Alternative Delivery/Innovative Scheduling

Technology should be used to enhance student learning and provide efficiencies in the learning process. We believe traditional face-to-face course delivery has an important and key role at MTSU. In addition, web-based and integrative technological strategies can be used to used advance student learning and provide effective approaches to instruction. According to recent results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (2008),

> For both first-year students and seniors, the percent of courses delivered primarily online was significantly related to level of academic challenge. Online courses seem to stimulate more intellectual challenge and educational gains. This suggests that integrating technology-enhanced courses into the curriculum for all students might have some salutary benefits.

Additionally, the NSSE Report states that online students report more "deep approaches to learning in their classes" relative to their on-ground classes. In fall 2007, more than 3.9 million students registered for at least one online class (12 percent increase over 2006). The growth rate for overall growth in higher education enrollment in fall 2007 was 1.2 percent (Staying the Course: Online Education in the U.S., 2008).

Providing online, hybrid, and web-assisted course structures can diversify course delivery options to meet the demands of the MTSU student. Student demand for alternative delivery continues to increase as indicated by the table below.

Table 1 -- MTSU Student Enrollment in Hybrid, Online, and RODP Classes

Semester	**Hybrid Online**			**Online**		
	****Enrolled**	**# of sections made**	**# of courses made**	**Enrolled**	**# of sections made**	**# of courses made**
F2006	NA	NA	NA	2138	126	94
S2007	NA	NA	NA	2191	121	97
U2007	NA	NA	NA	1663	103	80
Total 06-07	NA	NA	NA	**5992**	**350**	**271**
F2007	NA	NA	NA	2463	141	104
S2008	NA	NA	NA	2607	144	108
U2008	NA	NA	NA	1574	107	79
Total 07-08	NA	NA	NA	**6644**	**392**	**291**
F2008	322	13	11	2819	153	104
S2009						
U2009						
Total 08-09						

Table 1 -- MTSU Student Enrollment in Hybrid, Online, and RODP Classes (Continued)

Semester		RODP (MTSU only)		
		Enrolled	# of sections made	# of courses made
F2006		1355	190	190
S2007		1503	249	249
U2007		984	211	211
Total 06-07		**3842**	**650**	**650**
F2007		1575	208	208
S2008		1717	267	267
U2008		1016	203	203
Total 07-08		**4308**	**678**	**678**
F2008		2060	231	231
S2009				
U2009				
Total 08-09				

Source: MTSU Continuing Studies

If MTSU does not take advantage of this opportunity for serving our current students and potential new students, there will likely be significant revenue loss.

Today's learner – life-long learners, non-traditional learners, and traditional college age learners demand a different type of learning than in past years. According to the 2009 *Horizon Report*,

> Schools are still using materials developed decades ago, but today's students come to school with very different experiences than those of 20 or 30 years ago, and think and work very differently as well. Institutions need to adapt to current student needs and identify new learning models that are engaging to younger generations.

By adapting to students' needs through the effective use of learning technologies, Middle Tennessee State University can accomplish the following:

- Provide accessibility and convenience along with a meaningful learning experience.

- Encourage students' development as responsible and active learners. Web-assisted and online classes require that students take the initiative for their own learning and these

types of classes encourage students to be active in the learning process. This type of learning can engage students in the learning process.

- Achieve the goal of the Academic Master Plan to foster a student-centered learning culture—"MTSU will provide faculty opportunities to develop student-centered learning approaches to use integrative technologies effectively to enhance student learning."

- Provide evidence of compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements that students show competency in the use of technology.

- Facilitate being able to target non-traditional learners and learners in other geographic areas to increase the number of students that MTSU can serve.

- Use classroom space more efficiently to serve more students with the current physical space.

- Develop innovative ways to serve more students with our current faculty using web-assisted approaches along with large section classes and graduate assistants.

- Facilitate the mission of International Education by linking students and faculty around the world in the learning environment.

- Provide experiential learning opportunities for students in course delivery design and integrated technology

<u>Strategies for Use of Technology in Learning</u>

1. Develop and implement web-assisted learning courses. A web-assisted course:
   - meets in a classroom for approximately half of the scheduled class periods
   - contains weekly online discussion (usually asynchronous) equal to approximately half of the scheduled class periods
   - may contain other online activities, such as assignment collection and virtual group activities
   - can accommodate enrollment increases

   For example, two web-assisted courses share a classroom a during the same class time with one course meeting each week on Tuesdays and the other course meeting each week on Thursdays. This approach will also work for Monday/Wednesday class times.

Twenty percent of courses should have a web-assisted component within three years. In the first year, it is expected that 10 percent of courses will have a web-assisted component at the end of one year and 40 percent will have an online component by the end of year five. Academic technology staff (for training and support) and internet/server availability must be enhanced and two/three instructional designers should be hired. Departmental mentoring must be part of this program.

2. Develop five online degrees within five years that can be marketed as "signature online" programs. These are high quality programs (at graduate or undergraduate level) that are offered as total online degree programs. These will be very selective to ensure they are successful. Require departments to develop proposals/feasibility studies to show the potential success of the online degree program. Departments of programs selected will be given staffing and resources that are needed to make the online degree program a reality. Two/three instructional designers are needed to assist in development of these degrees. Continuing Studies currently has the dollars to support course development for five online degrees.

3. Offer accelerated courses and programs with web-assisted learning. Students would be able to take more than one class during the same time during one semester. (For example, a student could take two different Monday-Wednesday 12:40 class—one the first of the regular semester and another during the second half of the regular semester.)

4. New course proposals with some alternative delivery or online component are strongly encouraged.

5. New concentrations/majors/programs with some alternative delivery or online component will receive priority.

6. Mandate that all syllabi and class handouts be put online to reduce copy and paper costs and provide a testing center for test taking to save money on printing costs.

7. Develop use of mobile technology (web-equipped phones, I-Pods, etc.), web-casting, web-conferencing and synchronous technology as integrated tools in the learning environment.

8. Develop use of social networking as a tool in the learning environment for discussion, collaboration and participation in online learning activities.

These strategies will require additional staff in Academic and Instructional Technology Services, additional service/Internet capacity, and additional faculty development time. This strategic proposal of web-based and integrative technology will provide for a fundamentally different way of approaching the learning process at MTSU by engaging both faculty and students. We recommend that we take this opportunity to position MTSU for the future by meeting the growing expectation for accessing learning.

<u>Strategies for Innovative Scheduling</u>

1. Offer a general education weekend program with four web-assisted classes offered on Friday and Saturday each semester. Offer other targeted degree programs (including graduate) with web-assisted learning on weekends

2. Schedule courses on Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday, and Friday-Saturday with web-assisted learning modules. This provides for a six day schedule.

3. Add a two week January term with web-assisted learning. This would be suitable for unique offerings and study abroad courses.

References

The Horizon Report – 2009, http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/CSD5612.pdf, The annual Horizon Report is a collaborative effort between the New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative. Each year, the report identifies and describes six areas of emerging technology likely to have a significant impact on teaching, learning, or creative expression in higher education within three adoption horizons: a year or less, two to three years, and four to five years.

National Survey of Student Engagement, 2008 http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2008_Results/index.cfm

Staying the Course: Online Education in the United States, 2008,
http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/survey/staying_course

Steering Committee Minutes from February 21, 2009:

Discussion of Alternative Delivery Methods

1. General discussion of concerns with web-assisted and on-line courses, including effectiveness of the delivery method, ability to maintain quality in this format, costs of implementation, ability and preparedness of students for this method. Cost savings of on-line courses may not be substantial. Class sizes have traditionally been kept artificially low.
2. On the other hand, there is a growing demand for this format. It's a given that higher education is moving in this direction, and that growth in our ability to deliver on-line courses will be important to our overall strategic growth as a university.
3. There is some research that indicates there is no difference in learning outcomes between on-ground and on-line classes if done carefully and with rigor.
4. If the university wants to commit to expansion in this area, there will need to be significant investment in curriculum design, instructional designers, etc. Decisions regarding going to an on-line format should be based on sound pedagogy, not simply on faculty convenience or cost, and should involve careful review. These courses must not be permitted to become second class versions of high quality on-ground courses.
5. Note: Once a viable, high quality course is up and running, a GA can be involved in delivering the course and may help reduce costs.

6. This committee recognizes that further strategic development of our on-line curriculum is critical to the future viability of MTSU. However, there was a great deal of discussion as to how heavy a hand the university should have in encouraging development of these courses. This committee suggests that course proposals, concentrations, majors, and programs with alternative delivery or on-line components should be strongly encouraged. Deans and chairs are encouraged to promote these methods within their faculty.
7. Refer to appendix titled *Alternative Delivery* developed by ad hoc sub-committee of this group and revised in light of today's discussion.

Discussion of Innovative Scheduling

8. See longer term strategies of AIR group (page 7)—recommendation of moving to a Mon/Wed, Tues/Thursday schedule of classes. This committee instead recommends consideration of a six day scheduling system, to make optimal use of Fridays and Saturday.
9. Discussion of concerns with a two-week intersession as being too short for a reasonable delivery of normal course content. Committee does not generally endorse this time frame, although it may be appropriate to approve for some exceptional circumstances (i.e. some study abroad courses.)
10. Refer to appendix titled *Innovative Scheduling*, which will be separated from the previous report that was combined with the *Alternative Delivery* appendix.