GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ONLINE COURSES
Recommended by Faculty Senate – May 4, 2009
Approved by Administration – May 4, 2009
Revision Related to Integrity Policy change – February 2011

Each online course, regardless of topic, should contain the following elements:

1. A clear syllabus which includes all the categories in the college’s template.
2. Promotion of the use of APA, MLA or other appropriate writing style.
3. Correct grammatical structure and spelling on both the instructor and students’ parts.
4. Reflective writing assignment and/or assignments which is/are supported by multiple resource documents. Use of abstracts of documents should not be acceptable.
5. Quizzes and/or a written examination, or examinations, with special attention paid to reducing academic dishonesty in the development of these assessment tools. To reduce cheating, random questions from a question pool may be used, the order of questions and responses randomized, the test timed, the presentation of questions controlled to one at a time, and student completion times reviewed. Care should be taken to review the items used in assessments to ensure their accuracy before they are posted.
6. A culminating experience to assess student understanding of the content of the course and achievement of the course objectives.
7. Clearly communicated assignment expectations, deadlines and policies regarding the consequences of late submissions and academic dishonesty.
8. A discussion board element which reflects critical thinking and reinforces the concept that online courses are learning communities. Graduate course discussions should feature a requirement to make scholarly references. Deadlines for contributions should be clearly communicated. The instructor should actively participate in the discussion board and then summarize the lessons from the session.
9. If group interaction is utilized, it should be focused on highly specific, stated objectives, and begin early enough in the term for the groups to accomplish their objectives.
10. A bibliography for the course which includes required readings, suggested readings, and effective documentation of the same.
11. Electronic presentations (Power Points, written mini-lectures, multimedia content, etc.) which should be clear, accurate, grammatically correct, and add value to the course beyond the textbook.
12. Research papers should reflect correct grammar and spelling, be in APA, MLA or other appropriate writing style and include accurate internal notation and a bibliography. The length of such documents shall be sufficient to reflect a thorough scholarly effort which relates to the course level. Resources should be checked for academic quality.
13. A means of helping students understand the expectations of the course, such as a quiz over the content of the syllabus, prior to the first assignment.
14. Detailed rubrics clearly identifying the grading criteria and related points for each assignment should be made available in a timely manner (e.g., in the syllabus or as the assignment is made).
15. Instructors indicating when students can expect feedback and grades on their assignments. Feedback should be detailed and timely enough to allow students to learn and improve their submissions. Instructors should strive to respond to all questions in a timely manner, which will necessitate checking course-related email multiple times most days.