MBU Center for Distance Learning Vision, Mission and Goals

Through technologically-enhanced teaching-learning opportunities, Missouri Baptist University is prepared to reach out to a global and culturally diverse community of learners with a Biblically-based Christian perspective that students will find to be:

• caring and personalized
• learner-centered
• respectful of individuality
• accessible and convenient
• responsive to students' spiritual, intellectual and professional needs
• accommodating to students' schedules
• interactive among students, faculty and staff
• academically stimulating and challenging
• replicating the same high quality for education and support services as in the traditional on-campus environment

The Center for Distance Learning (CDL) at Missouri Baptist University is committed to providing quality educational opportunities to a global and culturally diverse society through electronic technology. CDL goals include:

• **Instructional Services Goal** - The CDL will provide online learning environments that will foster change in the individual; are not bound by the constraints of time and place; are creative with electronic delivery; are driven by learner need; have measurable, predictable outcomes; provide learning outcomes comparable to that of traditional delivery; and engage learners in an active mode of learning.

• **Professional Faculty/Human Resources Goals** - The CDL will provide technical and instructional support to faculty members through academic division mentors so that they might develop, redesign, or enhance their courses.

• **Campus and Community Goals** – The CDL will provide support and encouragement to all MBU academic divisions and faculty wishing to attract and retain distance learning students.

• **Student Support/Service Goals** - The CDL will continually strive to improve electronically-mediated educational opportunities by monitoring the progress and performance of students in relation to their needs and expectations and periodically evaluating services rendered.

• **Fiscal, Growth, and Finance Goals** - The CDL will support the mission of the University by being fiscally responsible for the inclusion of emerging technologies and the provision of quality administration, facilities and equipment.
Policy on Best Practices

The distance learning program at Missouri Baptist University complies with the Principles of Accreditation set forth in the Best Practices Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs (Appendix A). All distance learning courses and programs at Missouri Baptist University will adhere to the Vision, Mission Statement and Goals of the CDL and will be in full compliance with the distance learning policies set forth below:

I. Curriculum and Instruction

A. Timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students will be provided in all courses and programs. The Director of Distance Learning will oversee the distance education platforms and ensure best practices in electronically offered programs are followed by all divisions and University support units. A Distance Learning Committee composed of the Director of Distance Learning, the Technical Director of Distance Learning, a representative from the IT department, a representative from each academic division, and a dean from one of the extension sites serves in an advisory capacity to the CDL.

B. The technology will be appropriate to the nature and objectives of the programs. Course objectives and faculty expectations concerning the use of such technology will be clearly communicated to students.

C. Materials, programs, and courses will be timely and current.

D. Faculty interested in teaching an online course for the first time will be asked to fill out an online application. The application process will direct the faculty member’s attention to information on ownership policies, faculty compensation, copyright issues related to the creation and production of software, ITV courses, or other media products. Faculty will be informed of the assessment process used to evaluate distance learning courses.

E. The CDL will provide appropriate support services for faculty. The Director of Distance Learning will provide assistance to the Division DL Mentor from each division and to all extension Deans. Faculty who are teaching distance learning courses, web-enhanced courses, web-centric courses and ITV courses will receive appropriate training and support from the CDL.

F. Students applying for distance learning programs will be required to meet the same standards as all other students, but will also be fully informed of special equipment and learning requirements to be successful in online courses.

G. Distance education programs will be consistent with campus-based programs and courses by the evaluation of educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction.

H. The integrity of student work will be continually monitored by the appropriate academic divisions and the CDL.

II. Library and Learning Resources

A. Students will have access to, and will be able to effectively use, appropriate library resources.

B. Course requirements will ensure that students make appropriate use of learning resources.
C. Access will be provided to virtual laboratories and necessary resources in all approved University courses and programs.

III. Student Services

A. Students will have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support the programs, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, placement, and counseling.
B. Students will have an adequate procedure for resolving their complaints.
C. Advertising, recruiting, and admissions information adequately and accurately represent the programs, requirements, and services available to students.
D. Students enrolled in distance learning courses will be able to use the technology employed, have the equipment necessary to succeed, and will be provided assistance in using the technology employed.

IV. Facilities and Finances

A. Distance learning platforms will be continually updated with necessary equipment and technical improvements.
B. Long range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes will reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to ensuring the viability and effectiveness of the distance learning program.
Policies and Procedures for Distance Learning Course Development and Facilitation

I. Course Development Policy

Distance learning courses are part of the approved curriculum of the individual academic units (divisions) of the University. The content and objectives of individual courses, including those offered using a distance learning delivery system, must follow the same approval procedures for new courses as all other for-credit courses at the University. Faculty may either create new courses in a distance learning format consistent with the academic division’s program objectives or existing courses (face-to-face format) may be developed using a distance learning format. Both new and existing courses must be approved by the division faculty and division chair, the Academic Affairs or Graduate Affairs Council, and, in the case of undergraduate classes, the faculty in plenary session.

The primary responsibility of the CDL is to ensure that proposed courses offered in a distance learning format must meet approved standards of faculty training and course delivery established by the Center. The following criteria provide preliminary guidelines for consideration by the Distance Learning Committee:

A. Projected enrollments are sufficient to cover the costs associated with an alternative delivery format.
B. A need for offering the course in a distance learning format is demonstrated.
C. A plan for future growth (additional sections and personnel) has been considered by the appropriate academic division.

Faculty members desiring to teach and/or develop courses for distance learning must have the approval of the Division Chair and also by the CDL in terms of having met all the relevant training and course established by the Center. Following development of the course and before it is actually delivered through distance learning it must be reviewed for content by the Division Mentor and the Division Chair and by the Distance Learning Committee for appropriateness of format consistent with best practices for delivery of on-line courses. Following the first presentation of the class, the course must achieve a mean score on the Distance Learning Course Evaluation of 57 or higher. Courses that do not meet this minimal level may not be offered again until necessary improvements are made as dictated by the Distance Learning Course Evaluation have been accomplished.

The following procedures must be followed in order receive compensation for a new distance learning course design:

A. When an instructor is asked to or asks to develop a course for distance learning delivery, a distance learning instruction application is completed.
B. The instructor completes appropriate CDL training programs and refreshers if necessary.
C. The instructor develops the proposed course.
D. The distance learning course is reviewed and approved by the Division Chair and Division Mentor for content, and, if a new course, proceeds through the normal approval process for new courses, i.e. Academic Affairs Committee or Graduate Affairs Council and, when necessary, the faculty in plenary session.
E. The course is reviewed and approved by the CDL for compliance with online delivery expectations.
F. When approved, the instructor is reimbursed for course development after submission of an Overload Contract form signed by the appropriate Division Chair and Director of Distance Learning.
G. After the course is initially offered, it is assessed according to the CDL process and either approved for inclusion in the curriculum or sent back to the instructor for revision before the course is offered again.

II. Course Facilitation Process

Once a new distance learning course has been developed, the following personnel will be responsible for the following processes:

A. Responsibilities of the Division Chair
   1. Scheduling classes, setting limits on class sizes, and determining the number of sections.
   2. Assigning appropriately trained faculty to teach distance learning classes in each respective academic division.
   3. Determining whether intellectual property rights are followed when materials are used by faculty members who are not the same as those who have developed the distance learning course.

B. Responsibilities of Faculty
   1. Successfully complete the training offered either by the University or from an outside source, such as LERN, or demonstrate competency in the use of course management software from previous experience at another university.
   2. Work with the Division ET Mentor and/or Division Chair to develop and/or review the online course prior to offering the course.
   3. Agree to mentoring during the first quarter of the course by an experienced faculty member who has taught distance learning courses.
   4. Make appropriate revisions in course offerings based on student, peer, and administrative course evaluations.
   5. Agree to periodic review of the course by experienced faculty in the division and the Distance Learning Committee. When evaluation scores are above average for two consecutive semesters, reviews will be done on a random basis rather than each time the course is offered.
   6. Provide a course syllabus that is clear, detailed, and easy to follow and offer the information necessary for successful completion of the course. Distance learning courses should provide objectives and outcomes equivalent to on-campus counterparts.
7. Respond to student inquiries (telephone, emails) in a prompt manner (within 24 hours). When the faculty member is unable to respond because of sickness or absences, a prompt and timely response will be provided by other faculty or staff of the division.

8. Report results of graded assignments and tests to students promptly (within one week). When the faculty member is unable to respond because of sickness or absences, a prompt and timely response will be provided by other faculty or staff in the division.

9. Ensure continued interactivity among students in a designated distance learning class through designed activity, required postings, and collaborative projects.

10. Provide a variety of learning strategies to accommodate differences in the learning styles of students.

11. Make a reasonable effort to maintain periodic and consistent contact with all students enrolled in distance learning courses. Contact may be by telephone, letter, email, online, or through other electronic means.

C. Responsibilities of the Center for Distance Learning

It is the responsibility of the CDL to provide the following support to faculty and divisions:

1. Maintain the course management system portal.
2. Maintain the course system archives.
3. Assist with online course development.
4. Provide professional development and training opportunities through LERN, MBU-CDL workshops, and other in-service programs.
5. Oversee ITV training and course integration.
6. Licensing of necessary courseware and software to maintain distance learning courses.
7. Maintaining and updating distance learning software and hardware to ensure currency and reliability.
8. Marketing and promotion of distance learning courses and programs.
10. Provide direction for distance learning initiatives.
11. Ensure smooth and efficient course delivery and technology operations.
12. Monitor the interface between distance learning faculty and students.
13. Provide direction for the evaluation and testing of course management and web-integrated multimedia products.
14. Further develop and implement a plan of assessment for online courses and programs.
15. Further develop and coordinate the areas of video and web-based technologies and their integration with distance learning delivery systems.
16. Communicate policies and procedures related to distance learning to students at the beginning of each term.
17. Oversee export from the CAMSe management system into the Blackboard online classroom management system.
18. Ensure the viability of server operation in cooperation with Director of Campus Management Systems and Special Assistant to the Provost for Program
D. Responsibilities of the Division ET Mentor

It is the responsibility of the division in which the distance learning program is housed to provide the following support to faculty in the form of an ET Mentor:

1. Communicate appropriate online resources and materials to faculty within the division.
2. Communicate appropriate use of informational services (computer software, hardware).
3. Communicate and facilitate appropriate use of instructional technologies (Blackboard, ITV).
4. Review division applications for online courses and report findings to the Distance Learning Committee.
5. Evaluate efficacy of online programs within the division.
6. Represent the division at monthly Distance Learning Committee meetings to discuss issues related to distance learning within the division.

E. Responsibilities of the IT Department

The IT department is responsible for providing the following support of the distance learning program:

1. Maintain server operation.
2. Maintain student assistance through the University Help Desk.
3. Provide use of video and audio production equipment necessary for development of audio and video enhancements.
4. Train faculty who use ITV technology.
5. Update the server software and Blackboard application database.
6. Maintain backups of the Blackboard server drives as part of the server farm.
I. University Costs for Developing Distance Learning Courses

Distance learning can entail additional costs for the institution delivering instruction. Missouri Baptist University (MBU) should be able to recover these added costs. Moreover, if another institution provides classrooms or facilities for distance learning, the host institution should also be able to recover costs. In addition, ongoing maintenance costs for distance learning are at times higher than more traditional delivery methods, and development costs in regard to faculty training are higher.

Therefore, programs and/or divisions should make arrangements through the established planning process to fund such costs as:

A. Professional development for faculty  
B. Essential program needs related to electronic library resources  
C. Human resource needs  
D. Technological infrastructure needs  
E. Ongoing development efforts related to online programs and courses

II. General Policies on Intellectual Property Rights

Distance learning courses developed with institutional resources use a team of technical support experts and faculty to develop materials and software used in the course. Accordingly, MBU maintains the right to such materials or software. These materials may be licensed by mutual agreement between MBU and other institutions if there is collaborative effort in developing the materials.

The reuse of intellectual property, software and other materials such as videotapes, graphics, or websites developed by campus support units, may be used to support course offered by MBU. However, if the software or materials were developed by a faculty member, they may be reused only with the permission of the faculty member. If the software was developed for use at MBU, the faculty member who developed it shall be fairly compensated either by reduction in assignment (equivalent to a three hour course assignment) or through financial reimbursement equivalent to teaching a three-hour course (see Distance Learning Policies and Procedures for Course Development and Facilitation).

If a faculty member wishes to sell or license the software or materials that were developed for the course, the faculty member must disclose such intentions to the University. Upon such notification, MBU’s President or designated representative will inform the faculty member whether the University has an interest in the work, and a written agreement shall thereafter be negotiated to reflect the interests of both parties, including provisions related to the equities of the employee and the allocation of proceeds resulting from such work. This policy applies to all intellectual property and is not
limited to distance learning products.

When a University employee, acting on behalf of the institution or for personal interests, intends to sell or license intellectual property or other inventions, or works that are developed or planned to be developed as an employee of the University, the employee should notify the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs of such intentions. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will then inform the employee of any applicable University policies or regulations and/or of any interest the institution may have in such property. Under no circumstances may an MBU course, regardless of delivery format, be sold or licensed without written permission from the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Income received by the institution from intellectual property is placed in an account which is managed and maintained by the institution and expended according to policies set by the institution.