

## Faculty Agenda Item 22-3

**Date:** September 27, 2021

**Submitted by:** Kim Morse, Faculty Senate President (x2059) on behalf of Executive Committee

**Subject:** Senate Resolution on Course Modalities

**Description:** On April 26, 2021, the Senate received the following information from the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs regarding course modalities. Faculty in some areas of the university report that they are still being asked to teach courses in two modalities at the same time.

### **Course Modalities**

*These expectations are limited to the teaching aspects of faculty responsibilities.*

*Common to all teaching modalities are the following expectations: Faculty are expected to dedicate adequate time to their courses as to organize their courses; prepare all lectures, activities, and assignments in accordance with accreditation standards regarding instructional and non-instructional time; hold office hours in accordance with their unit's requirements; respond to student communications promptly; evaluate student work and provide feedback in a timely manner; and complete administrative tasks relevant to their courses. Faculty should include office hours or scheduled meeting times and contact information in their syllabi. Email communication should be through Washburn email addresses. Learning management systems are determined by the dean of the unit or the VPAA.*

*Course modalities are determined by the department chair and/or dean of the unit. Changes or adjustments to the modality must be approved by the department chair and/or dean of the unit.*

### *Synchronous (Modalities 1 and 3)*

*Synchronous courses have required classroom attendance and meet on a regularly scheduled basis, generally fifty minutes a week per credit hour in a fifteen-week semester or the same total of instructional time (750 minutes) per credit hour over a different period, based on Higher Learning Commission minimum standards. Classrooms may be physical (Modality 1) or virtual (Modality 3), depending on the course. The choice of physical or virtual classroom must be approved by the appropriate chair and/or dean. Higher Learning Commission guidelines require a minimum of 750 minutes of instructional (e.g., classroom) time and 1500 minutes of non-instructional (e.g., assignments and preparation) time for each credit hour in a Synchronous course. No more than 10% of meeting time will be replaced with asynchronous activities in a Synchronous course.*

**Rationale:** Further experience teaching in these modalities requires Senate to make the following clarifications.

The Higher Learning Commission requires students to receive 750 minutes (minimum) of instructional time per credit hour. When Modality 1 and 3 sections are taught as distinct sections it is possible for students to meet standards required by the Higher Learning Commission. When Modality 1 and 3 sections are taught simultaneously (mixed modality, dual modality, etc.) with one set of students in attendance in the classroom and another set of students in attendance virtually during the same synchronous time period it becomes impossible for students in either modality to receive the instructional time required by the HLC. Within the established course time period, instruction time is divided by an undetermined percentage with one group, face-to-face or virtual, receiving more-or-less instructional time. The only way this situation could be redressed so that all students receive instruction as required by HLC is if technology existed in the classroom that allowed all students to see and hear each other, the faculty member, and any displayed devices (computer screens, smart boards, etc.) simultaneously so that all enrolled students could participate equally in shared learning experiences. While it may be acceptable to violate HLC standards in order to accommodate extraordinary circumstances during a pandemic, it is not acceptable to violate HLC standards outside that context.

Moreover, as the University has documented through numerous C-TEL workshops and teaching resources on the modalities (<https://www.washburn.edu/faculty-staff/ctel/resources.html>) the modalities are pedagogically distinct, not interchangeable.

Modalities 1 and 3 require different pedagogies inclusive of different forms of lecture, activities, assignments, and grading structures. The preparation for a course in Modality 1 is different from the preparation of the same course in Modality 3. Because pedagogies and preparations for Modalities 1 and 3 are distinct, so, too, is the post-class session time required to evaluate student work, provide feedback, and complete administrative tasks.

It is not possible for faculty to meet the University expectations common to all teaching modalities to meet minimum, adequate, expectations if required to teach in multiple modalities in the same section.

The Senate is resolved to provide the following counsel to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Absent Faculty Handbook guidance on faculty load in these matters, the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs must adhere to HLC requirements on instructional time and follow its own guidance on expectations common to all modalities. Sections will be designated in the course schedule in one modality, not multiple modalities. Additionally, the Senate is resolved that the choice of modality should be made collaboratively with the faculty member and the department chair and/or dean of the unit.

**Financial Implications:** None.

**Proposed Effective Date:** Start of Academic Year 2022-2023. (Thus it will need to be implemented before Fall Schedules are due.)

**Request for Action:** Approval by FAC, FS

**Approved by:** FAC on date: 10-18-2021

Faculty Senate on date: 10-25-2021

**Attachments:** Yes  No