

Florida State University
Office of Distance Learning

Strategic Plan 2024



Office of Distance Learning

Strategic Plan

Table of Contents

Our Mission _____	2
Our Commitments _____	3
2023 Strategic Goals _____	4
Goal 1 Growth _____	7
Goal 2 Quality _____	8
Goal 3 Student Support _____	10
Goal 4 Academic Integrity _____	12
Goal 5 Accessibility _____	14
Goal 6 Affordability _____	16
Strategic Alignments _____	17

Office of Distance Learning

Strategic Plan

Our Mission

Serve the entire FSU community, whether on-campus or at a distance, by providing exceptional digital learning opportunities and support:

- Provide and support academic technologies for world-class learning
- Promote and facilitate engaging, online instruction that exceeds quality standards
- Support academic integrity with testing services for high-stakes exams
- Develop and advance accessible course design and delivery
- Manage distance learning auxiliary accounts and appointments
- Administer the secure, anonymous evaluation of FSU courses



Our Commitments



Excellence in Service

We are committed to providing extraordinary service to our clients and will never be complacent about the quality of what we produce.



Quality and Rigor

We are committed to providing the highest quality product and service possible, exceeding the rigorous standards of our educational institution.



Collegiality

We are committed to building positive, professional, and respectful relationships with our colleagues. We believe in respect, honesty, and fairness in all our interactions.



Accountability

We are committed to holding our colleagues and ourselves accountable for behavior, actions, and the outcomes we produce.



Good Stewardship

We are committed to making the best use of the limited human, financial, and time resources available to us. We will treat these resources as if they were our own.



Innovation

We are committed to a continuous journey of finding new and better ways to serve our clients through technology, pedagogy, and best practices.

2024 Strategic Goals

Growth

1. FSU will feature the strongest growing catalog of online courses and programs in the Florida State University System.

Over the next 5 years, FSU will invest strategically in the development of online programs to increase offerings in the Board of Governors Areas of Strategic Emphasis. A focus on developing a greater variety of general education courses will allow undergraduate students more flexibility in scheduling, supporting the “Take 15” initiative, class-size reduction, and a 4-year fully online bachelor’s degree.

Quality

2. FSU’s “Faculty for the Future” will be known for their expertise in digital instruction and recognized for fostering quality in online programs and courses.

Above all, FSU will be known for the quality online courses and programs that are offered to students. Courses will be systematically designed using standardized quality assessment tools, proven engagement practices, and sound academic technology for a consistent student experience. FSU’s courses and programs will be recognized as “High Quality” by the Florida Board of Governors and in the national arena.

Student Support

3. FSU’s support services for online learners will be known as the best in Florida.

All students should receive the academic, professional, and personal support they need to be successful. Regardless of their geographic location, FSU students will have access to advisors, tutors, online mentors, librarians, and a 24/7 technology help desk to support their academic needs. To foster their immediate and long-term success, FSU will offer students career planning and professional development opportunities as well as counseling, health, and wellness services.

Academic Integrity

4. FSU's world-class Testing Center will be recognized nationally as a model for student success and academic integrity.

More than just a secure location to host exams, the Testing Center will be known as a location where students are comfortable, supported, and more likely to perform well on assessments. The Testing Center will be recognized nationally for its superior service and commitment to promoting and preserving academic integrity.

Accessibility

5. FSU online courses will be recognized for their accessibility to all students, regardless of ability.

FSU is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. To ensure learning is accessible for all students, course materials will be offered using the principles of universal design. FSU faculty will have access to some of the best tools, training, and support in the nation.

Affordability

6. FSU will be known as an innovator in making online programs and courses affordable.

The increasing cost of higher education often serves as a deterrent to student success, reducing time-to-graduation and overall graduation rates. Rising textbook costs also prevent a number of students from purchasing the materials needed to perform well in a course. A focus on affordability initiatives will reduce the costs of course materials and fees, decrease student debt, and improve retention.

Goal 1 | Growth

FSU will feature the strongest growing catalog of online courses and programs in the Florida State University System.

Over the next 5 years, FSU will invest strategically in the development of online programs to increase offerings in the Board of Governors Areas of Strategic Emphasis. A focus on developing a greater variety of general education courses will allow undergraduate students more flexibility in scheduling and support the Take 15 initiative, class-size reduction, and a 4-year fully online bachelor's degree.

Objectives

1. Redesign the current course development model, using an annual grant/proposal process.
2. Develop a strategic program/course development roadmap.
3. Expand distance learning marketing strategy and practice for greater influence and reach.

Actions

1. **Redesign the current course development model, using an annual grant/proposal process.**
2. **Develop a strategic program/course development roadmap.**
 - 2.1. Establish baseline of current online course offerings that satisfy liberal studies requirements.
 - 2.2. Determine the key performance indicators that will enable us to identify course development targets and move ODL/FSU towards 4-year online undergraduate programs.
 - 2.3. Target courses that fall within the Board of Governors Areas of Strategic Emphasis.
 - 2.4. Target liberal studies categories with underdeveloped course offerings.
 - 2.5. Target face-to-face courses with high enrollments for class-size reduction.
3. **Expand distance learning marketing strategy and practice for greater influence and reach.**
 - 3.1. Identify in- and out-of-state markets for various programs.
 - 3.2. Identify marketing practices already in place within our colleges and departments.
 - 3.3. Create a marketing position or internship to support expanded strategies.
 - 3.4. Market liberal studies options to undergraduate advisors.

Goal 2 | Quality

FSU's "Faculty for the Future" will be known for their expertise in digital instruction and recognized for fostering quality in programs and courses.

Above all, FSU will be known for the quality online courses and programs that are offered to students. Courses will be systematically designed using standardized quality assessment tools, proven engagement practices, and sound academic technology for a consistent student experience. FSU's courses and programs will be recognized as "High Quality" by the Florida Board of Governors and in the national arena.

Objectives

1. Assess all online course design and materials using the Quality Matters Rubric.
2. Provide incentives for faculty, graduate assistants who serve as mentors, and departments to participate in training and create "quality" courses and the use of academic technology.
3. Develop a recognition program for faculty with high quality course design and instruction practices.
4. Identify and promote innovative academic technology, allowing faculty to push the "boundaries of the possible" and explore new ways of interacting with learners.

Actions

1. **Assess all online course design and materials using the Quality Matters Rubric.**
 - 1.1. Create a quality review plan/timeline including how often courses are reviewed.
 - 1.2. Create a plan for including and training other members of the review process (eg, ODL staff, GAs, and faculty).
 - 1.3. Develop an internship program in conjunction with FSU's Instructional Systems and Learning Technologies to include its students in the quality review process.
 - 1.4. Develop or procure a system for tracking the reviews.
2. **Provide incentives for faculty, graduate assistants who serve as mentors, and departments to participate in training and create "quality" courses and the use of academic technology.**
 - 2.1. Create a plan for providing incentive-based training on quality course design and instructional practices.
 - 2.2. Develop and deliver training objectives and content.

- 2.3. Define course development benchmarks that determine the distribution of development funds in conjunction with actions related to Goal #1.
3. **Develop a recognition program for faculty with high quality course design and instruction practices.**
 - 3.1. Develop criteria/areas for recognition plan that will recognize excellence in a variety of areas/disciplines/technologies/engagement techniques etc. (articulate with BOG awards?)
 - 3.2. Implement the nomination/selection plan for recognition.
 - 3.3. Develop or procure a system for tracking the program.
 - 3.4. Evaluate nomination/selection plan for recognition for effectiveness, make adjustments as needed and apply.
 - 3.5. Market and publicize recognition program.
4. **Identify and promote innovative academic technology, allowing faculty to push the “boundaries of the possible” and explore new ways of interacting with learners.**
 - 4.1. Develop a plan for promoting ODL’s current technologies that support engagement and interaction for all campus courses and carry out the plan, including partnering with CAT.
 - 4.2. Determine the effectiveness of the promotion/marketing plan.
 - 4.3. Create an innovation process for identifying and evaluating new technologies for delivering quality courses (eg, synchronous tools, engaging media, new software).
 - 4.4. Create a “tech lab” for ODL and faculty to obtain hands-on experience with new and emerging technologies.

Goal 3 | Student Support

FSU's support services for online learners will be known as the best in Florida.

All students should receive the academic, professional, and personal support they need to be successful. Regardless of their geographic location, FSU students will have access to advisors, tutors, online mentors, librarians, and a 24/7 technology help desk to support their academic needs. To foster their immediate and long-term success, FSU will offer students career planning and professional development opportunities as well as counseling, health, and wellness services.

Objectives

1. Partner with Student Affairs to increase student access to online counseling, health, and wellness services.
2. Work with the FSU Libraries and Academic Center for Excellence to develop an online tutoring service for all students.
3. Reinvigorate the online mentor model to meet and support the newest generation of online learners.
4. Offer a 24/7 help desk in partnership with the FSU Libraries to provide continuous academic and technical support for students.
5. Foster a sense of connectedness and increased student engagement.

Actions

1. **Partner with Student Affairs to increase student access to online counseling, health, and wellness services.**
 - 1.1. Develop an online orientation to communicate counseling, health, and wellness services available to Florida-based distance students, and how to get help if you're a student living outside of Florida (i.e., hotlines, provider network, etc.).
2. **Work with the FSU Libraries and Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) to develop an online tutoring service for all students.**
 - 2.1. Explore technology platforms for offering tutoring for online students.
 - 2.2. Develop online modules on how to be a successful online student, which can help identify successful online students that can serve as tutors.
 - 2.3. Ensure that tutors are eligible to tutor by vetting them academically (measurable).
 - 2.4. Partner with ACE and have them review students' academic progress.

- 2.5. Make certain that tutors are trained and certified on the use of online software to improve learning outcomes.
- 2.6. Communicate online tutoring services to online students via ODL's marketing strategy.
- 3. Reinvigorate the online mentor model to meet and support the newest generation of online learners.**
 - 3.1. Make it mandatory for mentors to be certified in Canvas, accessibility, and student services.
 - 3.2. Communicate the difference between the role of a TA and a mentor to instructors. (This action could help determine the funding source(s) for the mentor(s).)
- 4. Offer a 24/7 help desk in partnership with the FSU Libraries to provide continuous academic and technical support for students.**
 - 4.1. Include training for help desk staff on answering and routing questions about proctored testing.
- 5. Foster a sense of connectedness and increased student engagement.**
- 6. Use and continue to expand data resources to explore deep analytics and partner with other campus units to develop predictive analytics to increase student success, performance, retention, and engagement.**

Goal 4 | Academic Integrity

FSU's world-class Testing Center will be recognized nationally as a model for student success and academic integrity.

More than just a secure location to host exams, the Testing Center will be known as a location where students are comfortable, supported, and more likely to perform well on assessments. The Testing Center will be recognized nationally for its superior service and commitment to promoting and preserving academic integrity.

Objectives

1. Strengthen the Testing Center's partnership with the Student Disability Resource Center to manage volume and improve service.
2. Increase service by providing new means to accommodate faculty requests, regardless of the complexity of their assessment needs.
3. Continuously improve service by providing a positive, low-stress testing environment conducive to the comfort and success of our students.
4. Develop a leadership role among policy development and academic integrity organizations, both within the university and among peers at the national and international level.

Actions

1. **Strengthen the Testing Center's partnership with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) to manage volume and improve service.**
 - 1.1. Communicate volumes expected for peak times and ask for per class SDRC volumes afterward.
 - 1.2. Offer proctor training classes for auxiliary staff, including SDRC staff.
 - 1.3. As we develop software applications to aid in our own volume planning, share those resources and information with the SDRC in an effort to collaborate and better serve students needing accommodations.
2. **Increase service by providing new means to accommodate faculty requests, regardless of the complexity of their assessment needs.**
 - 2.1. Host pedagogy workshops on best practices for assessment and test design.

- 2.2. Create programs to develop and train proctors to operate within their colleges and departments (independently of the Testing Center).
 - 2.3. Develop policy to ensure equitable makeup practices when accommodation is within our abilities.
 - 2.4. Complete service request, scheduling, and student tracking tools to maximize our capacity.
 - 2.5. Identify and evaluate new technologies that can provide secure testing on multiple platforms and in remote environments.
 - 2.6. Train staff to deal with high-stress interactions with students in the Testing Center, equipping them with tools that will help de-escalate situations when they occur.
 - 2.7. Develop an emergency plan with procedures and training for sheltering in place, evacuation, and communication in the event of an emergency affecting the Testing Center.
3. **Continuously improve service by providing a positive, low-stress testing environment conducive to the comfort and success of our students.**
 - 3.1. Reorganize the Testing Center as needed to implement a customer-service-oriented model that maintains academic integrity while, at the same time, provides consistently excellent service to both faculty and students.
 - 3.2. Implement a program to train the operational assistants who run registers and proctor testing to incorporate best practices for academic integrity and customer service.
 - 3.3. Evaluate policies in the Testing Center for alignment to ODL's core commitments and expectations of the Academic Honor Policy Committee and revise to reflect our objectives.
 - 3.4. Make improvements to incident tracking and reporting in order to reduce interruptions in testing.
4. **Develop a leadership role among policy development and academic integrity organizations, both within the university and among our peers at the national and international level.**
 - 4.1. Serve on the Academic Honor Policy Committee to provide input on activity in the Testing Center and participate in policy development.
 - 4.2. Participate as a representative in the International Center for Academic Integrity.
 - 4.3. Secure National College Testing Association certification.
 - 4.4. Participate in the Florida Association of College Testing Administrators.

Goal 5 | Accessibility

FSU online courses will be recognized for their accessibility to all students, regardless of ability.

FSU is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. To ensure learning is accessible for all students, course materials will be offered using the principles of universal design. FSU faculty will have access to some of the best tools, training, and support in the nation.

Objectives

1. Provide tools to assist faculty in creating and maintaining accessible materials and documents.
2. Expand workshops and training opportunities for faculty and staff covering the principles of Universal Design including the development of accessible materials.
3. Create incentive, recognition, and awareness programs to increase the rate of faculty adoption of Universal Design and accessibility standards.
4. Conduct and share research on UD, accessibility, related topics.

Actions

- 1. Provide tools to assist faculty in creating and maintaining accessible materials and documents.**
 - 1.1. Investigate and, where appropriate, pilot test software, provide a report on its potential for long-term use, and procure funding for widespread adoption.
 - 1.2. Establish an accessibility intervention team for remediating inaccessible course materials to align with the Quality Matters Rubric.
 - 1.3. Develop an internal policy/process document that mandates purchasing only WCAG 2.0-compliant educational technology tools.
 - 1.4. Design and deploy trackable Design Tools (web page) templates and courses that model accessible course materials (can track usage via Canvas Commons download stats and embedded code).
 - 1.5. Partner with SDRC to create a Canvas org site containing materials remediating by SDRC, for faculty reuse.

- 2. Expand workshops and training opportunities for faculty and staff covering the principles of Universal Design including the development of accessible materials.**
 - 2.1. Complete and deploy “Universal Design & Accessibility Self-Paced Training” in Canvas.
 - 2.2. Continue offering F2F workshops (ODL and onsite) and synchronous webinars.
 - 2.3. Develop a web resource page that serves as an index of accessibility resources at FSU.
 - 2.4. Develop video tours of accessible course sites and materials.
 - 2.5. Explore coordination with other FSU units for broader outreach beyond faculty (eg, PIE, HR-sponsored staff training leading to certification for department staff).
- 3. Create incentive, recognition, and awareness programs to increase the rate of faculty adoption of Universal Design and accessibility standards.**
 - 3.1. Market and publicize tools and resources described above.
 - 3.2. Establish liaison with other FSU stakeholders.
 - 3.3. Establish criteria and awards for “UDA Stars” or similar type of program.
- 4. Conduct and share research on UD, accessibility, related topics.**
 - 4.1. Research and report on retention rates of online students who disclose disabilities.
 - 4.2. Research and report on the adoption of accessibility-enhancement software by students and faculty within FSU. Where possible, coordinate with other Florida universities using the same software.

Goal 6 | Affordability

FSU will be known as an innovator in making online programs and courses affordable.

The increasing cost of higher education often serves as a deterrent to student success, reducing time-to-graduation and overall graduation rates. Rising textbook costs also prevent a number of students from purchasing the materials needed to perform well in a course. A focus on affordability initiatives will reduce the costs of course materials and fees, decrease student debt, and improve retention.

Objectives

1. Review distance learning fee policies and existing budget justifications.
2. Develop programs to reduce costs and incentivize and recognize participating faculty.
3. Expand the use and development of open educational resources (OER) in conjunction with the FSU Libraries and colleges.

Actions

1. Review distance learning fee policies and existing budget justifications.
 - 1.1. Continue working with the Provost's Office to develop efficient fee policies and fee structures to help reduce distance learning course fees.
 - 1.2. Assist in the revamping of the budget request and justification process to correlate with an updated fee structure and policies.

Note: This could possibly change how departments utilize their DL revenue.
2. Develop programs to reduce costs and to incentivize and recognize participating faculty.
 - 2.1. Develop an incentive program to reward faculty who transition to/utilize OER's to help reduce educational expenses for students.
 - 2.2. Explore the viability of implementing an "Affordability Counts" program patterned after Florida International University's Affordability Counts Framework.
3. Expand the use and development of OER, open educational resources, in conjunction with the FSU Libraries and colleges.
 - 3.1. Promote OERs to online program representatives and students via Canvas, ODL's marketing strategy, and Student Business Services by way of the course registration system.
 - 3.2. Support, sponsor, and participate in events promoting the use of OERs and eTexts.

Strategic Alignments

Each of the Office of Distance Learning goals aligns with items in both the Florida State University Strategic Plan and the Board of Governors Strategic Plan. Those alignments are detailed below.

1. FSU will feature the strongest growing catalog of online courses and programs in the Florida State University System.

FSU Strategic Plan Alignments

Goal 1: Deepening our Distinctive Commitment to Continuous Innovation

Objective 1.2 Increase the University's role as an engine for Florida's economic development.

Address Florida's new and evolving workforce needs for entrepreneurially minded employees with strong critical-thinking skills

Goal 2: Amplifying Excellence Across our Academic and Research Programs

Objective 2.2 Enhance the quality of graduate education to achieve preeminence in strategically important areas of study and research.

Strengthen relationships between the graduate school and professional schools to encourage the development of multidisciplinary, multi-degree programs that are attractive to students.

Objective 2.5 Expand innovative teaching strategies.

Implement online learning strategies that will enable expansion of online programs, hybrid learning, and online collaboration while increasing retention and lifelong learning.

Recognize and support a wide variety of strategies for learning technologies, including online courses, hybrid learning, online collaboration, technology-assisted advisement, and support for lifelong and "life-wide" learning.

















