



Year 1, Number 32

End of Semester Greetings!

As we complete the final weeks of the spring 2016 semester, I want to express my appreciation for everything each of you has done to educate and assist our distance learning students this semester.

I wish each of you and your students a successful end to your semester!

Arturo Cole
Director
Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies



State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and our Quality Assurance Process of Online Courses at UNTD

Institutions that want to offer online courses and/or programs to out-of-state students must make sure they are compliant with consumer protection laws in the states where those out-of-state students are domiciled. To avoid having to deal with 50 different laws, the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements was formed. As of the writing of this post, 36 states are participating in SARA. In those states, over 500 institutions of higher education are now participating in SARA, UNT Dallas being one of them.



We received our approval notice a month ago and among other things we, as well as the rest of the institutions that participate in SARA, are expected to abide by the [Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education](#) developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) in 2011. The C-RAC guidelines are a set of 9 principles, each of which has a set of actions, processes and facts that institutions might use to demonstrate that they meet the guidelines.

Click the above link or see the attached PDF file to read these guidelines.

The principles/guidelines are perfectly reasonable/sensible, and the suggested evidence is exhaustive. For example, as evidence of principle #3, an institution might need to demonstrate that “the institution’s faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its online learning offerings.” Also, an institution might need to demonstrate that it “...ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction.” Finally, in support of principal #4, we see language similar to what’s in the federal definition of distance education. That is, the C-RAC guidelines suggest that institutions might want to ensure that “[c]ourse design and delivery supports student-student and faculty-student interaction.”

Thus, if we, as an institution, want to stay in good standing with NC-SARA, we must be in compliance with the C-RAC guidelines which are perfectly reasonable, but comprehensive standards to ensure quality in online offerings.





Remember that the office of DLIT is responsible for reviewing all distance learning (online and hybrid) courses based on quality standards. With the increase in quality assurance standards for the spring 2016 semester, we assist our faculty in developing a quality online course. We recently took on the process of updating, revising and adopting new quality standards for distance learning course design and development.

Our new Online Quality Assurance researched-based rubric consists of 8 general standards that focus on course design, not content, and each general standard is detailed in specific review standards, which provide detailed expectations for online course design.

We have now a total of 26 standards incorporated into our quality assurance instrument, in order to improve the quality of online and hybrid course offerings at UNTD. And we provide continued support to faculty in the design, development and/or redevelopment of online courses that incorporate the best practices reflected in current research.

Our faculty are guided and supported each step of the way so they can begin to identify areas for improvement in their own online/hybrid courses as they are being designed and developed. But please be mindful that the Online Quality Assurance program is a continuous and collaborative improvement process that recognizes that courses meeting the standards still have room for continuing improvement and courses that do not meet standards initially will receive useful feedback to guide revision.



Assessing Our Faculty's Technology Needs

The office of DLIT is currently conducting an instructional technology needs assessment to better serve the various schools and departments in their use of technology in the classroom and online environments. Our goal is to gather valuable information from full-time faculty members on technology tools and resources needed for their teaching and learning process at UNT Dallas. This survey of assistance and resources needed, including support and training, will help faculty integrate technology in pedagogy.



The **2016 Faculty Survey on Instructional Technology** was sent out by email last week to faculty members to assess the current use and perceptions of instructional technologies, their current and future technology needs, and the barriers and motivators to using these technologies. The survey was designed to gather data to inform university administration and others on campus on how to best align services and support in ways that will meet instructors' teaching needs and technology preferences.



Faculty should have received already the link to complete the survey. So far there has only been 7 instructors that have completed the survey. This survey will only take approximately 12-15 minutes to complete. Please contact us if you have any question of if we can be of further assistance.



Online Student Survey

Students in distance learning classes in the spring 2016 semester are being asked to complete a web survey on their distance learning experiences. The survey explores the use of Blackboard features and other technology tools in distance education courses as well as ownership, use patterns, and perceptions of technology among distance learning students at UNT Dallas. Our online students are asked what they think about Blackboard and about their online learning experience at UNTD. How the various Blackboard tools and features are being used in their courses, what they like best and least from Blackboard and if they would take another distance learning class and their reasons.



We expect the results of the survey to benefit our students by helping them identify their relationship with technology in a distance education course. This knowledge may help them as they select classes. As well, we hope to learn more about our students' experiences in the online environment.

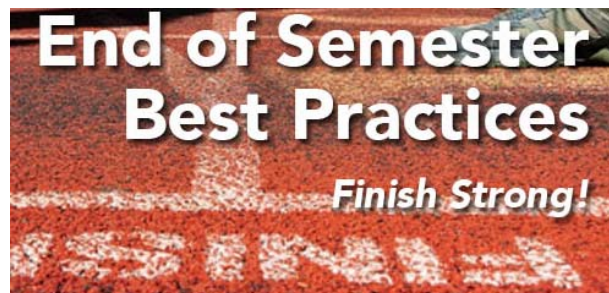
The results from this survey will also give us a better insight in trends and changes as we will be able to compare this year's results with last year's (Spring 2016 vs. Spring 2015) and help us make strategic decisions about instructional technology, as it relates to the design and development of online learning environments and distance education courses and to consider the implications in terms of support and training.



This survey should take our students approximately 15 minutes to complete. The responses are anonymous and participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Data collection will close on Sunday, May 15th.

Plan a good closing and wrap activity for the online course

As courses come to a close, it is easy to forget the value of a good closing experience, and it may be even easier to forget in online environments. In the final weeks of an online course, students are likely to be stressed and not take the time to do the lists and the planning that can help reduce stress and provide a calming atmosphere. A favorite image of mine is from David Allen of *Getting Things Done*. Allen notes that making a list helps us to clear the "psychic ram" of our brains and we feel more relaxed and more in control. Once we have made our list and schedule, we don't have to continually remind ourselves of what needs to be done and when.



Here are a few hints for closing out an online course experience with style and panache.

- Take time to remind your online students of what's next and when assignments and readings are due. Announcements of this type posted on Blackboard provide a "To Do" list and schedule for the online learners. And by implication this list provides a helpful "To Do" list and schedule for you as instructor. As

always, it is good to post reminders and make references to the planning list in your comments. And update as you go.

- Plan the ending of the online course experience. A well-designed ending of an online course provides opportunities for meaningful reflection and integration of useful knowledge. It is also a time to wrap up positive social and cognitive experiences in the online environment.

End-of-course experiences in online environments often include student audio or video presentations, summaries and analyses. These reports and presentations provide insights into just what useful knowledge students are taking away from a course and a final opportunity for faculty to remind students of core concepts and fundamental principles. It's the last opportunity you may have to make your students create those final connections.



MAY 5 Last Day of Classes

MAY 6 Reading Day

Articles



(Click the images to read the articles)



[Audio In eLearning: 7 Golden Rules For eLearning Professionals](#)

By Christopher Pappas

Source: eLearning Industry

If text and images are the stars of an eLearning course, then audio in eLearning is one of its most effective supporting actors. It has the power to create the perfect atmosphere and set the tone for the entire eLearning experience. In this article, I'll share everything you need to know about using audio in eLearning.

[Read more...](#)



[The Warm Demander: An Equity Approach](#)

By Matt Alexander

Source: Edutopia

Expect More From Your Students

Become a "warm demander" -- hold your students to high standards and provide the support they need to get there.

[Read more...](#)



[U.S. Promotes Plan to Get 1.5 Billion More People Online](#)

By David Z. Morris

Source: Fortune

The U.S plans to bring 1.5 billion people who currently have no or limited internet access, online by 2020. Internet access has "transformative effects" on individuals, for example banking, pricing and education all become more accessible.

[Read more...](#)

More



The office of DLIT invites you to attend the:

EDUCATION VIRTUAL SUMMIT

19 May, 2016 /online

Educators today are on the cutting-edge of video. Through MOOCs, lecture capture, flipped classrooms, media libraries, alumni relations, and more, educational institutions are using video to transform the way we teach and learn. Join leading educators to explore how to use video from the classroom to the dorm room to the library to the admissions department. At the Kaltura Connect Education Virtual Summit, you will find the best practices to inspire your educational institution through video.

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EDUCATION
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THURSDAY, MAY 19 - ONLINE
10:00-2:00 EDT

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LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EDUCATION SUMMIT

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“The Secret Weapon for Video: Using Online Video at Indiana University”



Wilmington University: Russ Lichterman & Matt Davis

“Changing the Learning Paradigm Without Breaking the Bank: How Wilmington Empowers Faculty and Students to Embrace Technology”



University of Georgia: Sherry Clouser

“How University of Georgia Crowd-Funded Video Across the Enterprise”

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You can participate from wherever you are, on any device. See for yourself the power of video to spread knowledge, generate collaboration, engage, and make the world a little bit smaller.

REGISTER NOW
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Contact Us!

The **Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies** invites faculty and staff to join and participate in our development programs. These events provide an opportunity to network with faculty from other departments, learn new instructional strategies and tools, and become aware of best practices in online teaching and learning. Hope to see you there, and don't forget to register for our workshops and sessions! Please contact us with ideas and suggestions for future events:

Web: <http://www.untDallas.edu/dlit>

Phone: 972-338-5580

Email: UNTDDistance@unt.edu



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