**Pros and cons of certification**

*Pros*

The potential exists for the following advantages.

1. The emphasis of the process shifts to ensuring good instruction rather than ensuring a curriculum plan.
2. Faculty will be able to develop and offer distance education courses in a more timely fashion.
3. Faculty will have the training and redevelopment needed to keep pace with changing pedagogy due to technological development.
4. The current compensation package can be retained and actually makes more sense than with the existing process.

*Cons*

The potential exists for the following problems.

1. The current lack of sufficient design support from the administration could remain.
2. The current lack of program support for distance education could remain.
3. The certification process could be so broadly defined that the designation becomes meaningless.
4. Courses, that lack sufficient resources to be delivered effectively or efficiently, could be offered anyway.

**Required Changes**

The system for being approved/granted permission to teach online courses, as it currently stands, is rather cumbersome and unclear, creates undue work for faculty who are proposing to teach a course and for the curriculum committees, and is inconsistent with how IUP handles similar kinds of situations/processes.

For example:

There are two ways in which a faculty member can teach writing intensive courses: 1) She/he can complete the certification process, after which they can offer any class they teach as a “W” class. 2) A department can designate a given course as a “W” course and anyone assigned can teach it as such.

In terms of teaching at the graduate level, a faculty member must demonstrate competency and be approved to do so. Competency is demonstrated by satisfying requirements in three areas, appropriate educational background (i.e., terminal degree), graduate teaching effectiveness, and scholarly activity. The application must be approved by both the department and the GSR.

In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the current approval process is really geared more for the course in question than it is for the faculty member teaching it. In fact, once a course has been approved through the curriculum process for online delivery, any faculty member in the department in which the course has been approved can be assigned that course, regardless of their abilities/competency in online pedagogy and technology.

**Criteria for certification**

The criteria would need to be sufficiently broad and inclusive to provide legitimate opportunity for certification to all faculty who are interested but specific enough to have meaning. The specific criteria would have to be worked out by a joint committee including representatives from the faculty, APSCUF, the administration, etc. (much as was done with the Tripartite Committee that developed the online student evaluation process).

We do not believe that it is the role of this committee, at least at this point, to recommend specific criteria, but rather to recommend that this kind of process be developed and put into place.

**Hurdles for curriculum process**

We recommend that the curriculum approval process at both the undergraduate and graduate level be changed so that distance education courses would no longer require approval through either committee or the senate. The two committees have the authority to recommend changes to their curriculum handbooks. The senate would have to approve the changes. Additionally, the current course approval process is the result of a side letter agreement. Meet and discuss would have to approve the change from a course approval process to a faculty certification process.

A distance education program would still require a variability of delivery proposal that would go through the curriculum committees as before.

In terms of a revised curriculum process, there should be no approval of individual courses for offering as a distance education course. This would relieve the curriculum committees of the burden of trying to balance the course proposal process with faculty credentials/qualifications. We assume that departments would still have to get courses approved for online delivery, but the process for approving faculty to teach in that medium would be removed.