be paid to the E-Learning Office, with work completed by June 30, 2008, for implementation July 1, 2008
3. Select programs for online development that have substantial potential to increase majors in CAS and to generate revenue to support the program and the CAS E-Learning Office. Responsibility for designing and implementing the process would lie with the Advisory Council to the E-Learning Office.
4. Clarify existing options to compensate faculty, instructors and extension educators for online course development and instruction.
5. Develop an electronic library of content that can be used by CAS personnel.
6. Increase visibility and representation of e-learning opportunities in CAS by (a) identifying a CAS programmatic contact/representative for eXtension, (b) naming a CAS representative to the PSU E-Learning Cooperative to serve as the E-Learning advocate for CAS, and (c) including a representative from the E-Learning Office on the Instructional and Curricular Affairs Committee, ex-officio, and for ADEC representation.

E-Learning initiatives have the potential to contribute to each of the four Goals outlined in the CAS 2005 to 2008 Strategic Plan. E-learning already has contributed to Goal A-- Increase enrollment and enhance student success through, most notably, the Turfgrass program (annual enrollments of 650 students online), the MPS in CEDEV (100 enrollments online annually), and the development of single courses. This is where E-Learning has the potential to continue to make substantial contributions. Potential exists for e-Learning to contribute to Goals B, C and D. E-Learning modes can be particularly useful in translating knowledge to a broader audience, and these same methods can enable CAS to reach out to new stakeholders. Integrating the CAS missions in e-Learning initiatives contributes to the goal of managing the College as a system. The future of e- Learning and its success in helping the College to achieve its goals depends on defining the goals and priorities for e-Learning and establishing a framework for operation of the e-Learning group. This committee was asked to specifically focus on seven areas. Our recommendations are outlined in the sections that follow. We have reordered the original list to simplify the presentation.

Form and Function of the College E-Learning Group
The E-Learning group is instrumental for developing high quality and successful online educational materials and programs in CAS. The mission of the unit should be strongly

oriented toward pedagogy and the development of educational materials. To achieve this mission, we recommend the following:

- The E-Learning group should be established as the E-Learning Office with a Director who has a background in instructional design and development of educational materials.
- The E-Learning Office should report to a newly established Advisory Council composed of a representative from each academic unit and Cooperative Extension, and chaired by an Academic Dean. Policy for the unit will be set by the Advisory Council.
- We recommend the following Program selection activities be the responsibility of the Advisory Council to the E-Learning Office:
  - o identify and encourage appropriate program areas for development as online offerings,
  - o design and implement the process for program selection for new program development.
- A finance subcommittee of the Advisory Council should be established to advise the E-Learning Office and Advisory Council on revenue sharing and cost structures for the E-Learning Office.
- CAS should continue to provide a baseline of support for the unit to maintain a core of staff. Beyond that, the E-Learning Office should become self-supporting.
- The E-Learning Office, and all completely online courses developed in CAS, will meet the Penn State Quality Assurance e-Learning Design Standards.

This structure will provide a clear link from the E-Learning Office to the academic units, facilitating communication among these units. This will encourage development of new online programs and courses, will ensure that the focus of the E-Learning Office is pedagogy and instructional design quality, and that increased demand for online course design, maintenance and revision is supported by revenues to the E-Learning Office. This structure also positions the E-Learning Office, and the College, to maximize the potential for growth in e-learning and the E-Learning Office.

Funds Distribution Policy and Cost Recovery for the College E-Learning Unit
The development and offering of new online programs will need to be carried out using existing resources (faculty and staff), or new revenues will be required to cover costs in both departments and the CAS E-Learning Office. We recommend a revenue distribution policy that meets the following objectives:

- Revenue to departments should be maximized to support full implementation and management of the programs.
- A portion of revenue from courses and programs developed by the E-Learning Office is returned to the College to support the E-Learning Office. This baseline amount supports and encourages retention of high quality staff, enables the unit to purchase equipment and software, and covers course maintenance (see below). We recommend a baseline percentage tax on the revenue generated through online offerings (similar to the current MOU).
- Resources need to be available for new course/program development (many of these costs are incurred prior to courses being offered and revenue generated).

- Cost recovery for services provided by the E-Learning Office is essential. Cost estimates for all services available from E-Learning Office should be developed.
- We recommend that an interim finance committee make specific recommendations on costs structures and the revenue distribution policy for the E-Learning Office, with work completed by the end of June 2008, for implementation July 1, 2008. The interim finance committee will then be disbanded. These responsibilities will rest with the finance subcommittee of the Advisory Council once the organizational structure for the E-Learning office is finalized. Relative stability in the policy is essential for CAS, the academic units, Extension and the E-Learning Office to plan for the future.

Priority List of Markets on which to Focus

The Team did not have the time or resources to identify specific programs, rather we discussed the criteria to be used in selecting programs. The programs need to be areas of strength or new opportunity for the College that will **increase CAS enrollments and majors and become self-supporting**. Programs that require fewer courses (e.g., certificates or professional master's degrees) can be developed and launched more quickly than a full undergraduate major, and should be given priority in the early years of the E-Learning Office. We are less supportive of developing online courses to serve existing students, unless a strong case can be made for how enrollments or majors would be increased, or revenue generated.

Process for Program Selection for New Program Development

Suggested criteria for program selection are

- Programs rather than individual courses should be the primary focus of development.
- The market for the program is potentially large, increasing majors/enrollments.
- The program must have a core of faculty, which may include interested extension educators, who are enthusiastic about developing and teaching the courses.
- If additional teaching resources will be needed to implement the program, the proposal must indicate how faculty/instructor time will be generated and supported.
- Programs offered online must be able to generate revenue to support course development and revision, instructional time and possibly program management, so the revenue-generation potential of different models for offering programs (e.g., World Campus, E-Learning Cooperative) needs to be considered. A document summarizing the alternatives should be developed.
- Programs/courses using E-Learning Office services must be able to generate revenue to contribute to the continued operation of the E-Learning Office in CAS
- Extension educators should be included in program/course planning to contribute to content and to identify if parts of content/videos/clips or flash content designed for online courses would be useable in other venues.
- The Director of the E-Learning Office will identify and approve smaller projects that can be integrated into the program development workload, as needed. These would be paid for by the requesting unit in the College.

<u>Policy for Maintenance and Revision of Existing Courses</u>
Course maintenance and revisions are essential to ensure course quality. **Course maintenance** is defined as the work required to prepare courses each time they are offered. This includes adjustments to some readings and the basic syllabus content that reflects changing dates and adjustments to assignments, and to make sure that all elements and links of an online course are functioning properly. Course maintenance is covered by the baseline revenue sharing from each academic unit to the E-Learning Office. Course revisions beyond basic maintenance completed by the E-Learning Office will be paid for by the requesting unit on a fee for service basis, with fees based on the cost structures developed.

<u>Faculty/Instructor Compensation</u>
One barrier to the development of e-Learning programs and courses is the availability of faculty time for course development and instruction. Faculty workload needs to be modified (by adjusting other onload activities) or incentives need to be offered to encourage these activities. Fixed-term or part-time instructors can be used to meet some online teaching and course development needs. The team suggests that

- Compensation for developing or teaching online courses should be permitted on-load (regular salary compensation) as part of a regular teaching load; additional resources can be committed to a faculty member for an online course developed or taught above regular course load (e.g., salary savings), options for buy-out of time of Extension faculty or educators should be considered, or support can be provided off-load with summer compensation for tenure-line faculty on 36 week contracts. These arrangements are negotiated by the faculty and program's academic home.
- Costs for fixed-term or part-time faculty/instructors would be covered by the academic unit, most likely from program revenues.

<u>Other Policies to Reinforce Values of Meeting High Demand and Multipurpose Use</u>
The E-Learning initiatives need to be designed to minimize duplication of effort and to encourage sharing of the resources developed. The Team recommends:

- The development of an electronic library of materials developed for courses or extension programs that might be useable by other faculty or extension educators (examples: figure of nutrient cycle, short video clips, lecture segments, photographs, flash visuals). Key issues with this recommendation are
  - o Providing staff time to identify existing materials and to create and maintain the electronic library
  - o Deciding who will have access to the library
  - o Determining legitimate use of course materials to abide by copyright agreements
  - o Develop course content so that segments can be easily used for multiple purposes
- Integration of E-Learning and eXtension. eXtension seems to have some potential for providing online resources, reducing duplication of effort, as well as providing a place for the dissemination of Penn State Cooperative Extension materials. At this point, Penn State's interest in and commitment to participation

in eXtension is unclear. We recommend that a contact person with programmatic responsibility for eXtension at Penn State be identified.

- We also recommend that a CAS representative to the PSU E-Learning Cooperative be named to serve as the E-Learning advocate for CAS, and
- That a representative from the E-Learning Office be included on the Instructional and Curricular Affairs Committee, ex-officio, and also for representation on ADEC.

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