



To: Provost and Vice Chancellor Elisha Baker,
University of Alaska Anchorage

Fr: Kimberly Swiantek,
UAA Governance Office

Re: Natural Science GER Distance Labs

On December 7, 2012 the Faculty Senate approved the following motion:

Motion: The Faculty Senate moves to approve the Natural Science GER Distance Labs document as a response to the Faculty Alliance memo from Spring 2012.

Please see the attached document for more information.

If I may be of further assistance, please let me know.

Provost

Approved Disapproved

Comments:

06/02/2013

Elisha Baker, Provost and Vice Chancellor

Date

Chancellor

Approved Disapproved

Comments:

7 Feb 2013

Tom Case, Chancellor

Date

Distance Lab Discussion

In response to the Faculty Alliance work on distance delivered GER natural science lab courses, the Faculty Senate at UAA is developing a plan of action for UAA and a set of recommendations for the provost.

These recommendations will offer suggestions on how UAA can continue—and perhaps expand—its mission and ensure a quality education. By developing these recommendations now, faculty can move forward in appropriate and agreed upon ways.

The principles in sections 1 and 2 below are part of UAA and UA policy. The principles in section 3 below have been derived from conversations with natural science faculty. If agreed upon these principles will be used as the basis for any actions and recommendations to the provost and chancellor.

1. The general philosophy of curriculum control
 - a. Faculty control the curriculum.
 - i. Departmental faculty control course content.
 - ii. Departmental faculty control course student learning outcomes.
 - iii. Faculty, through the curriculum process, control the list of courses that satisfy the GERs.
 - iv. The BOR has final approval over GER category definitions.
 - b. Program faculty control the program
 - i. The program's content
 - ii. The program's student learning outcomes
~ Programs at different universities have different goals as often noted in our transfer credit discussions
 - iii. The program's audience
e.g., for what careers the program is sufficient preparation
 - c. Each faculty member controls his or her teaching of courses.
 - i. Faculty may try new pedagogies in pursuit of better learning including ideas which may fail and ideas which can be used by others later
 - ii. Faculty may try new curricular materials unless multiple sections require group agreement which is under departmental control.
 - iii. Faculty may not change the base content, student learning outcomes, or audience. Faculty extensions of content, student learning outcomes, or audience should be looked upon favorably if base goals are achieved.
2. The general philosophy of educational access
 - a. Students must achieve the same learning outcomes regardless of section.
 - b. Students must achieve the same learning outcomes regardless of personal abilities.
e.g., seeing impaired students may not handle the scalpel in dissection, but must achieve the same understanding.
3. The general philosophy of GER natural science
 - a. Natural science is the study of the natural and physical world.
 - b. Demonstrating the necessary curiosity about the physical world is important.
 - c. Demonstrating the ability to use the scientific method is important.
 - d. Recognizing that natural science experiments require sensing and interacting, directly or indirectly, with the physical world is important.
 - e. Demonstrating an ability to analyze the results of experiments is important.

- f. Demonstrating an understanding of the complexities of natural science experiments is important.
 - i. Good experimental design is required for correct conclusions.
 - ii. Proper operation of equipment is required for correct conclusions.
 - iii. Proper handling of measurement error is required for correct conclusions.
- g. Being aware of current technology and techniques is important.
- h. Safety is important.

Based on these principles each department teaching a GER natural science lab must do the following.

1. Departments must decide what the student learning outcomes and content of its GER labs are within the limitations of the BOR and UAA GER policy and update the CCG to reflect any changes.
 - 1.1. Are students learning the concepts of that science?
 - 1.2. Are students learning the basic concepts & philosophies of natural sciences?
 - 1.3. Are students learning to understand the methods of that science?
 - 1.4. Are students learning to use the methods of that science?
 - 1.5. Are students learning to use the equipment of that science?
2. Departments must ensure these outcomes are being achieved. To achieve this they must assist in GER assessment development to enable GER lab assessment which will provide the necessary evidence that sections are achieving their goals.
3. The provost, deans and directors of impacted programs will be responsible for encouraging distance lab curriculum coordination between campuses within each MAU.
4. The provost and vice provost for undergraduate academic affairs will determine the time frame for enacting these distance lab guidelines in consultation with faculty governance.