To: Distance Learning Advisory Committee

From: Academic Policies Committee

 Diana Wagner, Chair

Date: 14 December 2018

Re: Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education Policy

The Academic Policies Committee met on December 11, 2018, to review the proposed “Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education Policy.” The full APC Committee endorsed the following recommendations on December 14, 2018.

We make the following suggestions and requests:

1. Under “Methods of Verification,” the committee thought that the wording was confusing, since all students have a unique ID number and LMS access, regardless of their degree status. Which office issues their GullNET ID and login is not relevant to the issue at hand. We recommend the following changes:

Initial Verification

~~During the Admission’s process,~~  Each student receives a unique student ID number. ~~Upon matriculation~~, Prior to enrollment, each student receives a unique and secure network account to authenticate into SU enterprise systems (i.e. GullNet, Email, MyClasses).

~~The Office of the Registrar provides student verification for non-degree seeking students.~~

2. Required Use of LMS

Nowhere in the policy does it say that faculty are required to use the university LMS. Faculty who deliver content through another platform (e.g., Google Classroom) are out of compliance of this policy. The Academic Policy Committee believes that all faculty delivering content via distance learning should be required to use the university-provided LMS. Under “Responsibilities,” the following sentence should appear first:

Faculty teaching university courses utilizing distance education are required to use the university provided LMS so that student identity can be verified through the unique student login process. Administering tests, quizzes, or assignments outside of the university LMS does not meet the requirements of HEOA.

3. Evidence of Academic Misconduct

Faculty who suspect a student of engaging in academic misconduct in an online environment should follow the same procedures for reporting and documenting the misconduct as for an on-campus course. As always, the burden of showing a preponderance of evidence lies with the faculty member. There are multiple strategies and tools in Respondus and Canvas for increasing testing security and integrity. The committee believes that as in on-campus courses, effective course and assessment design is the first step in discouraging academic misconduct.

4. Recommendation for Faculty Development Day

The Academic Policies Committee strongly recommends that the next Faculty Development Day be used exclusively to explore academic integrity, the academic misconduct process, and assessment and assignment strategies for avoiding situations prone to academic misconduct.

Thank you for your careful work on developing this policy. If the APC can be of further assistance, please don’t hesitate to call on us.