

To: UA Faculty and Instructors

From: Gail Burd, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Melissa Vito, Vice President for Student Affairs
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RE: New Programs, Projects, and Activities Related to Instruction

Date: September 20, 2010

This fall, the University of Arizona has developed several initiatives that are designed to improve instruction and student learning and retention. These initiatives have been a collaborative effort among Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Outreach College, and UITs and are outlined below.

1) Office of Instruction and Assessment

The Office of Instruction and Assessment (OIA) opened its doors to faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants in February 2010. The unit is directed by Assistant Vice Provost Deb Tomanek and includes professionals who assist with pedagogical planning and curricular design, instructional technologies, multimedia and website design, and course and student assessment. The unit offers workshops, courses, brownbag sessions, and one-on-one assistance. For additional information about OIA go to: <http://oia.arizona.edu/>.

2) Call for Proposals to Develop New Online Courses that Lead to Online Programs

Proposals for projects are invited by The UA Initiative for Development of Online Programs. This initiative is designed to build capacity for the development of high quality, online academic programs offered by the UA. The initiative is supported by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Outreach College (AAA TRIF), and the Office of Instruction & Assessment (OIA). The deadline for the proposals is October 1, 2010. For more information, go to: http://oia.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/RFP%20Fall%202010_v4.doc

3) Turnitin and Elluminate

A new contract has been purchased that provides integrated use of Turnitin and Elluminate within the D2L course management system. These programs are available to all UA instructors. Turnitin provides “plagiarism” detection for written assignments and can be activated within the D2L “Dropbox”. Elluminate allows instructors to provide synchronous, online discussions with real time computer presentations and can be found in the “Online Rooms” feature of D2L. The OIA can provide additional information and training on the use of this program. For additional information, go to: <http://oia.arizona.edu/>.

4) D2L Course Storage on Institutional Servers

The number of faculty using D2L as a course management system has grown steadily in recent years. The storage of course materials for all courses that have been generated over the years has created a tremendous need for server storage and the purchase of several additional servers. A survey of faculty last spring indicated that most faculty only need to save the course content for the most recent two years worth of classes. Purging these old materials will yield significant savings in institutional resources that could be applied to other instructional technologies. The goal will be to archive or purge course materials and course design elements from the previous two years every October and February; student work older than two years old will be purged every October and February. Additional communications to faculty will be sent from the D2L Team in OIA in the near future. Questions should be directed to Sue South in OIA (sesouth@email.arizona.edu).

5) Classroom Responders and Response Software

ABOR mandates that the Universities make every effort to reduce the costs of textbooks. Part of these costs have often included using specific classroom responders (“clickers”) for use in a given classroom. Many students have been required to purchase multiple types of responders, often costing \$50 or more each. Last

spring a faculty task force reviewed and recommended that UA support one type of responder and associated software – TurningPoint ResponseWare clickers and TurningPoint Anywhere polling software for the classroom. The Office of the Provost, the Office of the CIO, including UITs, strongly support this recommendation.

There will be several meetings this fall with interested **faculty and instructors** to discuss this recommendation, with the first meeting taking place on **Wednesday, Sept. 22 from 8-9 AM in the Copper Room** of the Student Union, and other meetings on **Oct. 18 at 4 PM and Oct. 29 at 9 AM, both in the Tubac Room** of the Student Union.

6) Early Alert

Individuals from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and UITs designed a pilot retention project to run with selected classes. The goal of the project is to offer an easy mechanism for a faculty member to inform students when they are in academic jeopardy in his/her class. The project will be assessed for student retention and grades in the pilot classes. Additional classes may be added in future semesters.

7) Freshmen Student Retention Project

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are piloting two sets of interventions designed to improve academic standing of rising Sophomores who were placed on probation, or continued on probation, at the end of their Freshmen year. Students with a 15 unit B-deficit were selected and randomly assigned to 1) a success course taught by professional advisors or staff from student affairs or 2) larger workshops and assigned one meeting with a professional learning specialist. Grades and student retention will be evaluated in the spring. The success course is designed based on the very successful course offered for since 2004 in the College of Science. (The outcomes from this course revealed a significant increase in persistence and graduation rates of students who participated in the mandatory success course.)