

# Online Teaching & Learning Committee Mid-Year Report

Submitted: May 2024

## Membership

**Chair:** Andrea Adams, Libraries

**Members:**

- Andreas Broscheid, Center for Faculty Innovation
- Audrey Burnett, University Studies/Online Strategy
- Jim Bywater, College of Education
- Sarah Cheverton, University Studies
- Greg Hackbarth, IT-Computing Support
- Leslie Harlacker, College of Arts & Letters
- Bill Hartman, Libraries
- Juhong Christie Liu, Libraries
- Sarah MacDonald, School of Professional and Continuing Education
- Laura Miller, Learning Centers
- Valerie Schoolcraft, Office of Disability Services

## Charge:

The Online Teaching and Learning Committee provides structure and coordination for initiatives that support success in online teaching and learning. Committee work is informed by and provides input on evolving decisions regarding JMU's online learning strategy.

Specific areas of focus for the committee include:

- Course development and instructional design
- Faculty professional development and support
- Online program development
- Student support and success
- Technology infrastructure and support

The committee reports to JMU's Associate Provost for Online Strategy while working in collaboration with the Online Virginia Network and Online Policy, Accreditation and Compliance offices (housed within University Studies), and JMU's Chief Academic Technology Officer.

## Summary of Current Semester Activity:

- The Online Teaching and Learning Committee developed the following objectives to guide our work during AY2023-24.
  - **Inclusive Excellence** – Center accessibility and equity in our work to enhance online and hybrid learning at JMU.

- **Assessment** – Identify administrator (specifically Academic Unit Heads and Program Directors), faculty, and student needs related to online learning at JMU.
  - **Resources and support structures** – Identify and recommend updates to online resources, campus terminology, campus workflows, policies/guidelines, and communication channels that support online learning.
  - **Campus-level strategy** – Continue to align and support evolving campus-level hybrid and online learning strategy. (Keep an eye on how the campus-level strategy emerges. Identify and reach out to departments when new online programs are created to provide support.)
- Committee subgroups completed needs assessments work and drafted a report focused on online learning for three groups, including: 1) students, 2) faculty and 3) administrators (specifically Academic Unit Heads and Online Program Directors). Work during the fall 2023 semester included collecting needs assessment data, analyzing the data, and developing research protocols to support sharing of results.

In spring 2024, committee subgroups drafted a report to share a summary of findings, recommendations, and suggestions or opportunities for future research. The subgroup reports were combined into a final committee report that includes overarching recommendations for online learning at JMU.

- The committee progressed work towards forming a Faculty Advisory Group that will inform strategy for the Online Teaching and Learning Committee and the Office of Online Learning. During the fall semester a purpose statement was developed, a list of faculty to invite was created and a survey for potential faculty advisory group members was developed to gather their feedback and perspectives. In spring 2024, faculty were invited to join the Faculty Advisory Group, with strong resonance from faculty members who expressed an interest to join the group. The group is set to begin meeting in fall 2024.
- Began reviewing and working on a guidebook that was previously developed and drafted to support best practices and campus resources for online and hybrid learning.
- Provided committee members the opportunity for coordination and communication across various stakeholders and departments that support online and hybrid learning. Specific topics have included DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) initiatives, accessibility, technology infrastructure, faculty and student needs, etc.
- Andrea Adams, Audrey Burnett, and Sarah Cheverton finished their service on the Distance Education Definitions working group. The working group, as part of JMU's Data Governance Council (a Reengineering Madison project), developed a set of shared terms and definitions related to online learning (including in-person, online, hybrid, HyFlex, etc.).

**Future Work Planned:**

- A final report summarizing the online learning needs for students, faculty, and AUHs / online program directors was drafted. The report will be submitted to the Office of Online Learning and includes a summary of findings, recommendations, and potential topics for further exploration.
- Make a final selection of 8-12 faculty members to serve on the Faculty Advisory Group. Plan and facilitate the first advisory group meeting in fall 2024.
- Continue to discuss and advocate for DEI and accessibility initiatives so that initiatives can be thoughtfully integrated and interwoven throughout online learning infrastructure, programming, support structures, and services.
- Continue to enhance coordination and communication across various stakeholders and departments that support online and hybrid learning.
- Continue reviewing and possibly finalize a guidebook for online and hybrid learning that was previously developed and drafted.