Report of the Online Education Task Force

Submitted February 2021

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™

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Online Education Task Force Report
February 19, 2021

Introduction

As technology has continued to advance, the ability to provide additional methods of delivery to both resident and non-resident students has increased. The on-demand access of online courses allows students the opportunity to coordinate these courses with their personal and professional responsibilities. Such flexibility allows Mississippi State University (also referred to as University and MSU) to market to a greater audience, including adult learners with full-time employment, distance learners unable to attend a residential program, and organizations seeking to improve the education and skills of their workforce, among others. Beyond the traditional online education markets, residential students often find value in online courses, due to the convenience of scheduling around course conflicts, on- or off-campus work obligations, and collegiate activities. Departments and faculty find value in online education when determining best methods to deliver and assess course content, manage faculty workload, and determine space allocation.

With the challenges presented by the global pandemic in early 2020, many institutions, including MSU, had to immediately transition to remote instruction to complete the spring 2020 semester. While several of the University's online-approved courses were able to transition, there was evidence that many of our traditional face-to-face (F2F) courses were not fully prepared to provide an online experience comparable to the approved F2F course option. Furthermore, many of our students were not prepared for a full schedule of online courses.

When seeking to increase online course offerings, important considerations include access to appropriate technology (including hardware and software and campus infrastructure), training on the appropriate use of technology in an online environment, accessibility compliance, and other best practices.

In February 2020, prior to the pandemic, Provost David Shaw created a task force to examine how the University could best position itself to be among the leaders in providing online education to its constituents. The task force members represented a wide variety of expertise in online education.

The Online Education Task Force Membership

Peter Ryan, Executive Vice Provost, Dean of the Graduate School
Sharon Oswald, Dean, College of Business
Jason Keith, Dean, Bagley College of Engineering
Rick Travis, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Terry Dale Cruse, Associate Vice President & Head of Campus, MSU Meridian
John Dickerson, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment
Susan Seal, Executive Director, Center for Distance Education

Jennifer McPherson, Financial Analyst, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Elizabeth Blaine, Strategic Operations Analyst, Vice President for Finance and Administration
John Rodgers, Professor & Head, Geosciences
Deborah Eakin, Associate Professor, Psychology
Rebecca Robichaux-Davis, Robert Holland Faculty Senate President; Professor, Curriculum, Instruction & Special Education
Steve Parrott, Chief Information Officer
Tyler Packer, President, MSU Student Association
Brent Fountain, Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs; Chair, Online Education Task Force

The Online Education Task Force Directives:

- Evaluate best practices at other universities that should be considered at MSU.
- Determine impediments to enhancing online education at MSU.
- Explore how we can expand programmatic offerings at MSU.
- Consider structural changes needed in the financial model MSU uses for tuition distribution and overall support of not only online education, but the overall educational enterprise at MSU.
- Consider structural changes that could improve development and support of online education.
- Address how students in Starkville, Meridian and other locations can best capitalize on courses offered through all means available.

The Online Education Task Force Recommendations

The Online Education Task Force has drafted eleven recommendations to address the original task force directives and provide insight on knowledge gained from Mississippi State University's reliance on online education during the 2020 pandemic.

Recommendation 1: Allow colleges and departments the flexibility to offer courses in the manner that best meets the needs of their students, faculty, and program, while maintaining any appropriate reporting and accreditation requirements. Departments and Colleges should consider the best mode(s) of instruction for each course based on content, instructor, student demand, course sequencing and available technology.

- Colleges, departments, and instructors should complete a strategic review of the curriculum and identify ideal methods of delivery whether that be F2F, online, hybrid/other blended mode, or a combination of each.
- Instructors should review individual courses and identify opportunities to include online elements to enhance delivery and course effectiveness and to support student learning outcomes.
- Colleges and departments should consider course sequencing and student schedules to balance online and F2F courses where appropriate.

- Departments should develop strategies that provide sufficient opportunity for distance students to access online courses (e.g., providing priority registration for distance students, reserving a percentage of enrollment for distance students).

Recommendation 2: Identify a funding stream to ensure that MSU remains on the cutting edge of technology to deliver quality online education experiences for students.

- Consider allocating an instructional enhancement fee from the existing tuition rate to provide a new funding mechanism for classroom technology, classroom support, and faculty utilizing classroom technology. Funding provided by this fee could provide resources for instructional designers, faculty online course development, faculty training and support, instructional technology upgrades, and new initiatives to further enhance educational instruction.
- Fund appropriate technology for classrooms to allow for F2F, hybrid, and online instruction.
- Centralize high-dollar and specialized audio-visual equipment in strategic locations across campus to create dynamic high-quality online instruction, to avoid duplication, to provide sufficient oversight and support, and to maximize use by faculty (e.g., studio, laboratory, classroom).
- Develop a mechanism where faculty can request University-maintained and operated technology (e.g., webcams, microphones, software) to support online efforts.

Recommendation 3: Hire instructional designers to support departments and faculty in the development and improvement of online courses.

- Identify a unit to provide the primary location for the development, management, coordination and supervision of instructional designers.
- Consider funding student positions to support instructional design staff and provide opportunity for experiential education among interested students.
- Utilize a percentage of an instructional enhancement fee from the existing tuition rate to fund and support instructional designers.

Recommendation 4: Direct faculty/staff to University-supported, University-provided technology when available and appropriate.

- Identify and support the technology and software that benefits a large percentage of the University faculty and staff to reduce expense and allows for coordination of training and support.
- Encourage staff to utilize University-provided/supported technology to
    - Increase campus information security,
    - Reduce need of faculty, staff and students to learn/operate multiple software, and
    - Avoid redundancy among colleges and departments.

- The task force recognizes that there will be discipline-specific software and technology where central ITS support is not feasible. ITS should be informed of such software for operational documentation.

Recommendation 5: Every course, regardless of primary delivery method, should maintain an online presence and/or electronic communication with students.

- Due to the training and support provided by ITS and CDE, the University-supported Learning Management Software (LMS), Canvas provides the simplest and most effective opportunity for instructors to develop an online presence and engage with students across multiple teaching modalities.
- Highly recommend that departments and faculty use Canvas throughout all University courses (at minimum, all 1000-level courses) to better engage and communicate with students. Examples of materials to be posted include:
    - Electronic syllabus,
    - Class communication,
    - Posting all assignments and activities.
    - Continue to support Canvas training for faculty and encourage training units to develop faculty training programs in Canvas.
    - Permit faculty to utilize methods of technology in addition to the University-supported LMS and create a culture where electronic communication and online presence are expected in standard course delivery. Such technology should not create additional costs for students without prior approval by the Additional Course Fee Committee.

Recommendation 6: In coordination with F2F training, develop and offer training for online delivery that allows for progression from proficiency to mastery in online instructional skills and best practice implementation.

- Coordinate activities of units providing instructional training to avoid duplication and identify gaps in training and delivery.
- Include resources developed at the college/department level when appropriate.
- Provide resources and best practices to faculty and staff regarding current and new online education strategies.
- Create a central repository to house training and resources to assist with online teaching and associated technology.
- Identify a mentoring system where faculty can seek support and feedback from expert MSU faculty in a similar discipline or course format.
- Maintain a training database of faculty achievement and education related to online training and development.
- Consider adoption of Online Learning Accessibility Policy language to the appropriate academic/operating policy to ensure that the University meets federal ADA guidelines

and provides equity in instruction to all online students (See https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor62335).

Recommendation 7: Support colleges and departments to build and maintain a repository of packaged high-quality online and hybrid department-level courses.

- Provide resources and develop a mechanism to compensate faculty for online course development. Examples could include:
    - Allow summer service of 8.33% for nine-month faculty,
    - Provide a course release for course development,
    - Consider allowing requests for additional pay and semester overloads to support the development of department-maintained courses.
- Funding could be provided by colleges/departmental tuition and fee allocations (see recommendation 11) and proposed instructional enhancement fee (see recommendation 2).

Recommendation 8: Work with colleges and departments to increase opportunities, provide flexibility, and promote the development and delivery of online courses to support both traditional and novel educational offerings. Additional offerings can especially benefit adult and other "non-traditional" learners who are seeking to increase knowledge/skill, improve performance, and/or increase marketability.

- Encourage colleges to formalize alternative pathways for degree completion.
- Encourage colleges and departments to identify and develop marketable content-specific certificate programs and create a tracking system within Banner.
- Evaluate opportunities and viability of micro-credential programs that can be matched with current program requirements leading to degree completion or stand-alone based on content alignment.
- Evaluate the feasibility of mini-terms and appropriate courses to provide additional flexibility to students.
- Identify opportunities to utilize online education to support University-business partnerships that increase the feasibility of participation by their current workforce.
- Work with departments to identify opportunities to increase the utilization of the Bachelor of Applied Sciences (BAS) and accelerated degree programs.
- Continue to investigate strategies that allow students to apply successfully completed coursework to future educational opportunities (e.g., graduate degrees, professional licensure and certifications).

Recommendation 9: To further remove the perceived differentiation between online and F2F courses, identify a standardized evaluation process where all courses (F2F and online) may be part of a performance review performed by faculty departmental peers and supervisor.

- Identify opportunities for online instructional quality to be reflected in annual reviews and promotion and tenure documents.
- Provide comparable awards for excellent online instruction and design and allow faculty teaching online courses to be considered for University level awards.
- Develop a process where peers and supervisors can observe online courses, comparable to class observations of F2F courses (e.g., teaching awards/recognition, annual review, promotion and tenure review).
- Recommend an institutional mechanism of coordination for instructors and courses who seek Quality Matters (or comparable) certification which can provide an additional measure of evaluation for online courses.
    - More information regarding Quality Matters can be located at: https://www.qualitymatters.org
    - Identify at least four current courses to serve as a pilot for Quality Matters certification that can later be adapted and expanded for additional course certifications.

Recommendation 10: Develop a system where student support units collaborate with academic units to educate and assist both traditional and non-traditional students in the use of online instructional technologies and in incorporating and utilizing best practices when participating in online courses. To coordinate this effort, we recommend establishing an online student success working group. This group would convene on a regular basis to address various aspects of online student success including needs that might be specific to Campus 5 or Campus 1 online students. Example outcomes may include:

- Further development of Canvas Resource page for online students that is made available to all faculty to include in their courses. This page would be the equivalent to the Instructional Resource Page for faculty but would be housed within Canvas courses for easier, more direct access.
- Implementation of an online tutoring system for online learners.
- Review online learners' access to student support services.
- Composition of the working group may include representatives from the following entities and others deemed necessary
    - Center for Distance Education
    - The Learning Center
    - Office of Student Success
    - Gen Ed online faculty
    - Program specific online faculty
    - Distance Education librarian
    - Advisors

- Center for Teaching and Learning
- Students

Recommendation 11: Re-evaluate distance education tuition and fees in context of the overall University tuition and fee structure, with the two-pronged goal of improving transparency and consistency, regardless of course delivery mode, while preserving the financial solvency of colleges and departments.

- Currently, distance education tuition and fees provide a funding stream for colleges and departments that supports their individual and collective efforts. As online education continues to expand beyond our distance student population to include opportunities for resident students, a comprehensive review of funding needs to be considered to avoid negatively affecting one population over the other. Furthermore, online education development, training, and delivery will require additional resources be committed in order to be effective.
- The task force recommends establishing a new working group under the direction of the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President and Vice President for Finance and Administration to further address the complex nature of the University's comprehensive tuition and fee structure. This working group should also be tasked with examining how costs for online education delivery can be effectively managed as part of a new or modified funding model for the University.

The Online Education Task Force wishes to thank Provost David Shaw and Mississippi State University for the opportunity to consider this important issue on behalf of our institution. We are more than willing to provide additional information and support as requested.

Sincerely,

The Online Education Task Force

Online Education Resources

UPCEA : https://upcea.edu/
UPCEA is the leading association for professional, continuing, and online education. For more than 100 years, UPCEA has served most of the leading public and private colleges and universities in North America. Founded in 1915, the association serves its members with innovative conferences and specialty seminars, research and benchmarking information, professional networking opportunities and timely publications. Based in Washington, D.C., UPCEA also builds greater awareness of the vital link between contemporary learners and public policy issues. CDE and Continuing Education serve on committees, serve as conference presenters, have received awards and attend conferences and webinars at the regional and national levels.

Online Learning Consortium: https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/
The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) is a collaborative community of higher education leaders and innovators, dedicated to advancing quality digital teaching and learning experiences designed to reach and engage the modern learner – anyone, anywhere, anytime. OLC inspires innovation and quality through an extensive set of resources, including best-practice publications, quality benchmarking, leading-edge instruction, community-driven conferences, practitioner-based and empirical research, and expert guidance. CDE has presented at national conferences and attends regularly.

WCET: https://wcet.wiche.edu/
WCET is the leader in the practice, policy, & advocacy of digital learning in higher education. WCET is a member-driven non-profit which brings together colleges, universities, higher education organizations, and companies to collectively improve the quality and reach of technology-enhanced learning programs. We primary use the resources of WCET for areas related to state authorization, although we do take advantage of some of the other training and resources.

EAB: https://eab.com/
EAB provides a number of services to CDE including tailored market research, related research publications, tailored training for our staff/faculty, website audits, and various other resources related to student success, enrollment, and strategy and operations.

Sub-Task Force Recommendations
For Studio Instruction in the Online Environment
(Representatives from Architecture, Art, Landscape Architecture, and Music)

At the request of the MSU Task Force for Online Education and its chair Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Brent Fountain, a sub-task force was formed to examine the question of online instruction in studio-based disciplines. The sub-task force was made up of Angi Bourgeois, Dean of the College of Architecture, Art, & Design; Jeffrey Haupt, Associate Dean of the College of Architecture, Art, & Design and Professor in Art; Sadik Artunc, Department Head in Landscape Architecture; Jassen Callender, interim Director of the School of Architecture, Critz Campbell, Department Head in Art, Sheri Falcone, Instructor in the Department of Music, Barry Kopetz, Department Head in Music, and Peter Summerlin, Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture. The sub-task force met weekly from June 5-July 10. The following report provides a summary of the major points of discussion, as well as recommendations and considerations for both immediate and long-term challenges and possibilities of virtual or remote learning in studio disciplines.

As the sub-task force for online instruction, the group set out to discuss 1) what is essential about studio instruction in our disciplines; 2) how can that be achieved in an online or remote instructional environment; 3) what cannot be simulated or achieved remotely/online; 4) what recommendations would we make for a) the immediate needs for studio instruction this fall (whether it be F2F, Hybrid, Online) and b) for the future of remote learning in our disciplines.

1): What is Essential about Studio Instruction in our Disciplines?
While our disciplines are unique from one another in various ways, the following are shared ideas about what is essential to learning in our studio environments that must remain as a major priority, no matter the mode of learning employed:

1) the interactive teacher/learner model--studio is often described as 1:1 learning in a group environment;
2) the need to see/hear/engage directly with each student--hands on examination of their work/their instruments in real time to assess the progress/challenges/successes;
3) the learner to learner model--studio learning is students seeing and learning by watching their peers--noticing their work ethic and work outcomes, by seeing/hearing their critique/instructor feedback, by the collective iterative mode of trying, receiving guidance/feedback, revising;
4) the innate competitive nature that comes from seeing each other's work come to life in a shared environment and witnessing each other's jury/critique impacts each student and their own development of work habits and project outcomes;
5) the actual making or performing is challenged in the remote environment--using specialized equipment in particular that is not available to each student individually; the need for public experiences essential to certain outcomes (public performances, exhibitions/artist talks, etc.;
6) field trips/field experiences/internships, taking out students into their disciplines, visiting professionals, engaging in group travel;
7) long-term projects requiring access to studio space after hours;

2): How Can Quality Studio Instruction be Achieved in an Online or Remote Instructional Environment?

Here we focused on two separate areas--a) examples of folks who are doing it right--who is teaching online or remotely with success and in ways that might make sense to study/examine for our own disciplines and b) what resources exist to support forms remote/online instruction in our disciplines.

a) Expertise:

The first of these revolved around creating a resource of experts who have mastered teaching online/remotely, are there programs in our disciplines that we could look to as examples to achieve not only the specific discipline outcomes, but also get at what we have listed above as essential aspects of studio teaching? Are their respectable educators in our discipline that we would see as resources, consultants, etc. for our own institutions? It was noted that in none of our fields is there a large distance/online educational presence, but that in our post-Covid world, many of us are getting offers from "experts" to teach or provide resources to us via distance/online. While it is possible that some professional/industry experts for online or virtual teaching could be out there, the need to research outside consultants was clear.

a) peer/peer plus institutions that have taken the dive into distance education--Arizona State and Purdue University were both mentioned as R1 institutions that are known to have invested heavily in developing online instruction. They may not have done so in our fields, but there may be things to learn from their online programs;
b) our accreditation bodies, especially in this moment where the entire world has moved quickly online/remote;
c) industry: our professions are providing good models for managing design/studio remotely and may provide useful insights to us:
d) links to peer and industry examples:
    i) https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-big-fault-lines-higher-ed-fall-jeff-selingo/?trackingId=hEOFS%2BErTNWW3jdzeup6bQ%3D%3D
    ii) https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/blog/6-considerations-for-transitioning-back-to-school?utm_campaign=Next%3A%20The%20Future%20of%20Higher%20Education&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newsletter
    iii) https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/blog/6-considerations-for-transitioning-back-to-school?utm_campaign=Next%3A%20The%20Future%20of%20Higher%20Education&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newsletter
    iv) https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/2020/06/active-learning-in-hybrid-and-socially-distanced-classrooms/
    v) https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/the-back-to-school-facilities-toolkit-helps-visualize-school-design-after-covid-19_o
    vi) https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2020/06/24/simulations-college-classrooms-fall-dont-bode-well?fbclid=IwAR3C8hrWIZh47cSfk0orH0Q1h-wY-y-a-Ac0e4d8845SIz5ViAQyc-cAvUg#.XvNw75BNViU.twitter

b): Resources/Technologies:

1. Educreation app: https://www.educreations.com/ an app that provides faculty and students a way to create and watch dynamic video lessons (voice over recordings, that can be engaged with, written over, marked up).
2. Wacom tablets : https://www.wacom.com/en-us/products/pen-tablets for drawing, marking, digital design/drawing/painting, etc.

3. Live-streaming for synchronous learning (so students who are in class and students engaged remotely can share the same learning space)
4. Studio tool in Canvas/Webex to make demo videos/short lectures. Set up for demonstrations much like a cooking show approach, or could use a time-lapse approach (depending on familiarity with editing tools)
5. Ipad Air with pencil combined with use of Procreate software (+- $10) allows for sketching, sharing content automatically, can do a time-lapse at the end of a drawing. Can record as you draw and record voice-over, files are not too big to share easily.
6. Use of GroupMe as a communication tool for entire class/peer-to-peer groups also.
7. ConceptBoard software for final critiques/juries/reviews. Students upload their work and all participants can add comments/critique as notes around their images. Can be screen shot for process work (Challenge is that students often do not document/photograph their work very well or with appropriate lighting.
8. Possible required equipment for students a cheap scanner/copier/printer to scan images.
9. Instead of building 3D models in wood or other materials, students are learning Rhino software and 3D modeling their designs
10. Recommended app by several drawing and graphic design faculty: https://procreate.art/
11. Open source video capture app recommended by Art faculty: https://obsproject.com/

3): What about Studio Instruction Cannot Be Simulated in an Online/Remote Environment?

While some of the essential aspects of studio learning listed above can be translated remotely/virtually, by its collaborative and iterative nature, studio instruction is challenging to the remote/online environment. We have examined our disciplines and generally speaking there are very few distance programs that we can find. Arizona State indicates it has the first fully online BFA degree from an R1 institution, and it is digital photography—and their curriculum does not include traditional drawing/design studios, but rather engages their students in photography from their first semester. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Music, and Art as undergraduate disciplines have not delved deeply into distance/online education at the undergraduate level, especially when it comes to the studio aspects of the degrees.

With the idea of drawing from local expertise, our sub-task force invited 3 faculty members teaching studio courses this summer completely online for their feedback. Associate Professor Hans Herrmann (architecture—1st year studio), Assistant Professor Joseph Morzuch (art-Design I), and Lecturer Aaron McElfish (art-Drawing I) each shared their process for approaching online studio instruction this summer, resources and technologies that have proven successful/useful, and insights in approaching the potential of teaching remote studios (full or hybrid) in the Fall and beyond.

These faculty members shared strategies, what was working, as well as what was more challenging. They shared ideas for software, technology (listed above). They each had developed somewhat different approaches to the studio, with one being handled almost fully asynchronously, one holding some synchronous meetings, as well as having much of the course managed asynchronously, and one who is functioning fully synchronously (though using technology to preserve and maintain online resources in Canvas). Many members thought that one of the biggest challenges to the studio in a remote environment was the hyper-condensed nature of summer in addition to the shift into remote/virtual learning. Summer studios are already very challenging, so moving them into the virtual realm is likely more challenging for this time period than it would be in a longer term like Fall.

It is hard to replicate textures, the tactile experience of teaching design/art, the loss of the immediacy of feedback, the osmosis that comes naturally from working side by side with each other/hearing a peer's feedback, seeing their work, learning from their strengths and weaknesses. It is also easy for quiet students to hide in the remote environment. Studio culture is a mainstay that is hard to build in a remote environment—some ways might be to schedule out of class "studio work times" that students open a shared WebEx while they are working—a suggestion one of the faculty members is using this summer. To work together remotely. A vital part of the studio experience is the meaningful play and iterative discovery that drives greater innovations, this is more difficulty to simulate in the overly structured and separate/isolated environment of distance/online/remote.

Music education has been noted to be particularly challenged in the online/remote environment due to the distinct need to have high quality sound transmission. The cost for the necessary technology at the level of professional music studios makes it extremely challenging for a program to invest in distance education.

One challenge to teaching studio remotely noted by those teaching studio remotely this summer is the issue of controlling the students' access to appropriate subject matter for the skill building they are doing in these courses—particularly drawing from life. One professor teaching online this summer found that the students were struggling finding appropriate buildings to sketch, so he decided to send photographs of campus buildings so he could control their drawing source. Another instructor incorporated the selection of the subject (still life) into their assignment. In this case, he gives them clear instructions for a selection of shapes they must incorporate and set up for their drawing, students then select their materials and organize the still life based on the instructions, then photograph it for approval by the instructor before they begin drawing. An added bonus here is that the students begin to think about the set up more carefully, considering the relationships of the objects, which might benefit them as they begin the visual analysis in preparation of drawing those relationships. This instructor has broken down the typical assignment into multiple steps which then become process assignments. We also discussed ways in which professors might utilize common materials that students could easily access in their remote locations in order to stabilize assignments—an example of color theory was raised. Because color is impacted by the quality of video transmission that might vary from student to student, it could be a strategy to assign students to find the same product or material (a cereal box of a particular color could be easily accessed by all students and provide a stable source for each student and provide a useful control for a color assignment). We can ask students to link to items or experiences that they hold in common.

4a): What Recommendations can we make for the Immediate Fall Semester?

a) create a webinar/lecture series offered by the Center for Distance Education and the Center for Teaching and Learning : ***Lessons from the Trenches: Studio Learning in a Pandemic.*** This should draw on the experiences and expertise of faculty who found success translating their studio courses into a remote or hybrid format from Spring, Summer, or the upcoming terms;
b) encourage faculty to take the MSU Online 101 course, very helpful for faculty to learn about organizing material through modules, condensing material, etc;
c) with the need to have a full online course prepped, and possibly offer both F2F and online simultaneously, it would be good to plan for interactive online set up ready to go;
d) invest in technology that would help both in F2F/hybrid and online like Procreate, Educreate, Rhino (3D Modeling), ConceptBoard (for critiques), photoshop/illustrator/Adobe Creative Suite;
e) consider having students recommended access to cheap scanner/copier/printer (+- $40-$50) to help stabilize the quality of reproductions of work submitted for evaluation (poor quality photos/scans were noted to be a challenge in assessing students' work);
f) consider use of upper division students as peer mentors or studio assistants, or even consider "vertical studio" experiences that would link lower and upper division student;
g) learn from the experiences of those teaching studio online this summer. Use their approaches, experiences, and insights as a starting point so that we learn from the Spring and Summer to make

Fall online a more measured and thoughtfully structured educational experience that more closely approximates what happens in the studio classroom;

h) avoid the idea of "translating" a course or assignment directly when changing the method of deliver to remote/virtual learning, but to rather re-imagine the course material/assignment which might change the nature of the assignment, break it into smaller components. Focus on the key outcomes and build appropriate assignments that will function with the strengths and weaknesses of the online/remote environment. We discussed the "Karate Kid" approach to learning, where typical assignments might address multiple items or outcomes holistically, in the online environment breaking down to the component parts and then building up those skills/techniques differently or individually—which might later come together—Wax on/Wax off;
i) creation of "open studio" time practices/requirements to try to develop an environment of peer-to-peer learning, encouraging dynamic community development through shared course Webex for open studio work, Groupme, discussion boards, etc.
j) make as much as possible available to the students from the beginning of the course—this is a guiding principle;
k) use either graduate or undergraduate TAs, older student mentors in the online class, assignment critiques, weekly check-ins;
l) regular or consistent work schedule week by week helps students know what to expect, when they are expected to interact, engage, or turn in items--One example of a weekly schedule for a summer design course: Monday, introduce project, demos, discussion of expectations; Wednesday check in, students share their projects to all, give feedback on each other's work; Thursday the professor gives feedback to all students; Sunday projects are due;
m) students seem less responsive to what they perceive as voluntary check-ins (which would be typical in the classroom on work days) but respond well to assignments/deadlines;

4b. What Recommendations can we make for future investigations of more fully remote/virtual teaching in our disciplines?

Some ideas for structuring existing or new studio-based curricula in a remote environment would be to consider structuring modules that followed a more intensive schedule, perhaps like a quarter system—longer classes, greater engagement, students focusing on fewer courses at a time to delve more deeply. A distance set up might maximize the August-October/Oct-Dec/Dec/Jan-March/March-May/Maymester/10wk summer program. This might only work for a fully remote student audience, or perhaps for distance only courses.

It was a consistent theme that direct translation of existing practices/assignments from F2F to remote learning was not successful. Rather, it was more appropriate to build the virtual/remote/distance course specific to the remote learning model. Though student learning outcomes must remain consistent across platforms, rethinking and redesigning the approach, the assignments, the interactions, etc. to suit online learning was deemed the best approach.

Also, graduate curricula might be best suited for distance programming because it would be built on the idea that incoming students have already had a strong studio basis in their undergraduate education. This could be controlled through admission requirements, if necessary or beneficial.

The sub-task force is happy to provide greater detail or meet with the larger Task Force, if it was determined to be helpful. We will continue to meet regularly to share ideas and strategies as we approach and move through the Fall.

Summary of Survey of Faculty Regarding Transition to Online – Spring 2020

In May 2020, the Online Task Force distributed an online survey via email to faculty (which includes those in professorial ranks and instructors) with the goal of gathering information about experiences in transitioning to online teaching. Questions focused on faculty characteristics (e.g., teaching experience), course characteristics (e.g., type of class), and technology used. The survey also included questions about future needs regarding online instruction, including needed training and technology. This summary is meant to provide an overview of the information garnered because this information helped to inform many of the recommendations made by the Online Task Force. A total of 465 Surveys were completed. For 385 surveys, all of the questions were answered; for 80 surveys, some data were missing. We accounted for missing data on a question-by-question basis. The Online Task Force would like to thank all faculty who took valuable time to complete our survey.

Ease of Transition Ratings

Faculty rated ease of transition for discussions, labs, and in-class activities as "Extremely/Somewhat Difficult". Responses were split for "lectures" with 38% finding the transition to online for lectures "Extremely/Somewhat Easy" and 40% finding the transition "Extremely/Somewhat Difficult". Ease of transition to online exams was also split with 31% reporting "Extremely/Somewhat Easy" and 44% reporting "Extremely/Somewhat Difficult". Assignments were reportedly "Extremely/Somewhat Easy" for 61% of those responding.

Instructor Characteristics

A large majority of those who completed the survey were faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences, followed by the College of Education, and then the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the Bagley College of Engineering. Prior to going online in Spring 2020, the majority of faculty had never previously taught online (54%), although 51% had taken the Center for Teaching and Learning's Online 101 training class. Most of the faculty received their information about the transition via email correspondence.

Those responding to the survey had taught an average of 14 years with an average of 10.5 years at Mississippi State. Each faculty member taught an average of 2.4 classes online during Spring 2020 with an average of 80 students per faculty member.

Class Characteristics

Most of the classes that transitioned to online delivery were undergraduate classes (247) and lecture classes (301); 125 were identified as primarily discussion classes. They were evenly split between being taught synchronously (152) and asynchronously (155). Class size was over 100 for 41 classes reported and over 50 for 77 classes reported. Fifty-eight were identified as graduate classes, with 53 identified as a mix of graduate/undergraduate classes.

Technology Used

The vast majority of faculty reported using Canvas, although a few reported using Email as the primary mechanism for delivering content. Fifty-nine percent reported recording video lectures and most used Canvas Studio, followed by Camtasia. YouTube was used by a few faculty. Sixty-four percent used

Video Conferencing software with the most frequently used video conference software being Webex, followed by Zoom, and then Teams.

Exams were typically not proctored; 76% did not use any proctoring methods. Proctored exams were administered primarily using Respondus Lockdown Browser or Honorlock, or faculty served proctors via Webex. The primary reasons given for not using proctoring technology were technology or connectivity issues, followed by the exam being incompatible with the Quizzes function in Canvas. Others reported being advised against using proctoring or cited cost to the University. Other security techniques employed other than proctoring technology included imposing time limits, only allowing viewing of one question at a time, and using a large test bank to create unique exams for each student. However, 95 respondents reported not using any test security techniques.

Technology Knowledge Prior to Spring 2020

Between 32 and 38% of faculty reported being very knowledgeable about Canvas's structure, gradebook, and assignments. Surprisingly, 50% reported being very knowledgeable with ARC Studio. They were not knowledgeable at all with Canvas Rubrics (43%), Webex (38%), Teams (57%), Zoom (35%), Lockdown Browser (56%), or Honorlock (74%).

Respondents reported that working with most of the Canvas components were "Extremely/Somewhat Easy", ranging from 60% for the Gradebook and Speedgrader to 35% for the Rubrics. However, 32% also rated Canvas Rubrics as "Extremely/Somewhat Difficult". Most who used Webex, Teams, and Zoom found them "Extremely/Somewhat Easy" to use (53%, 47%, and 61%, respectively). Faculty were divided on the ease of use for ARC Studio (38% vs 32%), but most agreed that Lockdown Browser and Honorlock were "Extremely/Somewhat Difficult" to use.

Future Need for Online Teaching

Requested technology training mirrored the ease of transition and technology knowledge data with 37% requesting more training on the use of Honorlock and 27% requesting training on the use of Respondus Lockdown Browser. Between 20-26% requested training on Accessibility Considerations, Webex, Canvas Discussion Boards, ARC Studio, Canvas Quizzes, Canvas Structure, and Canvas Rubrics. Less than 20% requested training on the use of Teams, Canvas Assignments, Canvas Gradebook, and Canvas Speedgrader.

When asked about what new technology faculty would like to see be made available to them, faculty responded primarily with "student needs", "quality video and audio recording software and hardware," "upgraded internet access from remote locations" and "upgraded classroom technology to include cameras in all classrooms."

When specifically asked about software they would like to have access to, several responders requested "Adobe Create Suite" and "Adobe Acrobat Pro".

Future help was requested to provide information on best practices in online education (24%). Less than 20% requested help with software, hardware, or other additional training, including access to instructional designers. However, 20% reported lack of necessary equipment as a remaining obstacle

toward future online teaching, with a small percentage of others noting lack of training, lack of software knowledge, and lack of internet access as remaining obstacles.

When asked what else MSU could do to facilitate quality online content, the responses primarily related to “student needs,” "on demand assistance,” “time needs and compensation,” and “internet-related issues across the state.”

Despite reported challenges, 84% of those faculty who responded reported a willingness to teach online in future semesters.

Specific Review Standards from the QM Higher Education Rubric, Sixth Edition

General Standards	Specific Review Standards	Points
Course Overview and Introduction	1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.	3
	1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	3
	1.3 Communication expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated.	2
	1.4 Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course, or a link to current policies is provided.	2
	1.5 Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated, and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided.	2
	1.6 Computer skills and digital information literacy skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.	1
	1.7 Expectations for prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.	1
	1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is professional and is available online.	1
	1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.	1
Learning Objectives (Competencies)	2.1 The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable.	3
	2.2 The module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.	3
	2.3 Learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly, are written from the learner's perspective, and are prominently located in the course.	3
	2.4 The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and learning activities is clearly stated.	3
	2.5 The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course.	3
Assessment and Measurement	3.1 The assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3
	3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course.	3
	3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work, and their connection to the course grading policy is clearly explained.	3
	3.4 The assessments used are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course.	2
	3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.	2
Instructional Materials	4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3
	4.2 The relationship between the use of instructional materials in the course and completing learning activities is clearly explained.	3
	4.3 The course models the academic integrity expected of learners by providing both source references and permissions for use of instructional materials.	2
	4.4 The instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline.	2
	4.5 A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.	2
Learning Activities and Learner Interaction	5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3
	5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.	3
	5.3 The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated.	3
	5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	2
Course Technology	6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives or competencies.	3
	6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	3
	6.3 A variety of technology is used in the course.	1
	6.4 The course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy.	1
Learner Support	7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.	3
	7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services.	3
	7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's academic support services and resources that can help learners succeed in the course.	3
	7.4 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's student services and resources that can help learners succeed.	1
Accessibility* and Usability	8.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use.	3
	8.2 The course design facilitates readability.	3
	8.3 The course provides accessible text and images in files, documents, LMS pages, and web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.	3
	8.4 The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	2
	8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.	2
	8.6 Vendor accessibility statements are provided for all technologies required in the course.	2

* Meeting QM Specific Review Standards regarding accessibility does not guarantee or imply that the specific accessibility regulations of any country are met. Consult with an accessibility specialist to ensure that accessibility regulations are met.

Online Learning Accessibility Policy

Mississippi State University

Purpose

Mississippi State University provides accessible online learning experiences for all students attending online courses with the University. Students attending online programs and courses with the University are provided with equitable information, materials, interaction, and services as other students, so they are empowered with the same quality of education and experience.

Laws

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Section 508 of the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards prohibit discrimination against students based on disability and addresses educational opportunities, activities, and communication.

Mississippi State University is committed to remaining in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), Section 504 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibit discrimination of people with disabilities. The University also complies with other federal and state laws that pertain to people with disabilities. Section 504 and the ADAAA establish that a person with a disability is identified as having a mental or physical impairment that creates a substantial limitation of one or more major life activity. Section 508 addresses Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility standards requiring equitable access to educational benefits, opportunities, programs, activities, and effective communication. The University is committed to making accommodations and reasonable changes to ensure the accessibility of programs to students with disabilities under the condition that the change creates a fundamental change to the program or course, and the change does not cause undue burden upon the University.

Policy Statement

Mississippi State University provides reasonable adjustment of policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that students have equitable access to course materials free from discrimination against students with disabilities. The University guidelines and policies to ensure the proper design and development of online courses to ensure equitable access to learning materials, student resources, and benefits afforded to the learner by engaging in education online. To ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University is committed to the delivery of information using electronic and information technology that has been developed, is continuously maintained, and procured for the University's online courses to ensure University programs are accessible to students

with disabilities. The University is also committed to the design and development of online programs and courses that meet the standards of W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

Standards

- Effective Communication requirements, as outlined by the Department of Justice, will be followed by provisioning the appropriate auxiliary aids and services allowing individuals with disabilities access to the same communications as non-disabled individuals.
- The Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards of Section 508 provides the outline of standards the University will adhere to assuring content delivery is accurate and in an accessible format for individuals with disabilities to have time to access and to make the same use of the content or software.
- Supplemental web-based applications such as conferencing will be accessible to all students.
- Online courses will be developed and maintained to conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines-Version 2 (WCAG 2.0) Level A.
- Instructors will be responsible for ensuring that links to external sources and material, are accessible or can be prepared to be provided in an alternative format.
- All materials and content created in addition to material and content provided through HTML must be developed to conform with the guidelines listed above.

Responsible Parties

All administrators, instructors, and staff that are involved with the design, development, and implementation of content and material for use in educational programs are responsible for ensuring that the content and material is accessible for use by students with disabilities.

Online Course Design Practices for Accessibility

- Mississippi State University currently provides courses through the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). Canvas LMS provides tools to be utilized during the development stage of content curation. These tools are to be used to create accessible content.
- Conference and presentations conducted via internet web services such as Webex and Zoom, provide tools and resources for providing accessible communications to students with disabilities. These tools are to be implemented during the use of the software for the purpose of providing accessible and effective communication with minimal disruption to the course and content delivery.
- Online course sites will be designed, developed, and maintained to conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines – Version 2 (WCAG 2.0) Level A.
- External web sites to be provided for students use during the course or as course content, must be reviewed prior to distribution to ensure content is accessible. If the content is not accessible to students with a disability, the material or content must be curated or provided in an accessible format.
- Course documents will be designed and developed to be accessible to meet the standards listed above. In addition, documents should align with the Guidelines for Accessible Distance Education published by the Georgia Tech Research on Accessible Distance Education (GRADE) initiative.
- Documents created by Microsoft Word or PowerPoint should make appropriate use of heading styles to assist a screen reader in presenting material in a logically structured manner. Both Word and PowerPoint 2010 include an Accessibility Checker that identifies and repairs accessibility issues.

- All Adobe PDF files are required to contain searchable content. Content that is "scanned" and provided to the students do not qualify as searchable.

Disability Services

If the student has a disability that may qualify them for reasonable accommodation, it is the responsibility of the student to contact their instructor or Mississippi State University Disability Support Services (DSS). DSS is located on the ground floor of Montgomery Hall, telephone (662) 325-3335. A student may appeal to the Provost and Executive Vice President if they disagree with a determination regarding an academic accommodation or modification.

Definitions

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) –** A federal civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination based on a student's disability.
- **Accessibility –** The extent to which a product, service, or facility is available to all people.
- **Accommodation** – A provision of access for students with qualifying documentation meeting ADA criteria to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to Web-based course materials.
- **Assistive Technology –** Technology meant to provide help in performing a task, whether general or specific (e.g., braille keyboards, screen readers, mouth-sticks)
- **Auxiliary aids –** Any services or device that enable persons with a disability to participate, enjoy the benefits of programs or activities conducted by the university online such as transcription/captioning.
- **Disability –** A mental or physical functional limitation that substantially limits any major life activities (e.g., performing manual task, hearing, seeing, concentrating, reading)
- **Learning Management System –** A system used to provide learning and course management, content delivery, and interaction between Instructor and Student through the use tools contained within the LMS (discussion boards, videos, assignments, assessments, etc.).
- **Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act** – States that an individual with a disability is entitled to equal access to all programs, services, and activities receiving federal subsidy. This includes Web-based communications.
- **Section 508 of The Rehabilitation Act –** An amendment to the Rehabilitation Act that requires electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by federal agencies to be accessible by people with disabilities, as well as employees with disabilities.
- **Web Accessibility –** All people can understand, navigate, contribute, and interact with the Web (W3C) (e.g., inclusive of disabilities, English as second language, non-traditional)
- **W3C –** World Wide Web Consortium. The main international standards group for website design.

Additional Information

American with Disabilities Act (ADA): prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public building, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. ADA does not deal directly with accessibility of the Internet. For more information, see Guide to Disability RightsLaws.URL: http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm.

Georgia Tech Research on Accessible Distance Education (GRADE): GRADE is a research project at the Georgia Tech Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA). Through GRADE, the Access E-Learning online tutorial was developed on accessibility. It includes 10 modules with tips and

assistance to faculty members seeking to make Word, Excel, Flash, and other file types accessible to people with disabilities. URL: http://www.accesselearning.net/

Office of Civil Rights: The United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights emphasizes that students with disabilities should be given the opportunity and assistance to reach their potential on an equal basis to those students who do not have a disability. URL: http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: became a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability by a school that receives federal funds (includes state colleges and universities). URL: http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/sec504.htm

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C): This is an international organization that leads the development of Web standards. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) was launched to promote Web functionality for people with disabilities. URL: http://www.w3.org/