

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

RESOLUTION REGARDING COURSE DELIVERY VIA DISTANCE LEARNING

Whereas, Southern Connecticut State University exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence; and

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty; and

Whereas, The extenuating emergency circumstances caused by COVID-19 have resulted in closure of the SCSU campus and changes in the way pedagogy and routine business are being conducted during Spring 2020; and

Whereas; The stopgap distance learning being utilized during Spring 2020 on an emergency basis is being misconstrued and promoted by some as representative of higher education online learning, while it is not representative of best practices of cohesive, well-designed, effective online courses or programs, which require a significant amount of training, planning, and resources, and which need to be matched to learning needs of students; and

Whereas; The student population at Southern, particularly the undergraduate student population which comprises the vast majority of students, has selected Southern in order to benefit from its on-ground classes, interactions with other students, professors, and other personnel, as well as a campus experience, internships, and field experiences, such as student teaching; and

Whereas; The abrupt shift to distance learning has resulted in reports of many students who are struggling with the medium of distance learning for a variety of reasons; and

Whereas; Some universities are utilizing this occasion to make future curricular decisions regarding course and program delivery that undermine the typical decision-making process that recognizes the faculty purview over curriculum; and

Whereas; The Collective Bargaining Agreement states that “The department shall have responsibility for the content and development of courses, curriculum and programs of study within its discipline, ...” (CBA, 5.17); and

Whereas; Some faculty have been informed that if they wish to teach a section of a particular course, they can only do so if they offer the course in an online format; and

Whereas; Decisions regarding method of course or program delivery are complex and require thoughtfulness and consideration of many factors, including the needs and desires of students, determination of the optimal educational environment for different groups of students, available resources, and mission and reputation of the institution; therefore be it

Resolved, That current efforts to provide distance learning for all course delivery shall be recognized as a temporary measure to deal with the exigent demands of campus closure and not as a replacement on a permanent basis of how Southern has delivered its courses and programs up until

this time; and be it further

Resolved, That complying with a particular mode of course delivery not be required for a faculty member to receive approval to offer a particular course or section of a course; nor that faculty members be given priority to offer a particular course or section of a course based upon mode of course delivery; and be it further

Resolved, That prior to enacting any overarching changes to our courses and program delivery methods, thoughtful consideration by the faculty through its representative governance body is necessary to study and compare learning outcomes for different kinds of students in a variety of instructional formats; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate will continue its study and discussions of online learning, that began in Spring 2020, during the Fall 2020 semester.