WILLISTON
STATE COLLEGE

Extended Learning Program Review: Fall 2014

I. PROGRAM MISSION AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Mission Statement

The Extended Learning Department provides educational opportunities to distance and on-campus students and faculty via online, interactive video, traditional classroom and hybrid modes, while assisting in evaluating and attaining quality curriculum control over institutional programs.

1. Is the program mission aligned with the College's mission, vision, and strategic plan?
   - ☐ **Yes**
   - ☐ No
2. If not, please explain

B. Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

Check which of the institutional outcomes apply to the program:

- ☐ **Students will demonstrate effective communication skills.**
- ☐ **Students will use reasoning skills to analyze and solve problems.**
- ☐ Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures and value systems.
- ☐ Students will apply health-related knowledge to promote physical and mental well-being.

C. Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students and faculty can successfully access technology necessary to participate in on-line or IVN courses.
2. Students and faculty can effectively communicate within the on-line/IVN course using learning management systems.
3. Students will develop skills needed to transition from secondary to post-secondary curriculum.

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES

A. Assessment of Program Student Learning Outcomes

The Extended Learning Department assesses the Program Student Learning Outcomes through a Priorities Survey for On-line Learning (PSOL) and mid-term and final term student evaluations for on-line, off-site, and IVN courses.

Staff also periodically accesses the engagement analytics reports throughout each semester for student involvement along with a student access report both within our on-line management system, Moodle.

In addition, department staff analyze completion rates for on-line, IVN, and early entry courses at the end of each semester to measure student success and faculty course instruction.

B. Outcomes Assessment Results and Action Response

The PSOL survey was not offered last year; however, it will be this upcoming spring, so these results are yet to be determined. The mid-term/final term course evaluations are helpful when higher levels of participation occur. In the past, we have offered prize drawings to encourage participation. These surveys, along with course evaluations, do help the Associate Dean determine who to hire as adjunct for each semester.

Instructors, who are not participating appropriately or timely, are contacted by the Associate Dean for Extended Learning or Coordinator for Distance Learning to determine why there is a lack of participation and/or communication.

The on-line and IVN students who are not attending or participating are contacted by the Student Success Center to assist with learning issues through the Excessive Absence form filled out by instructors. In addition, staff from the Extended Learning Department and instructors do also contact students who are not participating to determine what aid can be provided to help the student be more successful.

C. Employer/Self-employed Satisfaction (A.A.S, Diploma, Certificate)

This does not apply since this department is not a degree-seeking program. Information in these regards is addressed by degree seeking program areas.

D. Transfer Information (A.A, A.S)

This does not apply since this department is not a degree-seeking program. Information in these regards is addressed by degree seeking program areas.

III. PROGRAM RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

A. Student Enrollment Data

1. Trends and Barriers

   Some of the key assessment pieces evaluated heavily in the beginning of the semester are historical census data reports gathered from the WSC Research Assistant. Enclosed, you will find these reports.

   Early entry education trends: It is noticed that many of the courses early entry students are taking are barrier courses that can prevent students from being successful as full-time college students. With roughly a 90% success rate each semester, we are finding this pathway viable for college completion attainment. A lack of courses sent via IVN and time conflicts with regional schools is the largest barrier for this program. In addition, more stable trades program options will also encourage non-traditional students to look towards WSC for career advancement.

   On-line education trends: Females take more on-line courses with WSC than males. Business, Liberal Arts Transfer, nursing students, and non-degree are all our highest percentage of students. Over half of the WSC headcount take on-line courses. There are not enough online classes on the schedule therefore, the cap size for online classes tends to be higher.

   It should be noted, even thought the percentage of course offerings has decreased, the on-line student population is still increasing. FTE and credit hours have continued to increase for the past three years.

   An increase in on-line only and hybrid programs will allow this area to continue to grow to serve the needs of the region and a larger variety of student populations. Although funding is not allowing the Health Information Management program to be currently offered, it is programs such as these that can increase our student population and provide a great service for the medical industry.

   On-line only and hybrid options, as discussed this summer with the petroleum advisory board, is a necessary option to provide educational advancement opportunities for area oilfield workers. This is not only dependent by funding, but also curriculum development and program approval logistics. Affordability for hiring adequate, qualified adjunct instructors is a funding barrier for this aspect.

Interactive Video Network education trends:

Williston State College collaboratively works with other colleges in the NDUS system to provide courses to students. Examples of this collaboration are seen through our Information Technology program, Dakota Nursing Program, and Mayville's State's education and business programs. In addition, the department is working with The Great Western Network to start providing more courses to high schools across the state.

Although limited data exists about the Mayville collaboration due to the fact that the students are working towards a 4-year degree with another institution, the courses are consistently offered and the collaboration agreement is kept current each year to help meet the needs of the community. In addition, they have an advisor on campus to assist students.

Much of this area's success, as seen in the data, is due to the collaborative agreements. I believe developing the Outreach Programs to the Watford City and Tioga areas will increase the number of majors in the AA/AS degree programs. In addition, any future program development in the Career and Technology Education (CTE area) needs to include various delivery modes and accurate curriculum development to allow for their success, including IVN, and be marketed and promoted as such to the outreach regions.

2. Action Plan and Strategy

Provide more on-line courses to meet the demands and needs of increasing student enrollment in the Extended Learning area. In addition, assure that enough sections are on the schedule based on historical data to provide students adequate time to start courses versus being placed on waitlists.

If future funding permits, continue to send marketing material to regional community members and increase the marketing/promotion virtually to reach the needs of both industry and employment opportunities for current and future students.

The department will continue and increase working with advisory boards, department chairs, and curriculum members to develop and revamp educational programs to aid high regional industry and employment opportunities for current and future students.

Finally, we will continue to evaluate courses to provide quality educational opportunities to aid in student success in the workforce and meet accreditation and authorization requirements.

B. Faculty Data

Our department does not employee any faculty members at this time. In the future, it would warrant us exploring the possibility of hiring faculty.

C. Facilities/Technology/Budget Data

With the adjustments being made in regard to tuition and fee collection due to the NDUS Pathways model, it is unclear yet how the Extended Learning budget will be affected. This will be evaluated closely over the next couple years.

The IVN equipment does need some immediate updates to allow for more consistent classroom transmission to the receiving sites. In addition, with more requests for IVN events, it may become feasible again to hire a position to monitor and assist as an IVN tech.

If enrollment continues to increase, more staff may be hired to aid with technology and curriculum communication and proctoring to provide more student and faculty services. Furthermore, the increase of adjunct instructors continues to grow and budgeting funds for them will need to be monitored.

At present, funds are currently allocated for future outreach coordinators to aid WSC and the department with meeting regional community needs; however, due to the economic boom, the high expense of facilities and personnel are going be the largest barrier to success for these two positions and operations.

D. Student Support Services

Our department recently hired a Distance Education Coordinator who is also working with our on-line students for advising and monitoring the IVN systems and IVN techs to assure classroom support is available. The Associate Dean for Extended Learning works with the regional early entry students for academic advising and, in the past, has asked the Coordinator for Career Pathways to visit schools and offer services at these sites. She also is working with regional counselors to aid in pathway development for students. In addition, our Support Specialist spends time via e-mail, phone, and in person helping both instructors and students facilitate their way through on-line education.

The Smarthinking program allows even off-site and on-line students to receive help from experienced instructors to aid them with their learning process.

With no dedicated campus testing facility, personnel within our department offers on-line test proctoring Tuesday through Thursday to allow students consistent times to complete necessary exams for on-line courses. Other proctoring sources are available in the community for times outside of these days and evenings.

Other student support services are listed on each course syllabus and linked on our web page, including the Student Success Center, counseling services, bookstore, etc.

E. Internships/clinical/practicum/co-ops

This is limited in application since the other instructional departments oversee these opportunities. We do, however, check for state authorization validation and work with the departments to avoid violations with other states.

IV. PROGRAM STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

A. Strengths

Currently, the Extended Learning Department is made of a diverse staff with wide ranges of educational and technological experiences. Due to this recent update, we are finding fresh ideas to work towards positive changes to aid our students, faculty, and fellow colleagues.

Many Extended Learning Department programs offer college education to students who cannot physically be located on our campus due to time conflicts, career/job conflicts, family obligations, etc. Our department opens the door to education for those who need alternative modes of delivery and instructional styles.

In addition, the slow, continual growth, shows that students still desire the option to get a jumpstart on their college degree as early entry students or to focus on a pathway model, such as our two-year nursing program, through Williston State College while living off-campus.

Continual efforts are being made to establish good working relationships with regional high schools to bridge secondary and post-secondary career experiences for students through early entry course offerings. Additional marketing efforts have been established to promote both the WSC Early Entry program and the WSC Distance Learning program to aid in meeting industry, community, and student needs for job training.

B. Opportunities for Improvement

Our department is focusing on updating quality control measures for our on-line and off-site courses by revising the on-line course checklist, course instructional design needs, instructor practices, and re-visiting student course evaluations. We hope to identify more streamlined strategies effective for various modes of delivery. To do so, we will be consulting and training our staff through various outside expertise such as the Instructional Design and Technology certificate from the University of North Dakota and utilizing other NDUS Core Technology experts like Patti Heisler or Randy Wald. We feel these opportunities will assure that our department is offering modern interactive distance education opportunities for WSC students.

In addition, we need to provide more courses and work with the departments to offer new, adequate on-line programs for students.

Barriers could exist from adjunct or full-time faculty. Since quality control has not been consistent in the past several years, the staff realizes that some may be discouraged by constructive feedback; however, we know student evaluations, authorization requirements, and collaboration agreements will aid in supporting the need to work toward improved changes.

Funding barriers exist to employ faculty or adjuncts to provide new or updated programs. Having one to two Outreach Coordinators, in our near future should hopefully aid in bridging the educational experiences from WSC to regional community students who need more educational opportunities, yet cannot attend WSC campus courses.

V.   PROGRAM VIABILITY

As educational necessities in the community continue to grow and change the Extended Learning department needs to be able to change with them. Creating additional online courses offerings, as well as keeping course sizes manageable will be of utmost importance to maintain and increase quality extended learning programs and experiences. Since student learners have varied learning styles, continued growth using IVN courses to address the needs of students will continue to be necessary.

With the addition of the new scholarship for Williams County graduates we will likely see a need to expand online education. Online will be a way for Williams County grads currently living out of the area or working full time to be able to access a quality education at little or no cost out of their pocket.

The program consistently provides funds for operations through the Distance Education Access Fee. This fee helps cover the costs for a majority of the positions and operations for the department. The outreach portion, including early entry, uses appropriated funds for operations, salaries, etc. With the absence of recruitment, this area has been able to aid in marketing and relationship building with regional schools and students so it has warranted its associated costs to promote and aid in sustaining WSC. The program has also been able to assist other areas by purchasing equipment or commit waiver dollars to assist in providing educational opportunities.

VI.   REVIEW TEAM

Kari Rustand, Associate Dean for Extended Learning

Katie Peterson, Coordinator for Distance Learning

Ryan Avery, Support Specialist

Monica Crane, Learning Commons Manager

VII.   APPENDIX

[Program data is attached with review submission. Funding information was requested but not received.]