

As you know, online courses are a growth area for the university and the move to fully online programs and to increase quality online course offerings are long-term strategic goals at the Center for Online Learning. To determine what was needed to successfully develop online programs at the University, the Online Learning Advisory Committee was created at my request in Spring 2013. This committee was appointed by the Academic Affairs and includes experienced online faculty from all colleges as well as representation from University Information Technology.

This committee has been very active and is very committed to the growth of quality online learning experiences at the institution. After much review of best practices and requirements from HLC and HEPC, we are at a point where we are ready to move forward with policy and procedures related to online learning.

Statement of Need/Problem

The issue that I am here today to discuss with you is a pivotal issue that needs to be addressed in order for us to move forward in the area of online courses, namely oversight of online course quality. There is a requirement by both HEP-C and the higher learning commission, and currently, there are no such oversight procedures at the institution nor is there an entity charged with evaluating online course quality.

In Spring 2012, the West Virginia Virtual Learning Network of the Higher Education Policy Commission (of which WVSU is a member), adopted Quality Matters (QM) as the standard by which all online courses will be designed, reviewed, and evaluated. QM is a national program that utilizes a research-based, peer-review process to improve online course quality. **Because this has been adopted statewide by HEPC and will be part of state standards for online courses, I propose that the Faculty Senate passes a resolution adopting Quality Matters as the online course quality standard for the University.**

The Center for Online Learning has held multiple training sessions over the past two years to ensure our faculty are trained in the basic QM rubric process, and we will continue to provide support for faculty as we move forward. As of now, approximately 40 faculty have completed this training. However, to become a QM Peer reviewer faculty have to meet certain requirements (namely that they have ongoing online teaching experience) and they must attend and complete the intensive trainings that will certify them as Peer Reviewers. This means that the entity charged with ensuring online course quality needs specialized expertise in order to function as needed.

Due to the nature of the current online learning advisory committee, a lot of additional work and training has been done to take on the task of preparing the institution for fully online programs. Members have gone through two levels of training to become nationally certified QM peer reviewers. Each member of the committee has committed their personal time, effort, and experience in the area. **It is because of the highly specialized nature of the group needed for this task, and the real need to move forward in this area that I propose the faculty senate pass a resolution (either permanent or interim in order to get moving) that recognizes the existing online learning advisory committee as the Senate's advisory committee regarding online education, working collaboratively with Faculty Senate's educational policies committee to ensure online course quality.** In this capacity, the online learning advisory committee would be given the authority to review online course designs and make recommendations to EPC on approved online course offerings.

Online Course Quality- Call for Action Request

1. Faculty Senate pass a resolution adopting Quality Matters as the quality standard for online course development and review at WVSU
2. Faculty Senate pass a resolution recognizing the current Online Learning Advisory Committee (either in the interim or permanently) as the Senate's advisory committee regarding online education, possibly working collaboratively with EPC to ensure online course quality. In this capacity, the Online Learning Advisory Committee would be given the authority to review online course designs and make recommendations to EPC on approved online course offerings.