# Distance Learning Initiatives

**Infrastructure and software enhancements made to facilitate distance education since Summer 2011, Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.**

- **Contracted with Moodlerooms for use of Moodle as University's primary Learning Management System (LMS).**
  Students have access to a managed hosted vendor LMS with "enterprise" features and enhancements. The university is no longer responsible for hosting an LMS on campus. Moodle LMS is hosted by Moodlerooms, Inc. Moodlerooms, Inc., is one of the largest Moodle partners in the world, approaching 1,000,000 users worldwide. Moodlerooms provides online learning management solutions based on open-source Moodle to K-12 schools, community colleges and universities. Additionally, Moodle is an all-inclusive, managed open-source learning management platform delivered on the Dell Services Cloud.

- **Contracted with Integrated Moodlerooms Client Engagement Teams.**
  This service provides support for administrators.

- **Moodlerooms upgrade of Joule 1.6 Maintenance Pack.**
  This maintenance pack improved the functionality and usability of Joule 1.6.

- **Conduit 1.5 database software upgrade.**
  Conduit makes the process of rolling over courses and managing drop/adds each term faster and easier. Administrators can automate user and course management tasks such as enrolling users, authenticating passwords through Banner integration.

- **Implemented Twitter software in Moodle.**
  Twitter is an online social networking service and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". This also gives distance students the ability to interact with the instructor.

- **Continued to equip and systematically upgrade videoconferencing suites.**
  Videoconferencing suites will have the latest technology in order to enhance the video quality and sound clarity that will result in a better learning environment for the student.

**List of professional development activities since Summer 2011, Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.**

*Grambling State University embraces the "if you build it will they come" motto: The University will build quality courses and quality programs. This effort will increase distance learning student enrollment.*

These workshops are intended to increase the quality, interaction and student engagement level of online courses at Grambling State University.

- **Moodle Administrative Overview**
  - A training workshop provided by Moodlerooms, Inc. for Moodle administrators.
- **Moodle (Levels I & II)**
  - **Level I-** This workshop will orient the instructors on basic features of course site development and management. Topics include: requesting Moodle course shells, adding course announcements, adding a course syllabus and other course materials, creating folders, copying or moving content, customizing course settings, and sending e-mail through Moodle.
  - **Level II-** This workshop goes over various ways that students can submit work to instructors. Instructors will learn how to manage assignments, submit feedback, and maintain their grade book in relation to managing assignments.

- o **Virtual Chat/Messaging in Moodle**
  - This workshop will orient the instructor on the virtual chat/messaging feature in Moodle. Chat is the most useful in simple collaboration situations, where you just want to have a conversation with students.
- o **Podcasting in Moodle**
  - This workshop will orient the instructor on podcasting. A podcast is a package of multimedia files that can be downloaded from the Internet and played on a computer or a mobile device. A podcast can be a useful supplementary tool for online courses or blended courses. Instructors could post relevant news clippings, interviews, and discussions or they could post their own lectures available for download.
- o **TurnITin**
  - This training will introduce instructors to the features of Turnitin. Turnitin is the leading academic plagiarism detector, utilized by instructors and students to avoid plagiarism and ensure academic integrity.
- o **Utilizing Skype in the online environment**
  - This training will introduce instructors on how to use skype in the online environment. Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice and video calls over the Internet. **Skype** in the Classroom (Video) can make it easier for students and teachers to interact in an **online environment**.
- o **Utilizing videoconferencing equipment**
  - This training will prepare instructors for using videoconferencing by familiarizing them with the equipment and addressing the issues that may occur.
- o **Faculty Professional Development Resource site**
  - The Faculty Professional Development Resource site is housed on Moodle and is available to all faculty. It gives the faculty access to professional development videos, tutorials and self paced exercises.

**Training activities for students since Summer 2011, Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.**

- **Student Moodle**
  Student training is available for all GSU students who wish to learn Moodle. Students will be introduced to the structure and navigation of Moodle along with its set of tools and their functions.

  **Topics discussed:**
  - Find important class documents
    - o Syllabus
    - o Handouts
    - o Lecture notes
  - Easily access e-reserves
  - Look up assignment due dates and exam schedules
  - Read class announcements
  - Participate in online discussions
  - Take quizzes and exams
  - Turn in assignments
  - Check on grades

  Faculty can schedule a training session for a class during their scheduled class meeting time(s). Student training labs are available in academic buildings.

- **Walk in Consultation**
  Office of Distance Learning normal operating hours are from 7:30am-5:00pm Monday-Thursday and 7:30am-11:30 Friday. Students who wish to learn Moodle or simply need a refresher course on how to use it can come by during office hours.

- **www.gram.edu/academics/distancelearning**
  Students can access Moodle tutorials and quick start guides on the Grambling State University web site.

**Steps taken to improve the assessment of online courses by students since Summer 2011, Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.**

We have instituted a comprehensive training, development and design review program on our campus using the Quality Matters system (Rubric) for assessing and evaluating faculty developed and delivered online courses. Each online instructor is required to complete an in-house, self-paced online instructional course that discusses Quality Matters, SACS Best Practices as well as instructions for the university LMS.

The primary goal of the instrument is to supply useful feedback to instructors to improve teaching effectiveness and enhance student satisfaction with the online experience. The ODL collects evaluations using the web and STC Banner.

Table 1 reflects samplings of student opinion surveys for Academic Year 2011-2012 relating to level of satisfaction with instruction.

**Table 1 - Sample of**
**Student Opinion Survey Results - Instruction**
**Academic Year 2011-2012**

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would take another online course from this instructor. | 7 | 61 | 533 | 1312 | 1913 |
| How would you characterize communication with the instructor and others for this course? | 11 | 111 | 540 | 1233 | 1913 |

Online courses were delivered through the eLearning course management systems, Moodle. Moodle does not have a feature that restricts students from attending a course without responding to the survey. In an effort to increase the number of student responses, ODL deploys the survey and survey notice 3-4 weeks before the end of the course and the faculty assist in encouraging students to respond to the surveys.

Moreover, student survey results for University services received by distance learning students were positive. Table 2 reflects samplings of student opinion surveys for Academic Year 2011-2012 relating to level of satisfaction with services.

**Table 2 - Sample of Student**
**Opinion Survey Results – Services**
**Academic Year 2011-2012**

| Question | Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neutral | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | No Response | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the support services provided by the Office of Distance Learning? | 1701 | 101 | 20 | 11 | 7 | 73 | 1913 |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the support services provided by eLearning Systems (Moodle)? | 1722 | 66 | 18 | 4 | 15 | 88 | 1913 |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the eLearning resources through Distance Learning (online communication, course technology tutorial, how to access course materials, etc)? | 1860 | 21 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 23 | 1913 |

**The evaluation instrument administered for online courses gives the students opportunity to provide feedback in the following areas:**

o   Teacher Performance – knowledge of subject matter, organization of materials, fairness in grading
o   Resources-library, counseling, orientation
o   Communication with the instructor-posting of course procedures, discussion groups

Student evaluations of distance course are reviewed by the Office of Distance Learning's Instructional designer for constructive suggestions and immediately discussed with the Instructor. Evaluation results are also shared with the Instructor's department head. Results are used to make improvements of the course.

- **description of current initiatives to create and expand educational offerings by distance education**
  **Grambling State University has determined that offering selected distance learning programs and degrees will facilitate the completion of its mission.**

  Grambling State University has determined that offering selected distance learning programs and degrees will facilitate the completion of its mission. The faculty has proposed that the following programs be offered via distance education: Bachelor of Science in Child Development, Master of Science in Criminal Justice, Post Masters Certificate, Master of Science in Developmental Education and the Doctorate in Developmental Education.

  GSU was selected to participate in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Red Balloon Project on Blended Learning. We will now offer Blended courses in freshman composition and pre-calculus. Blended courses are course that use traditional face to

face lectures along with lectures via distance.  The grant focuses on performance levels for students of particular demographics and financial needs.

GSU entered into a partnership agreement with Louisiana Delta Community College (ASN-RN to BSN).  The plan is to offer many of the courses via distance.

- **description of any efficiencies realized through distance education**
  Grambling State University transitioned from Blackboard as the Learning Management System to Moodle in Fall 2011.  During AY 2011-12, the University realized a savings of approximately $40,750 in transitioning to this new management system.

  [Additional efficiencies were realized](#) as a result of space and energy savings associated with courses offered that were 100% distance.  Based on GSU estimates, GSU saves $19.20 for lighting per course and $172.31 savings for HVAC use per course.  During **Summer 2011, Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters**, **97** 100% distance courses were offered, resulting in a total savings of $18,490.46 for lighting and HVAC.

**3.b.i.  Number of course sections with 50% and with 100% instruction through distance education (Tracked)**

| | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Term of Data** | **AY 08-09** | **AY 09-10** | **AY 10-11** | **AY 11-12** (Fall'11-Spr'12) | **AY 12-13** | **AY 13-14** | **AY 14-15** |
| **# of course sections that are 50-99% distance delivered** | 7 | 7 | 21 | 58 | | | |
| **# of course sections that are 100% distance delivered** | 57 | 60 | 81 | 64 | | | |

**3.b.ii. Number of students enrolled in courses with 50% and with 100% instruction through distance education, duplicated headcount (Tracked)**

| | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Term of Data** | **AY 08-09** | **AY 09-10** | **AY 10-11** | **AY 11-12** (Fall'11-Spr'12) | **AY 12-13** | **AY 13-14** | **AY 14-15** |
| **# of students enrolled in courses that are 50-99% distance delivered** | 37 | 28 | 206 | 1339 | | | |
| **# of students enrolled in courses that are 100% distance delivered** | 718 | 944 | 1834 | 2502 | | | |

**3.b.iii. Number of programs offered through 100% distance education by award level (Tracked)**

| | Baseline | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Term of Data** | **AY 08-09** | **AY 09-10** | **AY 10-11** | **AY 11-12** | **AY 12-13** | **AY 13-14** | **AY 14-15** |
| **Associate** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| **Baccalaureate** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| **Post-Baccalaureate** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| **Masters** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| **Doctoral** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| **Professional** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| **TOTAL** | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | |