Dr. Thomas J. Hynes, Jr.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of West Georgia
1601 Maple Street
Carrollton, GA 30118-4510

Dear Dr. Hynes:

Please pardon my delay in responding to two letters, both dated March 23, 2009, regarding change at your institution. The first letter notified the Commission of programs offered at off-campus instructional sites and/or electronically:

- BSEd in Early Childhood Education at the Newnan Center
- MS in Criminology at the Newnan Center
- MEd in Physical Education to be offered 50% or more online
- EdS in Special Education to be offered in Cherokee County
- Post-baccalaureate certificate in Museum Studies to be offered at the Atlanta History Center

What are the implementation dates? Since the institution is approved to offer 50% or more of a program’s credits online, we accept the notification for the MEd in Physical Education and require no additional information from you except for the implementation date. Since the Newnan Center is an approved site, we accept the notification for the BSEd in Early Childhood Education and the MS in Criminology and require no additional information from you except for the implementation date. We accept the notification for the EdS in Special Education to be offered in Cherokee County and the Certificate in Museum Studies to be offered at the Atlanta History Center and look forward to receiving the prospectus for those sites. Please include in the prospectus(es), the following information:

1. Street address for each site
2. Implementation date for each program at the site

You asked about a consortium relationship with other University System of Georgia institutions in the offering of the MAT—Mathematics and Science degree program. At present, only Columbus State University is granting the degree, although University of West Georgia is teaching some of the courses. In the future, all the partners in the consortium will grant the degree. In my judgment, you do not need to submit a substantive change proposal to grant the degree; to do so will not require a significant departure from your approved curriculum. You, and the other partner institutions, should review and comply with the Commission policy, *The Transfer or Transcribing of Academic Credit*, available on our website, www.sacscoc.org. We accept the notification for the change in the consortium arrangement.
Your second question dealt with eCore, the University System of Georgia’s electronic core curriculum, and your undergraduate programs. The Commission approval for USG distance learning in Georgia, which included eCore, occurred in 2001. With the core curriculum available online, it is very easy for a program to exceed the 50% threshold. [I modify your question to read, “... program reaches the 50% threshold,” in order to mirror the language of the Substantive Change Policy.] You ask whether, when one of the undergraduate degree programs reaches the 50% online threshold because of eCore, must you report this as a substantive change? The answer is yes IF the program in question is a significant departure from the array of programs already in the approved cohort for online delivery. And then, only notification is required—no prospectus. If the program is not a significant departure, no notification is required.

Your second letter of March 23, 2009, asked whether a transfer of administrative responsibilities for eCore will trigger the necessity for a substantive change. eCore is moving from a system-administered program to one that will be administered by the University of West Georgia, effective summer term, 2009. There is no change to the curriculum. In our judgment, it is not a substantive change requiring prior approval. We accept the notification and require no additional information from you.

Best regards,

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President
Commission on Colleges

BSW/RER:jdw

cc: Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna, President
    Dr. Michael S. Johnson
March 23, 2009

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

In a separate letter, we requested clarification from the Commission about the effect of eCore in Georgia and the potential for many undergraduate programs to exceed the 50% level on line. Here we ask a different question. I am writing to clarify whether a transfer of administrative responsibilities will require a formal request for a substantive change. The question involves the administration of eCore within the University System of Georgia.

eCore is the University System of Georgia’s electronic core curriculum, a program that allows students to complete their undergraduate general education requirements online. Students enrolled at any USG institution are eligible to take eCore classes. Recently, USG has approved a change in administration of eCore, moving it from a system administered program to one that would be administered by the University of West Georgia. A copy of the proposal by UWG that was accepted by the University System is enclosed.

In October 2001, SACS approved the University System of Georgia’s eCore program, along with other online programs. With the current change being solely an administrative one, it is our view that this is not a substantive change to the program and the approval that was granted in 2001 is still in effect. We seek your assurance that this is an accurate perspective. Thanks in advance for your response.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Hynes Jr.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

cc:  Beheruz N. Sethna
     Jonathan Anderson
2009 eCore Plan

eCore

University of West Georgia

Contact Persons:

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678-839-6636
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December 19, 2008
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1A. Overall View of eCore

There have been several problems identified over the career of eCore that many believe have prevented the eCore program from developing its fullest potential. While eCore is known for its quality as documented by its SACS and AAAL accreditations, there is still much more room for improvement in the monitoring of faculty and classes as well as the timely upkeep and updating of the online class environment. Furthermore, problems of registration, testing and faculty recruitment remain obstacles to scalability and to adequate or profitable growth.

Part of the problem with eCore’s inability to adopt more nimble response mechanisms to the marketplace or to these obstacles listed is its administrative structure. The current structure was a necessary one for the development of the program, but a new administrative structure needs to be adopted to allow for new incentives and responsibilities for quality control, student service, and scalability.

Therefore, we at West Georgia are proposing a new model of three cost-centers: the areas are the administrative institution, the student home institution, and the faculty home institution. The three institutions would then share a percentage of the tuition dollars generated by the students to cover costs.
1B. Program Transfer Date

UWG has the largest enrollment of eCore students (40 percent) and a clear vested interest in the program’s success. We have invested in a comprehensive support structure for our eCore students and have a record of ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement. This has been demonstrated through efforts such as our Project Dew (2006), which resulted in a 25 percent increase in eCore student course completion. We believe that the eCore program must continue without interruption to students or institutions whose programs depend on these offerings, and we are thus committed to a Summer Semester 2009 start date.

1C. Program Growth & Marketing

Thousands of Georgia students are working on online degrees at for-profit institutions, like the University of Phoenix and Strayer University. Through an aggressive marketing campaign, we will show students the higher quality and less expensive opportunities available to them at USG's traditional institutions. In addition, we will look to market eCore to exceptional high school students (through joint enrollment). Finally, we’ll use the latest Web 2.0 technologies and social networks to optimize first impressions and recruitment through the eCore website.

Marketing & Advertising Campaign

We will focus on branding eCore as a highly-affordable online choice from traditional, regionally-accredited institutions. Our initial campaign, to begin in Summer 2009, will include the following elements:

- A new, fresher eCore logo (at bottom right of this presentation), incorporating earth green and blues to highlight online learning as an eco-friendly choice
- Cost-per-click advertisements placed in Facebook (targeted to Georgia/Alabama individuals under the age of 40)
- Billboard advertisements on the Georgia I-20, I-85 and I-75 corridors
- Print advertisements in college and high school newspapers, regional magazines
2009 eCore Plan: Administration

Increased affiliates

The eCore Dean will seek to leverage the eCore program, making it available to two or more additional USG affiliates. We hope to develop new partnerships with USG institutions who can package their eCore offerings with third and fourth-year online courses, creating fully-online degree programs. UWG is also exploring its own new bachelor’s level online programs, which would incorporate eCore.

Expansion into other Areas

eCore offers a compelling, but under-marketed, way for high school students to participate in joint enrollment programs that don’t interfere with their other courses or activities. In Fall 2009, the eCore Marketing Coordinator will begin liaison visits to administrators at Georgia high schools.

UWG is also planning a pilot project for Summer 2009 to aggressively market to students at UWG and affiliate institutions who have not completed certain core courses. The goal is to increase USG retention and progression for student who have either been unable to or who have failed to register for necessary core courses by expected points in their academic career.

Key Assumptions

- University websites are the single most used and most influential channel of communication we have with prospective students. (Academia Group)
- Marketing is moving from one-way to two-way communication – through Web 2.0. We can hear and listen to what our eCore students are saying about us. (Chron. of Higher Ed)
- Marketing package should include degree programs, not just eCore as a stand-alone program.
- Websites: engage them or lose them in 2 to 10 seconds.

Growth Targets

Our goal is to increase eCore enrollments by 25 percent each term for a three-year period. If successful, enrollments will be:

- Fall 2009: 1500
- Spring 2010: 1875
- Fall 2010: 2345
- Spring 2011: 2931
- Fall 2011: 3663
- Spring 2012: 4579
- Fall 2012: 5723

We anticipate that UWG will register 40-50 percent of these students, as it has in the past. Though our goal is ambitious, we believe it is attainable through cutting-edge marketing approaches.

*Please note our budget plan is far, far more conservative (9 percent growth per year).
Internet

We will look beyond traditional marketing and recruitment. Taking lessons from President-Elect Obama’s successful horizontal campaign, we will fully establish eCore’s presence on the internet with a Web 2.0 based approach. Web 2.0 goes beyond informing in that it is participatory. It is about user-generated content and people’s desire to connect with one another. Its use is skyrocketing. Our eCore Web 2.0 marketing will focus on increasing awareness of programs and reputation – to include:

- Facebook presence (active, daily updates) with RSS informational feeds
- Official videos on YouTube
- eCore student-generated videos on YouTube (hold prize contest such as eCore Road Trip, eCore song or rap, eCore Green Challenge)
- SkoolPool
- Interactive eCore website, with links to eCore student blogs, instant messaging with present eCore student (working as student assistant recruiter), interactive quizzes, short pop-ups for requesting information, buttons for rating, sharing, and responding.
- Daily monitoring of web to see “what students are saying about us”
- Responding to postings on blogs about online programs in general with links to eCore program
- Banner advertisements (pay per click) on Facebook – demographically targeted

Web 2.0

- YouTube has more than 80 million user-generated videos. It didn’t exist before 2005.
- 25 percent of teens write blogs.
- Instant messaging allows real-time communication between potential students and recruiters.
- Adding buttons that allow sharing, rating, and responding add a key participatory aspect.
- 15-18 year olds spend 88 minutes per day on social networking websites.
- 61 percent of college applicants with Facebook login every day.
- Involves some risk – once it’s on the internet, it’s there. Must take chance or be left behind.
- Official program/university homepage is just a shrinking “blip” on the internet.

Web 2.0 statistics from Academia Group.
2009 eCore Plan: Administration

1D. Faculty Hiring Plan

The following will be eligible to serve as eCore instructors:

- Instructors presently serving at University System of Georgia institutions, with approval by the eCore Associate Dean, their academic departments and VPAAs.
- Non-USG individuals may apply directly to the University of West Georgia to serve as eCore instructors. Qualifications include: a terminal degree with at least 18 graduate credit hours in the subject area; 3 recommendation letters from academic colleagues; a commitment to offering superior online instruction; successful completion of a 2-week online certification course (no charge).
- Computer literate
- Experience in online teaching (preferred)

Recruitment

The eCore Dean will negotiate agreements with VPAAs at USG institutions to become instructor providing-institutions. Each instructor-providing institution will receive 40 percent of eCore tuition for the enrolled students. With an enrollment of 20, this will be $4536; with an enrollment of 36, this will be $8165. The providing institution will support recruitment efforts through letters/emails to its deans, department heads and faculty. They also agree to pay each instructor at least $3600 (from the 40 percent received). In the event that 40 percent is less than $3600 (low number of seats), eCore will provide the institution with a minimum amount of $3600 to pay its eCore instructor.

The eCore dean will approve all applications to UWG eCore instructors (after screening by the eCore Associate Dean and Faculty Coordinator). The dean will serve as the liaison to UWG academic department heads to facilitate approval of these instructors at the UWG academic departmental level.

Adjunct Pay Comparison

- Ga. Perimeter: $2300 per semester
- University of Phoenix: $1000 for 6-week course
- National for-profit chain: $2700 for 8-week writing course
- University of New Mexico-Valencia: $1910
- Widener University: $2600 for 15 weeks
- Tulane University: $2850 per semester
- Capella: $2400
- NYU: $4000
- Western International U: $1400 for 9-week course
- Webster U: $2400 for 9 weeks
- Southwestern: $1450 for 6 weeks
- Colorado State: $3500
- ERAU: $125 per student for 12 week-term
- Kaplan: $2500 for 10 weeks
- DeVry: $2800 for 8 weeks
- Strayer: $2300 for 11 weeks
- Old Dominion: $2500 per semester

The above is unconfirmed information found on websites and blogs.
2009 eCore Plan: Administration

Hiring and Payment

A policy will be established whereby the providing institution agrees to support recruitment efforts through letters/emails to its deans, department heads, and faculty. They must also agree to pay each instructor a minimum of $1200 per credit hour (from the 40 percent received). In the event that 40 percent is less than $1200 per credit hour because of a lower number of seats, eCore will provide the institution with a minimum amount of $1200 per credit hour to pay its eCore instructor.

1E. Data collection strategies for tracking program data

UWG has already created a number of Banner jobs that extract information regarding our eCore students. This information is used for program evaluation and planning as well as reporting. Among the information we collect:

- Enrollment trends
- Weekly withdrawal rates as compared to previous semesters
- Comparison of eCore course completion as compared to the same course offered f2f at UWG
- Comparison of eCore course grades as compared to the same course offered f2f at UWG
- Performance of students who take a face-to-face course, such as English 1102, after taking the first course in the sequence through eCore (English 1101)
- Performance of students by age, gender, class status (i.e. freshmen, sophomore, etc.)

Collection of this data is currently the responsibility of our two eCore advisors, but will shift to the new Curriculum & Instruction manager when we take responsibility for the eCore administrative operation.
1F. Student Services

Following are our plans for eCore student services, including online bookstore services, test proctoring, student advising, and library services.

Online Bookstore Plan

eCore will initially contract with MBS Direct because of the past success in their eCore bookstore services. Students will find information for books through their course syllabus (online) or the eCore Textbook Listing (online), and may order their books online, by mail or by phone from MBS. The eCore Student Success Manager will coordinate ordering and communications with MBS to keep the textbook website updated, and with the eCore instructional designer to update syllabus information. The Student Success Manager will also notify faculty of updates to the booklist, and assist them with ordering instructor copies as necessary.

Student Advising

UWG’s current eCore advising system has been painstakingly developed as a result of several semesters of formal research into eCore course completion patterns and eCore student needs. The elements of this plan will be expanded to include all affiliates if UWG becomes the administrative provider.

Gated Registration. As an eCore affiliate, UWG was successful in its quest to increase eCore retention to a level nearing that of the institution’s face-to-face courses. In Fall 2009, retention was at 81 percent, compared to 65 percent in Fall 2003. A new gated registration system was among the measures which resulted in this increase. This requires all students who have not previously completed an eCore course with a grade of C or better to take an online orientation and pass a quiz prior to registering. As the administrative provider for eCore, UWG will expand the gated registration system to all eCore students, including those registered through affiliate institutions.

Targeted Emails. The eCore Student Success Manager will send prepared emails, with small chunks of information (rather than one long letter) to eCore students at key times throughout the semester. These will address need-to-know information such as

Student Retention and Gated Registration

- A repeating theme for students who did not persevere in eCore was that they did not really understand what taking an eCore course would be like.
- Less than 30 percent recalled having received and read the standard information sent by postal mail that explained the nature of eCore.
- Our eCore orientation (required prior to registering) explained online time requirements, testing, books, instructor contact and other issues to potential students. Next, they had to pass a brief orientation quiz prior to registering.
- Retention in eCore courses has increased from 67 percent (fall 2002) to 76 percent (fall 2007) to 81 percent (fall 2008).
registration for proctored exams, as well as "how is it going?" requests, and tips for eCore success.

*Other Student Information.* Students will continue to receive an informational letter by email before the beginning of each term. However, our interviews with eCore students indicate that most students do not read the document in full, if at all. Thus information to students will be made redundant - through chunked emails, eCore student webpage, and the eCore student Facebook site.

*Syllabi.* A major change - students will be able to view the actual eCore syllabus for their course at least one month prior to the course opening. They will also know the name of their instructor when they register. The eCore Faculty Coordinator will hire faculty far in advance, as well as make certain each instructor provides his or her syllabus for early online posting.

*Starfish* retention solutions

*Analytics.* UWG is pursuing, with ALT, the possibility of incorporating an academic analytic solution, such as *Starfish Retention Solutions*, to quickly identify at-risk eCore students. Starfish integrates with Vista and uses an algorithm to notify instructors and advisors when a student fails to meet pre-determined criteria. These criteria may include regular logins, participation on discussion board, completion of a minimum number of assignments, or average grades. We believe that incorporating such a tool would save countless hours of staff time and increase retention by identifying at-risk students.

*Library.* eCore students are able to use the library services of any college or university within the University System of Georgia. Students who reside out-of-state are provided with delivery services and are also provided with access to the Galileo Interconnected Libraries System. The eCore student website will provide information outlining library services and resources available to students. We will also provide a link to information and tutorials for utilizing online library resources, to include Google Scholar and Google Books.
Disability Services. All eCore courses will be ADA compliant and designed to appeal to a variety of learning styles. Student must document disabilities by following the processes at their affiliate school’s office of disability services and directing questions to them. All affiliate disability departments should direct students, as applicable to the Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC). Students will also be given information in each syllabus about these services as well as contact information for the Regents’ Center for Learning Disorders.

Proctored Exams. Each course will continue to require at least one proctored exam. However, exams will be delivered online through Georgia View Vista, rather than paper and pencil. An exception may be math or chemistry courses in cases that the instructor expects students to show their work. Students will benefit by immediately knowing their grades and being certain that the test will be available at the testing site. Instructors will no longer have to grade paper tests, and we will save on mailing time and associated costs. Details of the proctored exam procedure are available of page 22 of this document.
2.0 The Fiscal Model

2A. Tuition

The tuition rate for summer semester 2009 will remain unchanged at $144.00 per credit hour. All tuition increases start in the fall semester. Our budget model assumes a tuition of $189 per credit hour beginning Fall 2009, and includes the provision of payment to the BOR for the cross-institutional registration system. This charge is $50 per student per term. With each eCore student taking an average of 1.7 eCore courses, we estimated the charge to be around $10 per credit hour.

The agreed upon rate will go to the USG Fiscal Affairs Office for inclusion in the tuition approval sheet which is approved by the Board of Regents each April. Students will be able to register for fall semester during the advanced registration, but no tuition will be assessed until after the rates are approved in April. The students will be billed in July, after the new fees have been approved.

New Financial Model

eCore through UWG will adopt a new financial model consisting of three cost-centers: the administrative institution, the student home institution, and the faculty home institution:

- 40% to the Administering Institution
- 20% to the Student Home Institution
- 40% to the Faculty Home Institution

New Model/ Financial Worksheet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost per Credit Hour</td>
<td>$189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per three-hour class</td>
<td>567</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total per 20 seat full class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Home Institution (40%)</td>
<td>4536</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Home Institution (20%)</td>
<td>2268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering Institution (40%)</td>
<td>4536</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 2:</th>
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<td>Total per 37 seat full class</td>
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<td>Faculty Home Institution (40%)</td>
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<td>Student Home Institution (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administering Institution (40%)</td>
<td>8392</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2008-2009 Tuition (Per Credit Hour) Rates for Selected Online Courses/Programs

- Troy State University $200
- Central Michigan $325
- University of Washington $229
- Washington State $336
- University of Phoenix $381+
- Florida Tech University Online $410
- Iowa State $231
- University of Illinois $535
- Western Kentucky $349
- University Nebraska-Lincoln $204
- Texas Tech $257
- Eastern Oregon $135
- University of North Alabama $137-$274
- American Sentinel $225
2009 eCore Plan: The Fiscal Model

2B. Establishing the Budget:

The eCore budget will be set up under an account that will allow the program to sustain, scale, grow, and provide incentives. The account must be fluid so that the eCore administration can respond to the demand of the program. Therefore, a separate fiscal structure will be developed. This will be a departmental sales and service account (Fund 14000).

New Model/Financial Projections:

We anticipate a growth in enrollment of 46.56% over a 5-year period. The following table provides detailed estimated of our projected eCore revenues and expenses. With all costs listed, including faculty, administration, marketing and licensing (such as Turnitin, Starrfish, etc.), the program is fully self-supporting, even in the first year (FY2010). The only area of need is for staffing beginning in March 2009 to prepare for the upcoming eCore semester prior to the receipt of revenues beginning in Summer Semester 2009. Profits will be used for continued program growth, as well as infrastructure and facility expansion as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The University of West Georgia</th>
<th>Department of Budget Services</th>
<th>UWG eCore Administration</th>
<th>5 Year Projection Worksheet</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>eCore Administrative Fees</td>
<td>$1,474,841</td>
<td>$1,710,828</td>
<td>$1,865,354</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Fees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Miscellaneous Revenues</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>$1,474,841</td>
<td>$1,710,828</td>
<td>$1,865,354</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditures:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>340,000</td>
<td>450,200</td>
<td>463,706</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>105,570</td>
<td>109,265</td>
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<td>Travel</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>8,240</td>
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<td>Faculty (40% Home Institutions)</td>
<td>589,936</td>
<td>684,311</td>
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<td>BOR/GCI, Registration Fees</td>
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<td>Supplies &amp; Materials (714xxx)</td>
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<td>21,218</td>
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<td>Repairs &amp; Maintenance (715xxx)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Other Operating Expense (721xxx)</td>
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<td>5,305</td>
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<td>Advertising (742xxx)</td>
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<td>30,900</td>
<td>31,827</td>
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<td>Rents/Leases (74B100)</td>
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<td>Telecommunications (771xxx)</td>
<td>2,560</td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td>$1,306,487</td>
<td>$1,528,792</td>
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</table>
2009 eCore Plan: The Fiscal Model

The following table details revenue projections over the first five years of the program. These estimates were made conservatively to provide for prudent fiscal planning. Enrollment based on census date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>FY2010</th>
<th>FY2011</th>
<th>FY2012</th>
<th>FY2013</th>
<th>FY2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
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<td>3,687</td>
<td>4,020</td>
<td>4,382</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Increase:</td>
<td>-4.71%</td>
<td>9.02%</td>
<td>9.03%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>9.04%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credit Hours - Summer</td>
<td>2,624</td>
<td>2,861</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>3,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hours - Fall &amp; Spring</td>
<td>7,755</td>
<td>8,454</td>
<td>9,218</td>
<td>10,048</td>
<td>10,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Credit Hours</td>
<td>10,379</td>
<td>11,315</td>
<td>12,337</td>
<td>13,448</td>
<td>14,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Increase:</td>
<td>-4.71%</td>
<td>9.02%</td>
<td>9.03%</td>
<td>9.01%</td>
<td>9.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hour Ratio:</td>
<td>3.069</td>
<td>3.069</td>
<td>3.069</td>
<td>3.069</td>
<td>3.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Increase:</td>
<td>$36.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCore Tuition Revenues</td>
<td>$1,843,551</td>
<td>$2,138,535</td>
<td>$2,331,693</td>
<td>$2,632,104</td>
<td>$2,903,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative %**</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**includes 40% payable to faculty home
| eCore Administrative Fees   | $1,474,841| $1,710,828| $1,865,354| $2,105,683| $2,322,619|

The following table provides projected section and enrollments for each course for Fall 2009. Note that these are beginning enrollments, not census date.
3. Academic Coordination

Our administrative model will include a fully-staffed team to support all aspects of academic and administrative coordination. The team will be part of the same division (External Degree Programs) that UWG’s Distance & Distributed Education Center (DDEC) is. The DDEC holds responsibility for eCore advisement, planning and evaluation under the present eCore model. This division reports to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. We anticipate hiring seven new positions, and delegating additional responsibilities to current personnel for two of the positions. Key personnel, which may be expanded as eCore grows, include the following.

1. eCore Dean – Responsibilities include student grade appeals, serving as a liaison to affiliate VPAAs and academic department heads for hiring, and representation on the eCore subcommittee.

2. eCore Associate Dean – Responsibilities include general direction of the program, strategic planning and new initiatives, program evaluation, determining number of course sections and seats, management of day-to-day support functions, liaison to BOR.

3. eCore Curriculum & Instruction Manager – Responsibilities include faculty recruitment, initial screening of instructors, monitoring of instructors, instructor communication and recognition, course evaluation (CoursEval), coordination of course revision process, maintaining content of faculty eCore web information.

4. Testing Coordinator – Will coordinate worldwide eCore testing to include communication with students, instructors, test site coordinators, locating test sites, assistance with proctoring at UWG sites, testing technical support, sending password emails to proctors, processing instructor exam forms, ensuring that online exams are available and have proper settings.

5. Student Success Manager – Responsibilities include bookstore coordination, registration letters, identification and follow-up of at-risk students, collaboration with admissions and financial aid offices, maintenance of student eCore website.

6. Marketing and Communications Coordinator – Responsibilities include meeting enrollment

3A. Academic Governance Structure

The eCore Dean will be the second step of a streamlined grade appeal process for all eCore students, at all affiliate institutions. The first level will be the eCore faculty member, followed by the eCore dean if not resolved at the first level. If not resolved at any of these levels, the final appeal will be to the eCore Subcommittee.

The eCore Associate Dean will, in conjunction with the Curriculum & Instruction Manager, identify and work with faculty who receive poor evaluations or fail to meet expectations, such as responsiveness and adequate number of course logins. Decisions to release faculty from future eCore service will be approved by the eCore Dean.
targets through development of advertising, press releases, Web 2.0 initiatives, development of new populations such as joint enrollment. Also oversees copyright compliance in courses.

7. Instructional Designer – Responsibilities include oversight of course quality, making course updates, leading course quality review team, design of eCore website and assistance with website updates, lead technical assistance for instructors and students.

8. Budget Coordinator – Process all contracts, billing and payments, including instructor compensation, payroll, institution-to-institutions tuition sharing.

9. Registration Assistant – Will be in registrar’s office. Responsible for loading students into GeorgiaView, CampusVUE and Banner extracts; collaborate with affiliate registrars.

3B. Ongoing Faculty Support and Training

The eCore Curriculum & Instruction Manager will facilitate processes which maximize opportunities for faculty success in eCore teaching. These will include

- Facilitation of online training/certification program
- Facilitation of listserv for eCore instructors
- Development and email delivery of weekly newsletter for eCore faculty, including program announcements, tips, opportunities for new faculty, online training opportunities, spotlight on eCore faculty
- Assessment of eCore instructors through CourseEval and sending copies to hiring institutions (VPAA and department chairs). Collection of improvement plans (see appendix) from each instructor.
- Carefully monitoring performance of each instructor throughout term, and sending weekly reports to eCore Associate Dean. Reports to include log of student concerns/complaints (instructor-related) and failure to adhere to any aspect of instructor agreement (such as logging into course 5 days per week).
- Development of incentive and recognition programs for exemplary performance.

Major Changes for Training

- Online training and certification for eCore instructors
- Increased communication and recognition for eCore instructors
- Use of CoursEval software for systematic, data-driven course evaluations
- Mentoring for faculty
Support for instructors will include the following:
- extended training and mentoring
- technical support
- information
- recognition

*Training.* Research indicates the importance of instructors taking an online course prior to teaching online. All current and new eCore faculty will complete a 2-week initial eCore certification course, offered online 4 weeks prior to the beginning of Summer Session 2009. The course will be offered each term for new eCore faculty. In addition, beginning in 2010, all veteran eCore faculty will obtain recertification annually by participating in the program as a mentor.

Online Course Content for Faculty Certification:
Module 1: Faculty Expectations and Information.
  Readings, Discussion Posting, One Live Wimba Meeting, Quiz. 4 days
Module 2: Vista B. Readings, Exercises, Discussion Board Q/A, Quiz. 4 days
Module 3: Student Support and Retention. Readings, Discussion Posting, Quiz. 4 days
Module 4: Online Teaching. Readings, Discussion Posting, Quiz. 3 days

In addition, the Curriculum & Instruction Manager will email teaching tips to instructors weekly. These emails will include links to online training "snippets." A listserv will be promoted as a tool for mentoring and sharing of experiences/information.

**Key Assumptions on Faculty Training**

- No one-size-fits-all solution for preparing faculty to teach online. Instructors need a variety of visible and convenient choices.
- Resources should be allocated to provide immediate answers to needs through support staff that are available by telephone, in person, or email, and/or well-designed and easy-to-navigate internet materials.
- Programs should deliberately encourage formal and informal peer mentoring and learning communities, and provide opportunities for online instructors to share experiences.
- A particularly effective way to learn about online teaching is to participate in a course as a student. Such experiences enable persons to gain the perspective of an online learner.
- As instructors become experienced, their need for training changes; it is appropriate to develop learning opportunities which are relevant and reflect the needs of advanced learners.

*From M. Clay's "Training Practices and Preferences of Faculty Preparing to Teach Online."*
2009 eCore Plan: Academic Coordination

Technical Support. eCore instructors can receive just-in-time assistance from three places. These are the OSC helpline, the eCore Faculty Liaison, and the UWG Distance & Distributed Education Center. Instructors may call or email for help.

Information. Information for eCore instructors will be distributed in a variety of ways, to include:

- a listserv
- periodic face-to-face visits by the eCore Curriculum & Instruction Manager (for USG instructors)
- live informational meetings through Wimba (with recorded archives)
- a private Facebook site with links, announcements, and interviews with eCore instructors

Recognition. We will recognize exemplary eCore faculty annually based on certain criteria. These criteria will include: high levels of student retention; outstanding student course evaluations; full adherence to the eCore memorandum of understanding; and high levels of participation in mentoring, the listserv, and the eCore faculty Facebook site. Recognition will include a certificate signed by the eCore dean; letters to the faculty home department head, dean, and VPAA; and a press release sent to the instructor’s home institution.

Faculty Expectations

eCore instructors will complete a Memorandum of Understanding detailing their responsibilities. General responsibilities include:

- Maintaining visible interactive teaching presence in course
- Monitoring student progress and reporting at-risk students
- Annual completion of 2-week online certification course
- Posting and reporting grades
- Reviewing eCore teaching evaluations and documenting plans for improvement
3C. Maintenance and Revision of Course Templates and Website

Course Development and Ongoing Review. USG faculty teams initially developed all eCore courses. In our plan, a Quality Team will conduct a complete review and comprehensive update of each course at least once every three years. The team will include a content expert (paid faculty), an editor, and the eCore instructional designer. This content expert will ensure and document the following:

- Each course results in appropriate learning and rigor
- The courses provide opportunities for appropriate instructor-student; student-student; and student-content interaction
- Courses have comparable learning outcomes to those offered at UWG face-to-face classes.

The editor will check courses for spelling, readability, grammar, and consistent language flow. Each revised course will score at least a minimum standard score on UWG’s Five-Star Course Rubric. The instructional designer will review each course every semester to check for broken links, navigability, accessibility, copyright and technical issues. The instructional designer will also immediately update any reported issues.

Faculty may make limited changes to the approved course content. At least one proctored examination will be required.

Any new courses added to the eCore mix will follow these same criteria. New courses will be determined by institutional and student needs, and will be subject to the approval of the BOR.

The eCore website will be the primary responsibility of the eCore instructional designer. However, both the Student Success Manager and the Curriculum & Instruction Manager will be responsible for content updates in their respective areas of oversight.

Selected Elements of UWG’s Five-Star Course Rubric

- The instructor provides a biography and appropriate self-introduction which presents the instructor as approachable and engaged.
- Performance standards, rubrics, or examples of quality assignments are provided.
- Course pages and materials are consistent in appearance and organization.
- All external links are functional.
- Course materials are divided into appropriate sections or chunks.
- The instructor (or syllabus) clearly states how often students are required to interact with one another and the instructor, the expected quality of such interactions, and how these interactions affect student grades.

There are a total of 39 standards. This is only a sample.
3D. Responsiveness to eCore Issues

UWG’s Distance & Distributed Education Center has an established reputation of providing rapid and quality response to the faculty, students, and administrators it supports. The average time it took to get help from the DDEC was ranked 9.8 on a scale of 1 to 10 from 1600 respondents (faculty, students and administrators) in FY 2007 (tracked by the Remedy System). All eCore requests will be logged, and follow up calls will be initiated to those flagged as complex or problematic (such as high-risk students). The primary point of contacts for eCore issues will be:

**Faculty** issues and questions regarding hiring, evaluation, contract, expectations and course problems will be handled by the Curriculum & Instruction Manager, with backup by the Associate Dean. Testing issues will be the responsibility of the Testing Coordinator.

**Student** issues related to course problems, financial aid, getting books, registration, instructor issues, and any other related issues will be responded to by the Student Success Coordinator. Testing issues and assistance in locating sites outside the State of Georgia will be the responsibility of the Testing Coordinator.

**Board of Regents** and general administrative questions regarding program quality, program data and related areas will be handled by the eCore Associate Dean.

**Staff** questions regarding cross-institutional registration, CampusVUE and Banner will be responded to by the Registration Assistant.

**Technical questions** regarding the course management system will take first priority for those students contacting the eCore Administrative Office. Many technical questions are of the nature that they may be handled by trained student assistants; however, the eCore instructional designer, Student Success Manager, and Curriculum & Instruction Manager will also be available to respond. Students, faculty and staff may also contact the OSC for their first line of support, or during weekend/evening hours.

The eCore Dean will respond to inquiries from lead administrators at other institutions regarding affiliate information or partnership opportunities.
4A. Student Advising

UWG already has in place a well-documented record of successful student advising, as detailed on page 9. The Student Success Manager will be responsible for the maintenance of the Student Guide to eCore and the eCore website (in partnership with the Instructional Designer and occasionally, temporary contract experts). A Live Help system (chat based) will be established online for eCore inquiries, and linked off the main eCore website. Inquiries and questions through this live system will be answered by a trained graduate assistant, or routed immediately to the appropriate staff member. The possibility of a toll-free number will be explored if the Live Help system proves to be inadequate.

Affiliate Advisory Services. In addition to the eCore Student Success Manager, there will continue to be one or more eCore advisors at each affiliate institution. The eCore Student Success Manager will conduct meetings each semester with all advisors to ensure consistency of service. However, all eCore students, regardless of their institutional affiliation, can contact the UWG offices for assistance regarding their eCore courses. Advisors will take a proactive approach in providing information and reminders to students, as outlined above. They will be knowledgeable on the content of eCore courses, how they fit into core requirements, prerequisites, transfer policies, and financial aid. Furthermore, advisors will serve as student advocates, encouraging students in their progress. The eCore Student Success Manager will also contact all students identified by instructors (or software such as Starfish Retention Solutions) who are struggling or not participating. Referrals to other services will be made if appropriate.
2009 eCore Plan: Institutional Preparedness/Support

4B. Proctored Testing

A recent evaluation of the existing eCore testing process indicates that the overall program and its participants (i.e., students, faculty, proctors, and administrators) would benefit from revisions and enhancements to ensure that the process becomes more efficient. Feedback from students and faculty consistently suggests that the paper-based testing procedure is cumbersome. Thus, beginning Summer 2009, Vista 8 will be used for delivery of exams in most eCore courses (some math and chemistry may be exempt). Students in online courses must fulfill their responsibilities in arranging and taking a proctored exam.

Exam Process: Six Steps Instead of Ten!

1. Instructor
   - Posts test dates on syllabus

2. Instructor
   - Sends testing dates, requirements

3. Student
   - Sends online form w/ test site info
   - Goes to site to take test
   - Schedules test appointment

4. Test Coord.
   - Sends password & test information

5. Proctor
   - Receives password & test information

6. Proctor
   - Sends password & test information

Benefits of eCore Online Testing

- Students receive immediate feedback and test results, depending on exam settings
- Paperless assessment programs support Go Green initiatives
- Instructors have more flexibility in test question methods
- Online exams are more secure than paper-based exams (Appendix H)
- Lessens the chances of lost exams and mishandling of paper exams
- Increases opportunities for instructors to meet deadlines
- Significant time and cost savings from not copying, and mailing exams to and from instructors.

Online testing means no more lost paper tests.

Georgia Online Testing Sites

Presently, there are 16 USG sites throughout Georgia that have facilities available for online proctored testing. The University of West Georgia has also invested into its testing facilities at both its Carrollton and Newnan campuses to include 104 computers (by February 2009), staffing, and video surveillance systems. This is more than any other institution in the USG. The cost for proctored exams at UWG is $10, but may be higher at other locations.
Proctored Exam Responsibilities

The eCore instructor will make students aware of policies, procedures and deadlines for testing; include exam information in syllabi; adhere to designated eCore exam dates; create their exams in Vista 8 at least 15 days prior to the exam window; provide testing and proctoring information to the Testing Coordinator by required dates.

The eCore student will select a proctor from the approved list (or seek assistance from Testing Coordinator in locating an alternate; submit an online exam request form; provide proper ID at testing site; and pay test site fees where applicable.

The site proctor will follow instructor’s requirements for administering the exam; log the student into the test using the proctor password; maintain proximity with the student and observe the student throughout the exam; scan and fax tests that cannot be delivered online; report any testing issues to the Testing Coordinator.

The Testing Coordinator will provide proctors with password information; provide assistance regarding testing to students and faculty as needed; locate alternate testing sites, and assist with proctoring tests at the UWG testing sites.

4C. Tutoring

eCore currently has a contract with SMARTTHINKING, an online tutoring service. Its services are billed based on an hourly rate, and it is currently used approximately 12 hours per week. We have included this service, along with a projection for increased billable hours, in our fiscal plans under the line item - licensing.

- SMARTTHINKING’s a student-centric service that supplements on-campus courses and academic support systems.
- The SMARTTHINKING online tutoring service is designed for students who are taking core academic courses.
- Online learning assistance is available from tutors in mathematics, statistics, Spanish, chemistry, physics, and writing for all subjects.

In 2009 the eCore Administrative Institution will continue to provide SMARTTHINKING’s online tutoring services to eCore students. This helps to create a true
on/off-campus hybrid educational model that addresses a range of student needs and learning styles.

4D. Enrollment Management

The Registration Assistant will be responsible for overseeing procedures associated with the cross-institutional registration system. This individual will also work with affiliates to ensure that they understand how to run extractions and maintain the CampusVUE file. All affiliates should already have a designated or planned CampusVUE administrator to fill the needs of current and developing franchise programs (like UWG’s online MAT program).

Beginning summer 2009, eCore students will register via the GOML/CampusVUE registration system. As we understand CampusVUE, we will be able to retrieve the affiliate institutions’ enrollment data, as well as our own, and use this information for billing purposes. This data will reconcile with the affiliates’ Banner information. Therefore, the affiliates will no longer need to send an extraction file to us (the admin institution) as they currently do for the Georgia Center. Aggregating registration will make managing seats, student login accounts, student support, grades, and billing more efficient and scalable.

If the CampusVue registration system does not work as the GOML administrative personnel have anticipated, eCore will use the same process that the Georgia Center currently uses. The affiliate institutions will extract registration data from a Banner extraction program, and the data will be transmitted to the eCore Administrative Services database. This database is not only used for billing purposes but also is used to load students into GeorgiaView Vista. We will establish an extraction timeline for the affiliates in this procedure to ensure accurate enrollment reporting/billing.

Transient Students

To register for eCore courses, students from non-affiliate institutions must apply as transients. Currently, the process for applying is cumbersome. We can speed up the transient application process by using a single standard Ga411 transient application for eCore affiliates. A transient student would only be required to provide general information and submit a letter of transient permission from his/her home institution. A transient student would NOT be required to submit
2009 eCore Plan: Institutional Preparedness/Support

academic transcripts from each college attended. Normally, the Admissions Office grants Transient status for only one consecutive term. This too could be reconsidered. Together, these changes would mean that transients could be admitted within 48 hours.

eCore Registration: Administrative Issues

UWG has identified several administrative issues which should be addressed to maximize the success of the new registration system, and is committed to working with ALT to work towards solutions. Among these issues:

1. CampusVIEW will copy the registration information back down to the affiliate’s Banner system, via a process by the CampusVUE administrator. Currently this synchronization process is done once a day and must be done manually. The BOR hopes to have the process more automated by Jan 1.

2. Over-Registration issue: There is nothing inherent in the system now to prevent over-registration on the front end. When we synchronize the two systems, generated errors will list students who have over-registered. Affiliate eCore advisors must contact the student or auto-drop them from some courses. The exact policy and procedures are undetermined at this time, as they must be worked out amongst the various affiliates.

3. Billing issue: Since the process of synching the registration data is done manually once a day, there will be a time delay on the courses appearing on the student’s bill. It could happen that the student might pay the bill and then have additional charges later. Affiliates should agree to view these cases as exceptions and not charge the student late fees or drop students from courses. The exact policy and procedures are undetermined at this time, as they must be worked out amongst the various affiliates.

4. Financial aid issue: Time delays in synching information may also impact financial aid. Each school has an enrollment freeze date by which the student’s enrolled hours are used to calculate aid. For UWG the freeze date is usually the day after the last day of drop/add. Affiliates should agree to accommodate eCore exceptions, as UWG currently does for its eCore students. The exact policy and procedures are

Aggregating Registration through CampusVUE will Make eCore more Efficient and Scalable

- With aggregate registration info, CampusVUE can wait-list students and open new sections as needed
- eCore usernames and passwords will no longer have to be manually generated
- Students will no longer have to be manually enrolled in their online course in Georgia VIEW
- The host school will no longer have to manually collect and reconcile billing from the multiple campuses
- Faculty can verify attendance and post grades online securely
undetermined at this time, as they must be worked out amongst the various affiliates.

5. Financial aid for transients: Some schools will not facilitate the transfer of financial aid dollars from their home school to the transient school. In other words, a Ga Perimeter student can attend UWG as a transient and our financial aid office will work with GPC to transfer HOPE funds so that the student may use the funds here. However, GPC does not do the same for our students who may wish to take a summer class as a transient.

6. Single sign-on: Student attempting to register through affiliate Banner presently will have to login a second time in order to register through CampusVue.

4E. General Support

UWG has had an exemplary general support system in place for its distance programs for more than a decade, and maintains extensive data on all areas related to program success. Details and point-of-accountability information are outlined in Section 3D on page 20.

*Helpdesk.* In addition to the statewide OSC helpline, available 24/7, eCore students may contact the UWG Distance Education/eCore helpdesk for immediate, dedicated assistance with Vista or other eCore issues. This will be housed in the same office as the eCore Student Success Manager and will be manned by full-time support specialists, as well as highly-trained graduate assistants. Assistance will be available through email or telephone support Monday through Friday, 8 am - 6 pm. Helpdesk calls are logged through the Remedy system, which includes a brief evaluation sent by email to the student. Helpdesk professionals follow up within three days with any calls that are deemed complex or indicate that a student is at risk of not successfully completing their eCore course.

4F. Institutional Resources

The budget team at the University of West Georgia has carefully evaluated this plan for its viability and we believe that it will become immediately self-supporting. However, the institution, in addition to providing facilities and time expense from other collaborating units (ITS, registrar, VPAAs office, budget services), is prepared to allocate whatever resources necessary to ensure program quality.
5. Continuous Improvement Strategies

Evaluation of all aspects of the eCore program will be systematic and continuous. Evaluation will be the responsibility of the eCore Associate Dean. The initial evaluations, planned and existing, are as follows.

5A. Student Evaluations

Student Evaluations through CoursEval. UWG's Distance & Distributed Education Center already holds a license to the CourseEval system, which allows for secure course evaluations with a link delivered through the students' email accounts. The system also allows for easy comparative data, with viewing available to the course instructor, academic deans and department heads, and the eCore associate dean, dean, and curriculum & instruction manager. In addition, the eCore instructional designer will have access to data relevant to course design and navigation.

Student Services Telephone Survey. Annually, the eCore Student Success Manager will conduct a telephone survey of a sampling of eCore students to measure satisfaction, services, and success factors.

Withdrawal Survey. The Student Success Manager will email a short survey to all students who withdraw from eCore courses to determine their reasons for withdrawal.

Quick-Polls on FaceBook and eCore Student WebPage. Though not scientific, information gained from quick, interactive polls placed on the eCore FaceBook site and webpage can provide insight as to student opinions on certain current issues that arise on eCore.

Module Survey. We will incorporate a very brief feedback link at the end of each course module, allowing students the option of telling what they did and didn't like about each module, as well as error information. This will be automatically sent to the eCore Instructional Designer and Curriculum & Instruction Manager for follow up or changes as needed.
5B. Faculty Evaluations

Instructor Course Improvement Forms. eCore instructors will complete a course improvement form upon review of their student evaluations. The purpose of the form is to document the changes they are making in their instruction based on these evaluations.

Appendix C. Evaluation Improvement Form

(Mailed in triplicate to each distance faculty, along with the results of their eCore course evaluation).

Please review attached distance learning survey results for your course. Complete this form and return one copy to your department head (or dean) and the pink copy to the eCore Faculty Coordinator.

eCore will post aggregate (not individual) results of course and program improvements to our website, and will present quarterly to the eCore Dean. This information will enable us to make program and training improvements as well as meet SACS requirements.

Name of Course __________________________
Course Number ___________________________ Term _________________
Instructor ________________________________

After reviewing your student evaluations, what do you think went well in this class?

What was problematic?

What do you plan to change next time you teach the course?

Faculty Training Survey. All eCore instructors will be asked to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement after completing their 2-week online certification course. In addition, instructors will receive annual surveys regarding their experiences in teaching eCore and their satisfaction with the level of support and

5C. Process for Faculty-Recommended Course Content Revisions

A hyperlinked form will be available within each eCore course that faculty can use to provide suggestions for minor course changes and revisions, such as broken links or misinformation. This link will be hidden from student view. The form will be automatically emailed to the eCore instructional designer, who will make course changes within 1-3 days. For more substantial content changes or assessment changes, the instructional designer will forward the suggestions to other faculty who teach the course in question. If all indicate their approval of the suggestions, then the instructional designer will, with the approval of the
Curriculum & Instruction Manager, make the changes. Any changes relating to the course objectives will be submitted to the eCore subcommittee for approval. As described on page 19, each course will also undergo a comprehensive review and update every three years at a minimum.

5D. Other Strategies

Five-Star Course Rubric. A rubric, based on research and the Principles of Good Practices, will be used in the development and revision of each eCore course. The rubric includes instructional design, interaction, syllabi, accessibility, and other criteria.

Retention and Grade Comparisons. Each term, retention data and grades will be compared to f2f counterpart courses at UWG. Results will be reported and used to make documented program improvements.

Help Call Evaluations. Using the Remedy system at UWG, the eCore Associate Dean will analyze data to determine the number, types, and other patterns relating to eCore help requests. The data will also provide the caller's satisfaction with the assistance received and the timeliness of the response.