

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Interim Report of the Electronic Learning Group

May 20, 2008

I. Charge

The Electronic Learning Group was created by SCHEV to consider recommendations regarding Virginia's capital outlay guidelines with reference to on-campus space needs implicit in certain kinds of electronically mediated instruction where students are located off-campus. Currently, institutions report student enrollment in terms of various course types with further elaboration provided through the dichotomous categories of "on-campus" and "off-campus." The Commonwealth's capital outlay guidelines presume that no on-campus space needs are entailed by instruction reported as occurring off-campus, regardless of modality. While this presumption may once have been essentially accurate, the incidence of electronically mediated instruction means that nowadays students may be located off-campus and yet instructed or supported in ways that require the use of space-intensive resources on campus. The ELG has been charged with characterizing the nature and extent of these space needs and making recommendations for incorporating them, if and as necessary, into the capital outlay guidelines.

II. Process and Recommendations.

SCHEV convened a series of ELG meetings (face to face and by phone conference) from January through April 2008 to consider the most effective manner of implementing the charge.

The first obstacle to address was the lack of an empirical record of the scale and type of student enrollments in electronically mediated courses, either on- or off-campus. While some of the course type categories used previously by four-year institutions and Richard Bland College to report student enrollment to SCHEV do reflect various distance modalities, there have never been sufficiently clear guidelines, or inter-institutional uniformity, to provide a consistent basis for specific recommendations regarding space needs. Moreover, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has heretofore reported all courses as either lecture or lab, with no elaboration by modality. Consequently, there is in Virginia no reliable historical record of student enrollment patterns in electronically mediated courses, much less a record that is sufficiently detailed to inform sound deliberations about possible revisions to the capital outlay guidelines.

The ELG's deliberations thus far have focused on developing a typology of electronically mediated instruction that would be both (i) feasible for institutions to use in reporting student course enrollments, and (ii) sufficiently detailed to support specific recommendations regarding on-campus space needs for certain off-campus instructional activities. As a result of these deliberations, the ELG has arrived at a set of recommendations to SCHEV to guide the stewardship of this project to an ultimate

conclusion. It is the purpose of this interim report to articulate recommendations to guide the gathering of data for use in formulating actual revisions to the capital outlay formulae. These interim recommendations are proffered in the knowledge that a balancing act is being attempted here, among such factors as: the burden involved in establishing new reporting requirements; the need for accurate information about the extent and (over time) growth of electronic learning modalities; and—not least—an inconvenient time frame given the lead-in that may be needed to gather sufficient enrollment data from such a large system of public higher education. It is important to note that, in order to affect capital recommendations made by SCHEV for the 2010-12 biennium, it will be necessary to gather some data from a representative sampling of institutions for 2007-08 enrollments. Without 2007-08 data it will not be possible to recommend revisions to the space utilization formulae in time to inform the 2010-12 capital outlay process; these recommendations need to be established by spring 2009 at the latest.

Finally, the ELG would like to emphasize that the recommendations contained in this interim report are an initial step, aimed at enabling the garnering of information to support deliberations about whether and how to incorporate space needs associated with electronic mediated instruction into the capital outlay guidelines.

Recommendations

- A. The current course enrollment reporting template (Table 1) contains sufficient differentiation among course types to provide accurate information about student enrollments in electronically mediated courses. It should be used as is, with the proviso that sufficient guidance be given to institutions to ensure reasonable inter-institutional consistency.
- B. The Table 2 typology of Location/Delivery Mode/Interaction Mode should be adopted as an elaboration on Table 1 reporting to capture enrollment in electronically mediated courses. Note that the same level of detail is sought for both on-campus and off-campus offerings since electronic learning are increasingly being used in instruction of all types. Accordingly, space implications of on-campus electronic modes should be included in the consideration of possible revisions to the capital outlay guidelines.
- C. Before specific recommendations regarding the capital outlay formulae can be considered, data as per Tables 1 & 2 should be collected for a full year of enrollment from as many institutions as feasible. The consensus of institutional representatives is that logistical considerations dictate that initial data collection may not occur for some institutions prior to the 2009-10 academic year. If it is possible to collect sufficient data for the 2007-08 academic year, that should be done to support revising the capital outlay guidelines in time for the 2010-12 biennium. It is important that the data collected be both accurate and sufficiently representative to support system wide inferences about space needs before revisions to the capital outlay guidelines are recommended to SCHEV.

- D. Once a sufficient sampling of data according to Tables 1 & 2 has been collected, it should be cross referenced with room utilization reporting from institutions. The purpose of this review would be to develop an analysis of space needs associated with each type of electronically mediated instruction according to the Table 1 & 2 categories. This analysis should be used to recommend revisions to the capital outlay guideline formulae.
- E. Conduct a focused study of how faculty who have taught electronically mediated courses use different spaces to prepare for class and interact with students.
- F. The framing of any specific recommendations for the revision of the capital outlay guidelines should take account of the possibility that they may have the effect of introducing disincentives for certain kinds of innovation in electronic learning. This should be avoided as much as possible, even as we acknowledge that all resource allocation processes require the establishment of priorities among competing activities.

III. Explication of Table 2 Categories

A. Location: This category is divided into on-campus and off-campus, defined in terms of whether instruction is received by the learner in a space located on a campus site that has been approved as such by SCHEV and/or the General Assembly (e.g. classroom building on the main or a branch campus). All such sites are “on campus”; all other sites at which students receive instruction are “off campus.” This division is derived from existing space use guidelines and reporting conventions.

B. Delivery Mode: The three delivery modes here are characterized in terms of the extent to which instructor and learner share a common physical space during instruction. In addition to its intuitive plausibility, this way of defining delivery mode has the advantage of being immediately relatable to instructional space needs. Thus, e.g., a hybrid course is one for which it may be inferred that the classroom space needed is a certain (as yet to be determined) factor of what it would be for a face-to-face version of the same course.

i. Face-to-face: The instructor and learner share the same physical space more than 50% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie unit credit hour equivalency).

ii. Distance-Hybrid: The instructor(s) and learner share the same physical space less than 50% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie unit credit hour equivalency). Electronic delivery is used for the balance of instruction.

iii. Distance-Electronic: Apart from a face to face orientation or initial class meeting, the instructor and learner use electronic means to interact 100% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency). Despite the label, correspondence course enrollments should also be reported in this category.

C. Interaction Mode: There are also space implications regarding synchronicity. Asynchronous situations typically require less instructional space but in certain circumstances may require more instructional support space. Opinion in the group was divided on whether a division between synchronous and asynchronous delivery could be consistently maintained or whether it would ultimately prove useful. Some considerations indicate that reporting according to this dichotomy may have institution-specific relevance. SCHEV staff believes it would be useful to collect this data. In the absence of the availability of this parameter, from particular institutions, a default classification will be established.

i. Synchronous: During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time (e.g. video conference).

ii. Asynchronous: During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at different times (e.g. discussion board).

D. Mixed Mode: In cases where different populations of students are taking the same course according to different parameters of location, delivery, and interaction, the institution should report these “mixed modes” at the individual student level. Some institutions currently handle these situations by creating different sections of the same course to handle each combination of location and delivery. All possible enrollment combinations for a given course must be accommodated by properly identifying each student’s mode of reception and interaction.

IV. Timeline

May 2008: Promulgate Interim Report to institutions for comment.

Mid-June 2008: SCHEV provides institutions with revised enrollment reporting parameters (in accord with Table 2 categories) to take effect no later than AY 2009-10. If possible, identify a representative sampling of institutions to incorporate the new parameters into reporting on 2007-08 and/or 2008-09 enrollments.

AY2008-2009: Conduct the study described in II.E, and the analysis described in II.D above, *if* an accurate and sufficiently representative sampling of institutional reporting on 2007-08 enrollments can be procured. Develop revised capital outlay guidelines in time to inform the 2010-12 biennium process.

If accurate and sufficiently representative information for 2007-08 cannot be procured, the analytical work necessary to revise the capital outlay guidelines would be completed during the 2009-10 academic year at the earliest.

Table 1: Course Type Enrollment Reporting Categories

CRSTYPE	CRSTYPE_TEXT	CRSTYPE_DEFINITION
AB	Study Abroad	Coursework is taken abroad.
DI	Discussion/Quiz/Recitation Section	A discussion section associated with a large lecture course
ID	Internet Delivered/Web-based	100% of the coursework is delivered via the internet
LI	Live two-way audio/video	Coursework is presented via synchronous-interactive video
IN	Independent Study	Student is independently working on a project supervised by a faculty member
IS	Internship	Student is performing the duties of an intern and enrolled for course credit; supervised by faculty member and site-supervisor
ST	Special Training or Activity / Fieldwork Experience	Coursework primarily consists of specialized fieldwork experiences (e.g., *professional licensure, volunteering, service learning, science fieldwork, etc.) *Note: Professional licensure includes social work, nursing, legal, counseling, business. Student Teaching is not included in this category, see SU.
LB	Lab	Coursework conducted in a laboratory (e.g., science, language, music)
LC	Lecture	Course material delivered primarily in lecture format
LL	Lecture/Lab	Course is a mixture of lecture and laboratory work
PE	Physical Education/Drill	Coursework requiring physical activity or involving sports or drill formation exercises
SM	Seminar	Course material is primarily delivered via small group discussion led by a faculty member
SO	Studio	Practicum coursework normally associated with art, music, dance, and theatre
SU	Student Teaching	Practicum placement in elementary or secondary school
TH	Thesis	Student is enrolled in a course working toward a thesis, supervised by a faculty member
TU	Tutorial	Coursework is delivered through regular weekly meetings with a faculty member and one or two students.
VT	Video Tape/DVD Instruction/Televised Instruction	More than 50% of coursework is delivered through prerecorded video media (asynchronous delivery)
ZZ	Course Type Not Available	NOTE: use of this course type will result in exclusion for capital consideration

Table 2: Location, Delivery, and Interaction Enrollment Reporting Categories

Location	Delivery Mode	Interaction Mode
<p>(1) On-Campus Instruction is received by the learner in a space located on a campus site that has been approved as such by SCHEV and/or the General Assembly. The site must be one that is treated as a campus by SCHEV for reporting purposes (e.g. classroom building on the main or a branch campus).</p>	<p>(1a) Predominant Face to Face For formal instruction, the instructor and learner share the same physical space more than 50% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency).</p>	<p>(1aS) Synchronous The instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time.</p>
	<p>(1b) Distance – Hybrid For formal instruction, the instructor and learner share the same physical space less than 50% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency). Electronic delivery is used for the balance of instruction.</p>	<p>(1bS) Synchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time (e.g. video conference, teleconference, or Elluminate® live session).</p>
	<p>(1c) Distance Electronic Apart from a face-to-face orientation or initial class meeting, for formal instruction, the instructor and learner use electronic means to interact 100% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency). * Correspondence course enrollments should also be reported in this category</p>	<p>(1bA) Asynchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at different times (e.g. discussion board or podcast).</p>
		<p>(1cS) Synchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time. (e.g. video conference, teleconference, or Elluminate® live session).</p>
<p>(2) Off-Campus Instruction is received by the learner in a space that is not on a site approved as a campus by SCHEV and/or the General Assembly. Such spaces may include leased facilities funded through the institution’s operating budget, or the student may be completely remote from any institutionally managed facility (e.g., at home).</p>	<p>(2a) Predominant Face to Face For formal instruction, the instructor and learner share the same physical space more than 50% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency).</p>	<p>(2aS) Synchronous The instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time.</p>
	<p>(2b) Distance – Hybrid For formal instruction, the instructor(s) and learner share the same physical space less than 50% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency). Electronic delivery is used for the balance of instruction.</p>	<p>(2bS) Synchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time (e.g. video conference, teleconference, or Elluminate® live session).</p>
	<p>(2c) Distance Electronic Apart from a face to face orientation or initial class meeting, for formal instruction, the instructor and learner use electronic means to interact 100% of the time (understood in terms of Carnegie credit hour equivalency). * Correspondence course enrollments should also be reported in this category</p>	<p>(2bA) Asynchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at different times (e.g. discussion board or podcast).</p>
		<p>(2cS) Synchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at the same time. (e.g. video conference, teleconference, or Elluminate® live session).</p>
		<p>(2cA) Asynchronous During electronic interaction, the instructor and learner interact mostly at different times (e.g. discussion board or podcast).</p>