

Enrolment Action Plan Special Projects Team Project Charter

Project Title: Planning for Off-Campus & Distributed Learning (OCDL)

Project Description:

The University has committed itself to expanded and improved off-campus and distributed learning (OCDL). The project will result in clearly articulated principles and priorities for OCDL at the University of Saskatchewan, and lay the groundwork for the development of a university-wide vision for OCDL and accompanying strategic directions. The project will include

- an examination of existing support services
- College and School ambitions, needs and perceptions
- stakeholder needs including those of under-represented populations
- best practices at comparable institutions and those that have developed strong OCDL programs.

Executive Sponsor:

Ernie Barber, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning

Project Manager:

Bob Cram, Executive Director, CCDE

Project Team:

Initially as follows, with other members added to the team as the work plan develops:

Cheri Spooner, Director, Distance Learning, Off-Campus & Certificate Programs, CCDE

Mary Buhr, Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources, representing Deans Council

Dan Pennock, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources

Tom Steele, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Marlene Smadu, Associate Dean, College of Nursing

Terry Wotherspoon, Head, Department of Sociology

Dirk Morrison, College of Education, representing Teaching and Learning Committee of Council

Russ Isinger, Registrar, SESD

Rick Schwier, Acting Director, ULC

Frank Bulk, Media Applications Consultant, EMAP

JoAnn Murphy, Head, Murray Library, University Library Representative

Keith Jeffrey, ITS Representative

Student Representative, TBA

Laura McNaughton, Project Assistant, Provost's Office

Decision Makers:

- Provost
- Vice-Provost Teaching & Learning
- Project Team
- PCIP

Need:

One of twelve action items in the University's new *Enrolment Action Plan* focuses on the need to expand and improve OCDL. The same need is expressed in the *Strategic Directions* (2002), the *Second Integrated Plan*, the commitment within that Plan to Innovation in Programs, and at least three of the foundational documents (e.g., *Teaching and Learning*, *Aboriginal Initiatives*, and *Outreach and Engagement*). The University of Saskatchewan wishes to explore how to expand its involvement in alternative types of instructional delivery, including distributed (students and instructor are separated in time and/or distance) and off-campus (classroom located away from main campus). Colleges have responsibility for courses and programs; many colleges are taking individual initiatives to create off-campus and distributed learning opportunities for students.

A majority of the instructional activity of the University of Saskatchewan occurs in the classroom, face-to-face between students and the instructor, in classroom space on the University campus in Saskatoon, and timetabled on weekdays during the regular academic session. At the same time, prospective students, and the public, expect to have access to learning opportunities in non-traditional ways, from their homes and communities outside Saskatoon, or in different time-frames than what has been usual for this university, including weekends. On-campus students are increasingly accessing courses from other institutions (either on-line or in another distributed form). Off-campus and distributed learning strategies become particularly important as the University engages underserved populations – Aboriginal communities, northern and rural communities, and adult learners, for example. These communities are calling on the University to do things differently. There is an increasing need for the University to acknowledge the centrality of alternative instructional delivery methods to achieving a diverse student body and preparing these learners for success in the knowledge age.

Stakeholders:

- Students including USSU, especially OCDL students
- Colleges and departments
- Support staff
- ITS
- EMAP
- Faculty & sessional lecturers
- CCDE
- Regional Advisory Councils
- Regional Colleges
- Affiliated Colleges
- OCDL institutional partners (e.g. NORTEP, some northern Colleges, University of the Arctic, University of Regina, FNUC, some First Nations, industry partners)

Stakeholder Requirements:

- Clearly stated set of options and goals regarding the coordination and implementation of off-campus and distributed learning strategies at the University
- Clear understanding of strengths, gaps and overlaps of already existing off-campus and distributed learning strategies and support services

Deliverables:

- A clearly articulated set of strategies and priorities for OCDL that will enable the University to achieve the goals and objectives in the *Enrolment Action Plan*, the *Strategic Directions (2002)* and the *Integrated Plan* and that will provide support and enabling mechanisms to assist academic units in achieving their OCDL goals
- Draft vision for OCDL for consideration by the Provost.
- Assessment of perceptions, needs and projections of Colleges and Schools.
- Examination of practices, structures and enabling mechanisms at other universities involved in OCDL, both traditional campuses like our own as well as those that have developed strong programs in OCDL.
- Assessment of financial models and incentives including those that will encourage collaboration.
- Increased awareness within the university community (governing bodies, faculty, instructors, students) of OCDL methodologies and opportunities.
- Examination of how to renew and strengthen our relationship with regional colleges and other critical institutional partners in OCDL

Scope:In Scope:

- Examination and investigation of development and delivery of courses, modules and programs delivered off-campus (classroom located away from main campus) and/or by distributed means (students and instructor are separated in time and/or distance) whereby a student could complete a University of Saskatchewan class in its entirety without coming to Saskatoon or a University of Saskatchewan program with at most occasional visits to Saskatoon.
- Other courses that provide alternatives to on-campus Monday to Friday courses, such as special weekend courses
- Inter-institutional partnerships considerations
- All opportunities and issues regarding OCDL from the perspective of students, faculty, sessional lecturers, staff, the public, government, partner institutions, the University
- Mandate for OCDL (i.e. who or which unit(s) has/have responsibility for administration, budget, quality assurance, etc.)
- Enabling structures and systems (e.g. financial models, academic governance)

Not In Scope:

- Use of new technology in the classroom
- Creation of new off-campus and distributed learning opportunities (with the exception of support for pilot projects)
- Forms of experiential learning at off-campus sites (e.g. practicums, internships)
- Items already covered in the E-Learning Project report – a separate project is being conducted to examine new e-learning opportunities at the University and how these will continue to be supported at the University level.

Constraints:

- Timeline
- Schedules
 - Coordinating schedules of all committee members for meetings

- Ability to consult with students, faculty and staff
- Resources for necessary research and analysis (e.g. external consultants if needed)
- Risks
 - Potential for jurisdictional disputes and competition among units and colleges capable of supporting OCDL opportunities & projects

Assumptions:

- Multiple perspectives will be brought to the work of the project team either by the experience of its members or through engagement with stakeholders.
- Project team and stakeholders appropriately representative of U of S community, OCDL stakeholders and diversity of OCDL learners.
- Colleges will support development of campus-wide strategies and policies relating to off-campus and distributed learning.

Milestones:

This is a multi-year project charter that will continue for this planning cycle, i.e. to June 30, 2012. In 2009-10 the following milestones will have been met.

- Engagement of Deans and School Executive Directors in focused discussions about OCDL and analysis of their needs, perceptions and projections will be completed by November 15, 2009.
- Project Team will be formed and have held its first meeting by January 2010.
- Project Charter will be finalized and approved by January 31, 2010
- Engagement of regional colleges in discussions of how best to work with them as key partners completed by April 30, 2010
- Completion of a workshop/conference on OCDL for the university community by October 31, 2010
- A study of best practices in OCDL at comparable universities and those that have developed strong OCDL programs will be completed by July 31, 2010.

Longer-term milestones include:

- An analysis of strengths, gaps and overlaps in current support services for OCDL
- A draft vision statement for OCDL
- A final report