

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Online Education at KU Presented to the University Senate

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of online distribution of course content is now largely taken for granted on most campuses in this country. The rapid improvement of technology, increasing economic pressures and efforts by interested faculty to find better ways to teach have created an adoption environment that ranges from highly strategic to individually organic.

Online education methods are now as diverse as technology and innovation allow. From face-to-face (F2F) courses where some content and assignment submission are delivered online, to interactive learning courses wholly delivered through machine-driven learning management systems, the range is broad and growing.

According to a 2013 report tracking online education in the United States sponsored by The Sloan Consortium, two-thirds of chief academic leaders say online learning is critical to their long-term strategy. Only institutions not now offering online courses consider it non-critical.¹

The KU approach toward online education is based on a strategy of unit-focused development with emphasis on the impact online courses can have on the net enrollment of the university while improving student persistence, retention and progress toward degree completion. According to Provost Jeffery Vitter, "Curriculum is the purview of the faculty and of the individual schools/college at the university."

"Therefore, new degree development, whether online or F2F, will always be unit-driven, the quality expectations will always be unit-driven, and the assessment of student-learning, while mandated that it happens at the institution level, will always be unit-driven," Vitter said. "The centralized university strategy is to work with the individual units to develop their unit-level online strategies, and for the units to set goals and targets. I do not see this approach changing. Our role centrally is to do what we can to help the units achieve their goals."

Bold Aspirations Goal 1 Strategy 1-E identifies the goal of the redesign of courses to be enhancement of student learning, acknowledging technology allows blending of online with classroom formats. The Plan states KU will support faculty members to redesign

¹ Grade Change - Tracking Online Education in the United States, Allen and Seaman, Babson Survey Group, Sloan Consortium, January 2014. pg. 3.

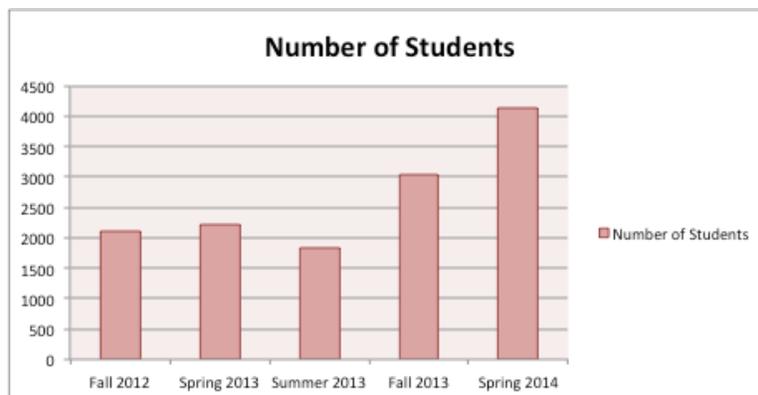
current courses or propose new courses that involve new technologies and incorporate active learning.²

A significant step toward meeting this goal began in 2011 with the formation of the Center for Online and Distance Learning (CODL). CODL provides instructional design and eLearning support specialists with a wide range of pedagogy and media expertise for assistance with flipped, hybrid and online course development.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

According to the annual Sloan Consortium survey tracking online education in the United States, online enrollments have increased at rates far in excess of those of overall higher education each of the 11 years of report. The report released in January 2014 estimates the number of students taking at least one online course reached 7.1 million nationally.³ This represents at least one-third of higher education students taking at least one online course in 2013.

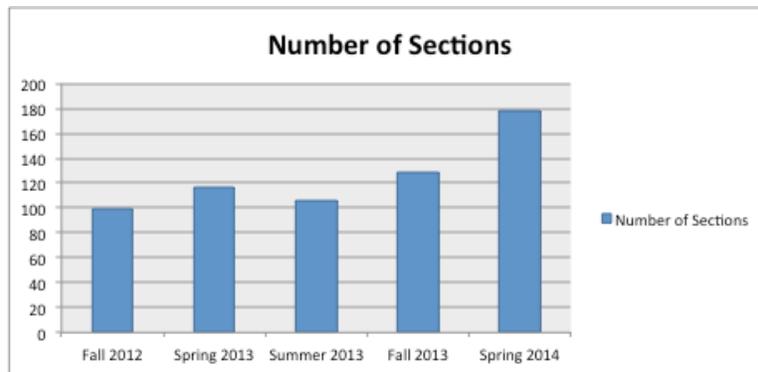
Online courses at KU, including those designated as hybrid courses (combining in-classroom with online presentation), represent a small but growing part of our academic offering. Data from the 20th Day Snapshot for Spring 2014 show about 4.3 % of enrolled students are in 178 online course sections. Since Fall 2012, there has been an upward trend in the number of students and number of sections being offered. More importantly, use of the Blackboard learning management system by faculty and GTAs represents more than 60 % of instructional staff with “courses active in Blackboard.”⁴



² KU Bold Aspirations, University of Kansas Strategic Plan, page 19

³ Grade Change - Tracking Online Education in the United States, Allen and Seaman, Babson Survey Group, Sloan Consortium, January 2014. Pg. 3.

⁴ Blackboard Usage Report, Fall 2013 – Prepared 9/30/2013



Source: Enrollment Summaries Fall 2012 - Spring 2014,
 KU Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Feb. 25, 2014

Provost Vitter said KU does not have a goal for online courses as a %age of total offerings. “We are approaching online education through developing full degree programs online so that students who cannot or do not want an on-campus experience but want a KU degree (want to be a Jayhawk) can do so fully online,” he said. “The idea of fully online programs is to grow enrollment with net new students rather than to offer a particular %age of total courses online.”

DEFINITIONS

The KU Center for Online and Distance Learning offers some basic definitions of online environments found within the KU environment. (From <http://codl.ku.edu/Online-vs-Hybrid>.)

Online courses are delivered 100% online, providing opportunities for students both at KU and at a distance to take courses from wherever they are.

Hybrid courses integrate the benefits of face-to-face (F2F) instruction with the flexibility of online learning to create a high-quality educational experience. Students meet less often but prepare and interact online prior to F2F sessions and typically 50% or more of the content, materials or assessments are online. Hybrid courses are listed as HB in Enroll & Pay.

Flipped courses (Not included in KU OIRP online course tabulations) reorganize activities where lecture components, online learning modules, and other preparation and mastery materials are completed outside of the classroom. During class students participate in more active learning and small group activities under the guidance of faculty.

Web-enhanced courses (Not included in KU OIRP online course tabulations) are F2F courses that have a presence (syllabus, readings, discussion questions, quizzes, etc.) in Blackboard

Individual faculty or units may also employ free or commercial materials from companies such as Udacity, (www.udacity.com); the Open Learning Initiative (OLI) of Carnegie Mellon University (<https://oli.cmu.edu/>); Coursera (www.coursera.org); edX (www.edX.org) and others. Textbook publishers are also actively entering the online marketplace with electronic textbooks and a wide range of supplementary course materials online.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are not part of the KU plan at this time, as they seldom provide a mechanism to full degrees or degree completion. According to the provost, KU has been looking at how to work with other universities to share online platforms, particularly for adaptive personalized learning.

“We are interested in consortia that look to develop course materials to share, and are members of the Bay View Alliance, the APLU Personalized Learning Consortium (PLC), and the Public Flagships Network,” Vitter said. “These are all consortia looking to develop and share platforms, data on student learning, and course materials.”

FOCUS POINTS

This report will identify several trends found in online education across this country and at KU and identify specific areas we must address to make sure KU maintains excellence as it moves forward in this realm. This committee has identified four areas of importance deserving the attention of Senate. These areas include:

1. **Quality** of learning – its online delivery, its effectiveness and its assessment
2. **Time** required developing and delivering online courses and how this fits within teaching expectations, scheduling plans and work load of faculty and staff.
3. **Economics and Intellectual Property**— how online courses are funded, priced, how instructors are compensated and how online development is part of the intellectual work of the faculty
4. **Integration** of online education with the mission of the university

The committee acknowledges the evolution of technology will continue to play an important part of the broader conversation about online teaching. As appropriate, specific tools will be mentioned as they relate to the more important consideration of educational principles over technology processes.

1. FOCUS - QUALITY

The discussion about the **Quality** of online courses has frequently been oversimplified to a debate of distance vs. F2F by those who teach online versus those who do not. Those at institutions with online courses remain positive about relative learning outcomes while those at schools without online courses were more negative.

Regardless of the subjective nature of the debate, the most recent data from the 2013 Sloan Consortium annual report shows nearly three-quarters of academic leaders believe online education is as good or superior to F2F learning.⁵

The integration of KU Core requirements and approval of Core courses has increased awareness and established requirements for more robust assessment of learning outcomes across the curriculum. This committee sees a more rigorous review of course proposals and assessment of learning outcomes, as a critical step toward assuring our online curriculum is equally strong.

The KU standard end-of-semester course evaluation document has been available in an electronic form and used for online courses the past three years. A richer rubric for

⁵ Grade Change - Tracking Online Education in the United States, Allen and Seaman, Babson Survey Group, Sloan Consortium, January 2014. Pg. 4.

course review based on the standards of the Quality Matters program (QM), was implemented with seven online courses in 2013 and more than 40 courses are in process for QM review in Summer 2014.

With KU's emphasis on student persistence, retention and progress toward degree completion we must also pay careful attention to the variability of retention and completion of online courses.

In *Managing Online Education 2013: Practices in Ensuring Quality*, the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies reported a completion rate difference of only three % in favor of traditional on-campus F2F courses (81%) versus online courses (78 %).⁶ The report also indicated more than half of surveyed schools do not report completion rates for online courses.

The Sloan survey indicates 41 % of chief academic administrators see retention in online courses to be serious concern. The same report showed nearly 70 % of respondents believe a student needs more academic discipline to succeed in an online course as compared with an F2F offering.⁷ Without such discipline, it is assumed failure rates increase. Because there are many student motivations for taking online courses versus F2F, these differences make direct comparison difficult.

An additional area of study in the WICHE report noted individual faculty develops content at most universities. More than half (53 %) require faculty to participate in development training before offering their first online course and slightly less than half (48%) require new online courses to go through a required review evaluation before availability to students.

As KU continues to expand its online presence, it is hoped the discussion will become less about which mode of delivery is better and more about how to create the most effective learning environment for our students.

⁶ <http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/moe/2013ManagingOnlineEducationSurveyExecutiveSummary.pdf>, pg.2

⁷ *ibid.*

2. FOCUS - TIME

Online expansion at KU must address the following time-related aspects for faculty and staff – Increased workload for course development and production, different student expectations for instructor availability and feedback, and difficulties created by technology variables (software versions, hardware platforms, network connectivity).

COURSE PREPARATION

According to its Annual Report for 2012-2013 (the first full year of its operation), CODL had 116 consultations with faculty redesigning courses to be hybrid or online as it completed 35 projects for CLAS, Business, Education, Journalism and Public Administration.⁸ In addition to desk-side assistance for faculty, CODL provided media production services, exam proctoring and online support for students in these courses. The report indicates more than 600 hours were committed to video production and transcription alone during this first year of operation. Some courses listed (PHIL 666, FIN 416, AE221) required more than 100 hours of media production each.

Course preparation and development by individual instructors or units who did not use CODL cannot be accurately accounted for, but could be assumed to be no less time consuming depending on the individual instructors' technical abilities and familiarity with online pedagogy.

Bryan Chapman, Chief Learning Strategist for the Chapman Learning Alliance published a study in 2010 that showed a range of preparation time for online courses varied by course complexity, from an average of 22 hours for each hour of instruction in simple content environments to 82 hours of development for each highly interactive, complex, custom course.⁹ Chapman updated this report 2011 to an average of 184 hours for every finished hour of content. This considered the priority of the development project, the number of review committees and cycles the course must pass, the availability of all involved in the development (solo faculty effort vs. team including educational design, coding, production).¹⁰

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

High student expectation of instructor availability (primarily via email) is also a significant time factor. Twice as much instructor time is needed for teaching online classes compared with traditional classes and most of that time is communicating with students.¹¹ Students also expect rapid response to their email inquiries, including weekends.

At least 94% of students prefer communicating with instructors via email and 87% expect responses within 24 hours. Instructors responded to student email messages within 24 hours (81.9%), almost half of the students expect instructors to respond within

⁸ CODL Annual Report 2012-2013, pg.2.

⁹ How Long Does it Take to Create Learning? 2010, Retrieved

www.slideshare.net/bchapman_utah?utm_campaign=profiletracking&utm_medium=sssite&utm_source=ssslideview

¹⁰ How Long Does it Take to Create Learning? 2011, <http://elearninguncovered.com/2011/05/how-long-does-it-take-to-create-an-e-learning-course/> retrieved Feb. 2, 2014

¹¹ Cavanaugh, J. (2005). Teaching online - A time comparison. Online Journal of Distance Learning

Administration, 8 (1). Retrieved March 22, 2014, from <http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/ojdl/spring81/cavanaugh81.htm>

25-48 hours on weekends, and 30.6% expect responses within 13-24 hours.¹² (Jensen Riley & Santiago 2005).

TECHNOLOGY TROUBLESHOOTING

Regardless of the best planning and instructions to students about technology requirements for the online course, faculty and staff time may also be consumed with technology troubleshooting as the course is presented. In the best situations, students are using hardware and software in University computer labs, widely available and consistently maintained in on campus. However, a Fall 2013 survey for KU Information Technology found nearly all of KU students have their own computer and conduct much of their coursework using personal devices.

As the %age of students using their own computers and number of courses taken beyond the campus increase, the frequency of mismatched software versions also increases. This problem can lead to extended downloading and conversion times for assignment grading to complete incompatibility and ungraded efforts. As online course offerings are unit-based, inconsistency in software and hardware in department-supported computer labs across campus also leads to extra time devoted to responding to student concerns about how to complete required work.

Variability of network speed also has an effect on time spent as faculty and students conduct coursework. Data transfer on campus computers connecting via Ethernet in offices and labs is significantly faster than shared Wi-Fi networks in most residential environments off campus. We must not assume coursework will only take place in the best-networked environments.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT, LOAD AND SCHEDULING

Development of any new course is time consuming and the creation of an online course, even if a modification of an existing F2F course in the instructor's portfolio, and to achieve the highest quality of course possible, there should be adequate allowance of time for the design and development process. In some departments, course release is provided to allow faculty this time.

The question of load and schedule must also be considered as units bring more courses online. Faculty should be sure the instruction of an online course is counted fully and appropriately in their teaching expectation. As the University continues its exploration of non-traditional intersession terms, adequate compensation for faculty and supporting staff must be appropriated.

3. FOCUS - ECONOMICS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

When asked how the economic impact of online education fits within KU planning, the provost acknowledged that creating and delivering high quality education, whether

¹² Jensen, T., Riley, E. & Santiago, J. (2005). Student expectations of Instructor availability in the online classroom. Southeastern Scholarship Conference on E-Learning. Retrieved March 21, 2014: http://sscel.maconstate.edu/proceedings_2005/proceedings_05/student_expectations.pdf

online or F2F is not cheap. “We never desire to provide anything less than high quality degree programs,” he said. “However, higher education enrollment growth depends upon reaching students in the F2F market, the online markets, and the international markets.”

“Being and staying relevant in the current higher education climate means creating degree programs for the student demands, and those demands are changing, with one significant area being the adult online student, particularly for graduate programs in education, business, nursing, and undergraduate degree completion; there are likely other fields as well,” Vitter said.

“Higher enrollment can have a significant economic impact upon the institution. Every new program must balance the cost of implementation of a high quality degree program with the expected enrollments to ensure that it is economically feasible and in the best interests of the institution.”

Increased enrollment through expansion of online programs can have a positive impact on the overall economic strategy for the university. But how does this affect faculty and staff financially and with respect to the ownership (and future income) from content developed for these courses? As individual units explore course development and marketing partnerships with third-party vendors, such as current relationship of the School of Education with Everpring (<http://everspringpartners.com/>), it is important clarity of these aspects be maintained.

FACULTY SUPPORT

In the past few years some, but not all, faculty have received financial incentives for online course development. Decisions about what, if any, incentive is provided for development of online courses, lies within the purview of each Dean. Some units, including the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering, have policies concerning course development support, while others do not.

Beginning in the fall of 2012, \$100 per resident credit hour for online courses has been returned to the budgets of each school. How this adjustment was applied to support online education, if at all, was left to the discretion of the deans. There has been discussion that this adjustment may end as soon as June 2014.

As state support for higher education continues to decline, there may be a growing reliance on contingent faculty, including for delivery of online courses. A recent AAUP report revealed less than one-quarter of the national higher education workforce is composed of tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty.¹³ Pay inequity for graduate student and adjunct faculty teaching an F2F course is widely discussed across this campus and nationally. Rates vary by school size, location and student numbers. This problem is equally problematic for online course instruction and is compounded by the inclusion of full-time faculty (who may not receive their normal rate of pay) in the pool of online instructors.

According to [GetEducated.com](http://www.geteducated.com), a publisher of college rankings, the average salary for instruction of an eight-week online course ranges from \$2,100 to \$2,860 depending on

¹³ Faculty Pay Survey Shows Growing Gap Between Public, Private Colleges, Kingkade, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/08/faculty-pay-survey_n_3038924.html

region.¹⁴ SimplyHired.com shows the average annual salary for a full-time adjunct online professor to be \$51,000 in 2013. Again, regional variations apply, with higher salaries in cities on either coast and lower salaries in the Midwest and South.¹⁵ In both articles, academic qualifications for the online instructors were the same as for F2F teaching. At for-profit universities (i.e. Univ. of Phoenix, Western International Univ.) the part-time adjunct salaries average \$1,000 less.

Of concern to Senate should be the potential for development of a gap between pay for full-time “campus” faculty and a significantly reduced pay structure offered non-tenure track faculty, including those teaching online courses. As KU continues its inclusion of online course delivery, it should value its instruction as being on par with F2F and compensate instructors and staff accordingly.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

As more faculty members take on development of online courses, consideration must also be given to the intellectual property this produces and its commercial value. As additional units embrace institution-directed online course development, faculty must be aware of significant case law from the previous decade that concludes course development is not simply work for hire. In *Pittsburg State University/Kansas NEA v Kansas Board of Regents*, decisions of the Kansas Supreme Court¹⁶ and subsequently the Public Employee Relations Board found that university ownership of intellectual property was not a condition of employment and is negotiable.¹⁷

At KU, the Intellectual Property Policy for the Lawrence Campus speaks specifically to the area of “Mediated Courseware” and makes a distinction between self-initiated content development and institution-directed mediated courseware.

The University has limited ownership or control rights for self-initiated courseware (See Appendix I, section 1a, 1b). Normally, no royalty, rent or other consideration is paid to the employee(s) for this development. For institution-directed the University owns the rights to revise the content and decide who may utilize the content in instruction. This policy recommends a contract should be agreed to between KU and the faculty member(s) prior to this courseware development. An example of such a memorandum of agreement from CLAS is included. (See Appendix II).

4. FOCUS - INTEGRATION WITH MISSION

The final area of focus identified by the committee was how the expansion of online education fits within the mission of the University and how does it mesh with the individual goals of faculty and staff.

¹⁴ The Average Salary of Adjunct Online Instructors, Suttle, <http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/average-salary-adjunct-online-instructors-7985.html>

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ <http://www.kscourts.org/kscases/supct/2005/20051110/91305.htm>.

¹⁷ *PittStatePERBdecisionFeb2007.pdf*, accessed through <http://www.aaup.org/brief/pittsburg-state-universitykansas-nea-v-kansas-board-regents-psu-and-perb-280-kan-408-kan-2005>

As our University mission statement declares, “The university is committed to offering the highest quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, comparable to the best obtainable anywhere in the nation.”

The Bold Aspirations Plan is a well-defined strategy for raising our expectations as a university and the priorities we will pursue. We must hope its reference to new technology and support of course redesign to enhance learning in Strategy GY 1-E is call for development of improvements to online education and exploration of new learning paradigms.

As other universities, including other schools in Kansas, offer online programs broader in scope and curriculum coverage, the committee hopes the KU administration will continue to support the efforts of its schools and college to include online education as an area of excellence for which this university can be recognized.

In her preface to the Bold Aspirations Plan, Chancellor Gray-Little said, “The aspirations of the University of Kansas are bold: to be recognized as a top-tier public international research university. KU has defined a clear path forward.”

Clarification of the path forward as it relates to online education could help faculty and staff better understand the opportunity for improvement this environment represents and how they can become active and effective partners in achieving the goals of the University.

CONCLUSION

In his contribution to NEXT: The Future of Higher Education, a 2013 special report of The Chronicle of Higher Education, José Cruz said “Transformational change is grounded in a thorough understanding of an institution's mission and strategic context. It enhances what works and suppresses what doesn't in existing policies, practices, and structures.” Cruz, the provost and vice president for academic affairs at California State University at Fullerton continued to write, “To harness the power of transformational change, academic leaders need to engage campus communities in the pursuit of clear goals.”¹⁸

There is no doubt online education is but one of many changes on the horizon for KU as it seeks place among the top tier of the academe. It can and should become a critical component of the success of the university for decades to come.

The University Senate should work with the administration to raise awareness of the importance of online education to the future of higher education and better define its place in our university. The university should continue support of efforts to improve online education across the campus and through shared governance, openly work to

¹⁸ NEXT: The Future of Higher Education, Sept. 30, 2013, <http://chronicle.com/article/What-Are-the-Barriers-to/141869/> accessed March 5, 2014

further improve our learning standards for KU students in all courses - whether F2F or online.

APPENDIX I

KU INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

([HTTP://POLICY.KU.EDU/PROVOST/INTELLECTUAL-PROPERTY-POLICY](http://policy.ku.edu/provost/intellectual-property-policy))

1. Mediated Courseware

For purposes of the University Intellectual Property Policy, the phrase “mediated courseware” means: course materials that (1) enable instructors to rely exclusively or substantially on non-classroom contact hours for instruction, 2) make extensive use of technology, including but not limited to video conferencing, streaming media, and similar technologies and (3) potentially could permit students from other institutions to access courses offered by the University of Kansas upon payment of a specified fee. The phrase “mediated courseware” does not include course material prepared by an instructor that makes use of the Internet for delivery or presentation, unless all of the above criteria are met.

a. The University shall have limited ownership or control rights for mediated courseware as specified below:

(1) Self-initiated mediated courseware. When employees develop mediated courseware without specific direction by the University, unless otherwise agreed, the ownership of the courseware shall remain with the employee. Normally, no royalty, rent or other consideration shall be paid to the employee when that mediated courseware is used for instruction at the University and such mediated courseware shall not be used or modified without the consent of the creator(s). The mediated courseware shall not be sold, leased, rented or otherwise used in a manner that competes in a substantial way with the for-credit offering of the University unless that transaction has received the approval of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. Should approval be granted to offer the course outside of the University, the creator shall reimburse the University for substantial use of institutional resources from revenues derived from the transaction offering the course.

b. Mediated courseware when judged by the creator(s) to have commercial value shall be reported to a designee of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. The report shall contain a description of the mediated courseware. Mediated courseware judged by the creator(s) not to have commercial value shall be considered reported when used in a University of Kansas course.

(2) Institution-directed mediated courseware. When the University specifically directs the creation of mediated courseware by assigning one or more employees to develop the mediated courseware and supplies them with materials and time to develop the mediated courseware, the resulting mediated courseware belongs to the University and the University shall have the right to revise it and decide who will utilize the mediated courseware in instruction. The University may specifically agree to share revenues and control rights with the employee.

Procedure: When the University directs employees to develop mediated courseware, a contract should be agreed to between the University of Kansas and the faculty member(s) before the project begins. The contract should contain clear statements regarding the following:

1. Definition of the project and participants
2. Time commitment
3. Compensation, such as release time, summer salary, etc.
4. Ownership of derivative works

5. Revenue sharing
6. Conditions of revision
7. Credits to creators
8. Procedures for creating an agreement on instructional uses by other institutions or licensing should those conditions warrant.

APPENDIX II – EXAMPLE OF MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FROM CLAS

Dr. [REDACTED]
Sociology
[REDACTED]@ku.edu

Dear Dr. [REDACTED]:

Thank you for agreeing to develop and online course. This letter is to provide you with information about our expectations for the course, the intellectual property rights concerning the course, and your compensation for development.

You have agreed to construct a fully online, 8-week version of SOC [REDACTED]

We expect that you will work with the Center for Online and Distance Learning (CODL) to construct the course, and that they will be placed on and taught through the University's learning management system (i.e., Blackboard). Once the course meets with CODL's approval, including an assessment of the course using the Quality Matters rubric, we will process an Additional Pay Form to issue you a check for \$ [REDACTED]. The payment will be processed on the next available off-cycle payroll date, meaning the payment will be issued separately from your bi-weekly paycheck. As with all payroll compensation, this means that it will be subject to normal payroll taxes and withholdings.

We expect that the course will be taught online at least twice over the next three years.

The online course is an instance of "Institution-directed mediated course ware" according to the Intellectual Property Policy of the University, which can be found on the Provost website at the following web address: <https://documents.ku.edu/policies/provost/IntellectualPropertyPolicy.htm>. According to this policy, the course will be "owned" by both the University and yourself. For the University's part this means that your Department may, at the discretion of the Chair, assign appropriate faculty to teach the course using the online materials you create. For your part, you may also choose to use the materials you create if you leave the employee of the University. As an employee of the University, using this material to teach outside of KU, however, will need to be negotiated with the University as a potential conflict of interest.

We appreciate your involvement in developing this important online course to introduce students to your major. If you have questions please do not hesitate to ask me.

If you agree to these terms, please reply to me, [REDACTED], by email cc'ing your department chair or associate chair, who will give the final approval for this project.

Sincerely,
Paul Atchley, Ph.D.
Dean's Project Leader, Online Program Development

Cc: David Smith, Sociology Chair
Mark Reynolds, CLAS Budget Director
Julie Loats, Director, Center for Online and Distance Learning
Samantha Montague, CLAS Online Program Coordinator
Janelle Williams, Sociology Department Office Manager