

**Report from the Joint Committee on Online And Distance Learning
May 5, 2016**

Committee Members: Anne Seitsinger, Laura Beauvais, Deb Mongeau, David Porter, Jill Doerner, Kathleen Torrens, Mike Motta, Vince Petronio, David Rarick, Diane Goldsmith

SAKAI: A successful transition was made to Longsight in January 2015. We have had no unplanned outages since the transfer. We have had three scheduled maintenance periods two on Sundays at 5 am one this Tuesday at 5am. This time was chosen by URI as one when we have the fewest users.

In August we will upgrade our instance to Sakai 10. The Committee had hoped to recommend an upgrade to version 11, effectively skipping 10, but the release of 11 has been delayed and while they believe it will be ready by August, we didn't want to upgrade without assurances that it is stable and secure. Neither Roger Williams nor Providence College will be upgrading to 11 at this time either. Some of what Sakai 10 offers include:

- Ability to drag-and-drop multiple files into the *Resources* tool.
- Adding extra-credit points to an item within the *Gradebook* tool.
- A redesigned native course *Syllabus* tool.
- Group submissions and grading in the *Assignments* tool
- A new peer-review option for assignments.
- Native audio clip recording within the instructor's content editing window.
- Integrated video – faculty can upload videos which will be accessed directly from Sakai

We will be providing faculty with training materials and a testing site on Sakai 10 as well as more information about the timing of the transition and how it will affect them.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement: Over the past 5 years, states have become more rigorous in regulating online education for their residents. This resulted in 50 states having 50 different definitions, regulations, applications, fees, etc. In response to that, several distance learning organizations come together and created a state authorization reciprocity agreement. To join, states needed to make sure their regulations which protected students met the standards and then apply through the New England Board of Higher Education. Rhode Island was accepted this year. Then institutions need to apply to the state. Institutions must meet the standards of the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (<http://www.nc-sara.org/files/docs/C-RAC%20Guidelines.pdf>), the same standards we have to meet for NEASC. One of those regulations for example, was why the Joint Committee asked the Faculty Senate to amend the manual to explicitly include “online learning” in the definition of academic integrity. Two weeks ago URI became the first Rhode Island University or College accepted by the state. That means we are able to accept students from 34 states into our online courses and programs as well as provide internships in those states.

Online Programs: The RN to BS program continues to grow. Approximately 180 students are registered for summer 1, which started this week. The RN to BS program is still looking for general education classes especially in the humanities and arts and design. The Masters in Dietetics program is also growing. I don't have the statistics for Cyber Security. Per the Academic Strategic Plan we are looking for more graduate programs that are interested in designing fully online degrees and certificates.

Summer Online Courses: The Office of Online Education and Enrollment Services have been working together to train faculty and develop additional online courses to be offered in the summer. Online courses tend to fill quickly and are rarely cancelled. Plus you can teach them from anywhere.

Remote Proctoring: The University is working with a remote proctoring company to provide video proctoring for high stakes testing in online courses. There is a cost of \$17 to the student who buys a token from the bookstore for this. The Office of Online Education can provide more information about this for anyone teaching a fully online class.

Snow Day Policy: Messaging about snow closings has now been changed to reflect the fact that online classes are NOT cancelled – since they are not affected by weather.

Ensuring Resources are Available for Online Courses: In response to student complaints, the Committee discussed ways of ensuring that faculty chose resources for online classes that were available and accessible to all students without coming to any URI campus. Our online students can be anywhere. The Committee asked the Office of Online Learning to inform faculty teaching online about this and to remind them of the need for copyright compliance when selecting resources.