



**Student Government Resolution 119.005**

**A Resolution Endorsing the Deans' Council Online Courses Policy and the Truman Quality Matters Initiative**

**Sponsored by Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association; Katie Alexander, Vice President of the Student Association; and Maddie Sarasio Meyer, Academic Affairs Committee Chair**

WHEREAS,

- The Student Government is the official governing body of the Student Association and exists to represent the present and long-term best interests of the Student Association in the formulation of University policy and in the fulfillment of the University's mission; and
- In recent years, students nationwide are increasingly enrolling in online courses;<sup>1</sup> and
- Truman currently offers only a small number of online courses, often only available during summer sessions; and
- The process of assigning an online attribute to a lecture/classroom course is arduous at present, as professors seeking a new attribute for their course must submit their course syllabus and Course Update Form to various levels of faculty governance for review, requiring at least two months before it can be officially approved; and
- This process of obtaining approval through faculty governance is often complicated but not necessarily standardized or thorough, as the course updates are rarely discussed in depth or challenged in governance meetings; and
- This current process inhibits flexibility of course offerings and could deter professors from offering a variety of course options for students; and
- Without a standardized, rigorous process of creating online courses, the quality of online courses has not always been closely monitored; and
- Because of these disparate efforts to create high-quality online courses at Truman, a few "legacy" courses (existing online courses) have been commonly known across campus to be prone to student cheating; and
- Quality Matters (QM) is a non-profit "global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments"<sup>2</sup> that is widely considered the "Gold Standard" in assuring high-quality online programming;<sup>3</sup> and
- Truman's Deans' Council is seeking to adopt Quality Matters as the standard for the creation and revision of all online courses; and

<sup>1</sup><https://campustechnology.com/articles/2018/12/11/online-course-enrollment-grows-in-face-of-shrinking-college-enrollment.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qualitymatters.org/why-quality-matters/about-qm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://wp-internal.truman.edu/ugc/files/2019/10/Quality-Matters-Summary-for-Online-Courses.pdf>

- This initiative will include the following aspects of implementations of Truman’s campus:<sup>4</sup>
  - “All new online faculty will complete QM’s online ‘Teaching Online’ course; and
  - All experienced online faculty taking new jobs at Truman will complete QM’s ‘Improving Your Online Course’ class; and
  - All new course proposals will be pre-screened against a simple rubric for key Quality Matters expectations prior to review by the Provost or faculty governance and checked by Learning Technologies for accessibility compliance before launch; and
  - All new online courses will be subject to a peer review process in two stages: self-review (after first-offering) and panel peer review (after second offering). Reviews will be performed by trained Truman faculty and staff; and
  - All ‘legacy’ courses will be required to complete the peer review process within three years of the adoption of this policy”; and
- Adoption of this initiative will help to improve and ensure the quality of all online courses offered at Truman; and
- In an effort to streamline the course attribute assignment process detailed above, the Deans’ Council has proposed a new policy that would require professors seeking to renew their course with a different attribute to submit their Course Update Form and syllabus to their department chair, then dean, then Provost for approval;<sup>5</sup> and
- The aforementioned parties will review the submitted materials using a standardized rubric (see Appendix A);<sup>6</sup> and
- This proposed new process will allow greater flexibility in terms of course offerings and scheduling; and
- Greater scheduling flexibility and online course offerings will allow non-traditional and traditional students alike to enroll in more courses, boosting enrollment and retention;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT,

- Endorses both the Deans’ Council’s “Policy Governing the Assignment of Online and Blended Course Attributes” and the adoption of the Quality Matters Initiative; and
- Suggests that while adopting these changes, Truman faculty and administration continue to evaluate and adopt new measures targeting the presence of cheating in online courses; and;
- Suggests that while adopting these changes, Truman faculty and administration ensure that the course catalog is updated and remains updated as new courses are added; and
- Requests that Student Government continue to be included in future discussions of any changes to these initiatives and policies.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://wp-internal.truman.edu/ugc/files/2019/10/Quality-Matters-Summary-for-Online-Courses.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://wp-internal.truman.edu/ugc/files/2019/10/Deans-Council-Online-Courses-Policy.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT,

Additional copies of this resolution are disseminated to Dr. Sue Thomas, President; Dr. Janet Gooch, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost; Dr. Kevin Minch, Associate Provost; DeeDee Moore, Executive Secretary to the Provost; Deans Council members; Dr. Scott Alberts, President of Faculty Senate; Dr. Kathryn Brammall, President of Undergraduate Council; All current members of Faculty Senate and Undergraduate Council; University Archives and the Truman Media Network.

Passed 13-1-2, October 13, 2019.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deanna Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association.

## Appendix A: Online Syllabus Desk Review Rubric

Faculty proposing to add an online or hybrid attribute to an existing Truman course should provide a representative syllabus that demonstrates that they and their department have considered additional factors practitioners of online education believe are key to student persistence and successful completion of online courses and programs. Syllabi **must** have all of the following present in order for paperwork to be approved. *This does not preclude additional adaptation of the syllabus after approval and before the launch of the course.*

Instructor Name	
Course Name and Number	
	Communication expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated (includes instructor contact information)
	Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course, or a link to current policies is provided (typically boilerplate language is included in the syllabus)
	Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided (such as minimum computing requirements, operating system, compatibility requirements with Blackboard, specialized software required for the course).
	Computer skills and digital information literacy skills expected of the learner are clearly stated (such as spreadsheets, search of online databases, familiarity with how to play YouTube videos, basic audio editing ability).
	Expectations for prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.
	The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable.
	Learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly, are written from the learner's perspective, and are prominently located in the course.
	The course grading policy is stated clearly.
	The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated (e.g.: How quickly will emails be answered? How quickly can feedback be expected on assignments?)
	The requirements for learner action are clearly stated (What are the instructor's expectations for the frequency, length, and timeliness of participation?)