Distance Education Policy Manual

Contents

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Native American students have the lowest level of achievement in higher education for any minority group (IHEP, AIHEC, & AICF, 2000), with reasons varying from low socioeconomic status and family responsibilities to inadequate college preparation and geographic isolation on reservations (AIHEC & SR, 2009). Their experiences at traditional colleges have been historically difficult, requiring students to deal with stereotypes and difficult relations with non-Indian students (Harrington and Harrington, 2012). There has been more focus on providing financial aid than on providing supportive programs and services, which are what Native students themselves claim to need (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). The American Indian Higher Education Consortium has long noted a mismatch between Native students' needs and the support provided to them at traditional colleges, thus the tribal college movement was started (AIHEC, 2012). Tribal colleges have unique insight into the needs and desires of Native students and provide a level of cultural support, which extends even to online classes (AIHEC, 2012). Native American students have been characterized as nontraditional due to age, being parents (often single parents), and requiring employment while pursuing their studies (Al-Asfour & Bryant, 2011; HCM Strategists, 2010). Nontraditional students have been shown to be more likely to take online classes, which can improve completion rates (Pontes and Pontes, 2012). However, it may be more beneficial for Native students to take online classes at tribal colleges than at other institutions. A large percentage of Native Students are first-generation college students (AIHEC, 2009). The culture of independence at traditional colleges has been shown to be a disadvantage for first-generation college students (Stephens, 2012) without the added level of independence required for online classes. At Leech Lake Tribal College, we offer an array of classes – web-enhanced, blended (hybrid) and fully online – infused with Anishinaabe culture to meet the unique needs of our Native students. This policy manual acts as a guide to students, faculty, administrators and visitors as they navigate our distance education program.

LLTC PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Values

"According to the Anishinaabe worldview, humans did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. Therefore, kinship among all of creation, not the mastery of our relatives (other humans, animals, plants, etc.) is vital to harmonious living. To adhere to this philosophy is to be guided by the following values:

1. Dabasendizowin (humility)
   - To recognize oneself as a sacred and equal part of the Creation
   - To be modest in one's actions
   - To demonstrate sensitivity to others
   - To be respectful of the thoughts and ideas of others
   - To recognize one's strengths and weaknesses and acknowledge the capacity for self-growth and change
   - To develop and practice good listening and observation skills

2. Debwewin (truth)
   - To speak the most honestly one can, according to his/her perceptions
   - To be loyal in all our relationships, avoiding hypocrisy

3. Zoongide'iwin (courage)
   - To face difficult situations with bravery
   - To acknowledge one's personal weaknesses and develop the strength to combat them
   - To demonstrate the ability to take initiative and to speak forthrightly

4. Gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty)

- To maintain truthfulness, sincerity, and fairness in all one's actions
- To possess the ability to manage confidential information
- To communicate with others and transmit information fairly and truthfully

5. Manaaji'idiwin (respect)
- To accept cultural, religious, and gender differences
- To maintain high standards of conduct at all times
- To safeguard the dignity, individuality, and rights of others

6. Zaagi'idiwin (love)
- To work cooperatively and harmoniously with others
- To show kindness and compassion
- To demonstrate acceptance and the empowerment of others
- To offer hope, encouragement, and inspiration

7. Nibwaakaawin (wisdom)
- To take time to reflect on all our experiences
- To acknowledge the opportunity to learn from others
- To persist in acquiring knowledge and improving skills
- To strive for the accomplishment of goals and dreams
- To practice ethical behavior at all times
- To seek guidance from Elders and qualified advisors" (LLTC, 2016)

Mission

Leech Lake Tribal College's mission is to provide quality higher education based on Anishinaabe values (LLTC, 2016). The program of online education at LLTC is founded upon the belief that Native students require opportunities for completing courses online in order to complete their educations and close the gap in higher education for Native peoples in the U.S.

The mission of the distance education department at LLTC is to increase educational opportunities for Native students by offering online classes grounded in Anishinaabe values and to improve their chances of success in online learning once they have moved forward to other institutions.

Vision

Our vision is one in which Native students experience equal opportunities in higher education, attend college at rates equal to those of other groups in the U.S., graduate and go on to have successful careers, which benefit themselves, their families, their tribes and communities while building and maintaining an Anishinaabe worldview (Wilson, 2012).

Thunderbird Academic Learning Model
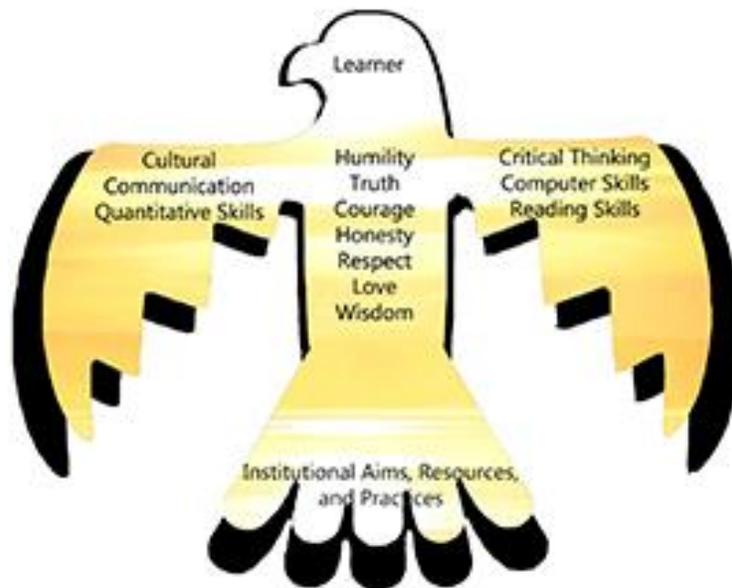
The teachings and roles of the various Clans integrate to reinforce the student experience at Leech Lake Tribal College, producing a Learner, as illustrated below:

- **Tail**: The tail of the thunderbird can be described as the foundation. It provides steering capabilities, balance, and stability. Our institutional aims, resources, and practices are the "rudder" of the Learner – enabling them to properly guide themselves through life.
- **Body**: The body of the thunderbird encases the vital organs that allow it to function. The seven Anishinaabe values are at the center of the learner and help keep the Learner strong and healthy.
- **Wings**: The wings of the thunderbird are complex. They allow the bird to hover, soar, and glide. Each of the six student learning outcomes makes the wings more efficient and effective, allowing the Learner to be more successful when they take flight after graduation.
- **Head**: The Learner is represented at the head of the thunderbird. The head allows the Learner to look in many directions to see the world from multiple angles, leading the rest of its body through the web of life (LLTC, 2015, p. 12).

Cultural Components

- It is an LLTC requirement that every course be imbued with cultural significance by including cultural components that reflect the Anishinaabe heritage, customs, language, and way of life (LLTC, 2008).

DEFINITIONS

It is important that we begin with a common understanding of what exactly constitutes educational technology, distance education, and online learning. Equally important is the understanding that the field and practice of distance education, through the use of educational technology, which includes online learning, is a reliable, high quality, and proper approach to education (Simonson, 2007). The following definitions have been debated, agreed upon and published by eminent individuals and organizations in the field.

Educational Technology – According to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology's Definition and Terminology Committee, "educational technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources" (Januszewski & Molenda, 2008).

Distance Education - Distance education is formal education that is institutionally based, not self-study, where the members of the learning group are separated geographically and use interactive telecommunications systems to connect with one another, the instructor, and the resources (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009).

Online Learning – "Online learning is instructor-led education that takes place over the Internet, with the instructor and student separated geographically, using a web-based educational delivery system that includes software to provide a structured learning environment. It may be synchronous (communication in which participants interact in real time, such as online video) or asynchronous (communication separated by time, such as email or online discussion forums). It may be accessed from multiple settings (in school and/or out of school buildings)" (Watson, Murin, Vashaw, Gemin, & Rapp, 2012).

NATURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Though distance learning in many forms – correspondence education, ITV, and independent study – has been around for decades, online learning is unique. Not only is it more convenient, when done well, it provides equivalent learning experiences to that in the face-to-face environment (Simonson, 2007). Some key issues must be taken into consideration with this in mind.

Learner Characteristics – Studies show that having strong academic skills, high motivation, and self-discipline lead to success in the online environment (Moore, 2007). Students must work more collaboratively with peers than they might have in the traditional classroom (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004).

Role of Self-Motivation – Because students have less or no face-to-face contact in an online class, the role of self-motivation is very important. This includes the ability and desire to be organized and a willingness to take the initiative in communications with instructors and peers.

Collaboration and Communication – Interactivity is essential to successful learning and is considered central to the teaching and learning process in the online environment. In a review of the literature on student persistence in online studies, Hart (2012) found that certain factors related to interaction led to persistence: having a sense of belonging in a learning community, peer support, and communication with one's instructor.

ACADEMICS

Academic policies are put in place to ensure course integrity, uphold quality standards and assurance, facilitate accreditation, manage quality control, and handle faculty related issues (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). Under the integrated approach to policy development, existing LLTC policies have been modified to establish distance education policy (Simonson, 2007).

Pre-approval of Distance Education Courses – Distance education courses must be pre-approved by department heads in conjunction with the distance education coordinator prior to submission to the curriculum committee. A course must be approved one semester previous to the one in which it will be taught to provide time for changes to be made before it is offered in the course catalog. Changes to an existing course must be approved in the semester before it will be taught to provide time for minor changes to be made before it is offered.

Course Quality – LLTC uses the Quality Matters (QM) peer review process to certify the quality of its online courses. The QM program uses an established rubric for online courses combined with professional development to train instructors on the peer review process, and ongoing, continuous improvement process (qmprogram.org). Eight standards are included in the rubric (http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric):

1. Course Overview and Introduction
2. Learning Objectives (Competencies)
3. Assessment and Measurement
4. Instructional Materials
5. Learner Interaction and Engagement
6. Course Technology
7. Learner Support
8. Accessibility

Academic Calendar (LLTC, 2016)

Academic Calendar	2016-2017
Fall Semester	**2016**
New Student Orientation	Aug. 26
Last Day to Register	Aug. 26
Classes Begin	Aug. 29
No Classes - Labor Day Holiday	Sept. 5
Last Day to Add/Drop	Sept. 6
Last Day to Make up Incompletes from Spring Semester	Sept. 23
Midterm Grades Due	Nov. 2
Last Day to Officially Withdraw	Nov. 14
No Classes - Faculty Development	Oct. 20-21
No Classes - Veteran's Day Observed	Nov. 11
No Classes - Thanksgiving Holiday	Nov. 24-25
Classes Resume	Nov. 28
Pre-registration for Spring Semester	Nov. 14
Last Day of Classes	Dec. 9
Finals Week	Dec. 12-16
Fall Semester Ends	Dec. 16
Final Grades Due	Dec. 20
No Classes - Winter Holiday	Dec. 26-Jan. 6
Spring Semester	**2017**
New Student Orientation	Jan. 12
Last Day to Register	Jan. 13
Classes Begin	Jan. 17
No Classes - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Jan. 16
Last Day to Add/Drop	Jan. 24
Last Day to Make-up Incompletes from Fall Semester	Feb. 10
No Classes - President's Day	Feb. 13
Midterm Grades Due	Feb. 14
Last Day to Officially Withdraw	Apr. 3
No classes - Spring Break	Mar. 20-24
Classes Resume	Mar. 27
Pre-registration for Fall Semester	Apr. 6
Last Day of Classes	May 5
Finals Week	May 8-12
Spring Semester Ends	May 12
Final Grades Due	May 16
Graduation Ceremony	May 19

Grading – Faculty members must adhere to the grading policy in the course catalog and enter all grades into the electronic recording system so that they can be submitted to the registrar at the end of each semester. Grades are due within three working days after the final exam for each course (LLTC, 2008). LLTC uses the following grades to compute grade point average (LLTC, 2015):

- A = 4 points (superior)
- B = 3 points (good)
- C = 2 points (average)
- D = 1 point (passing)
- F = 0 points (failing)
- I = Incomplete (no credit; this grade will automatically become an F is coursework is not completed by the agreed upon date)
- W = Withdrawal (does not affect GPA)
- AU = Audit (does not affect GPA)
- R = Repeat (replaces the former grade with the newer grade from the repeat class in the calculation of GPA)

Admissions – All applications for admissions from any student with a high school diploma or GED are welcomed under LLTC's open admissions policy. The application can be found on our website (http://www.lltc.edu) and is available by request via phone/fax or email. Personnel in the Student Services office are available to assist with the application process. A one-time, non-refundable application fee of $15 will be charged. All information in this section can also be found in the LLTC Catalog (LLTC, 2015).

- **Transfer Students** – Transfer students are those who have previously attended an accredited university. An official, sealed transcript must be requested to be sent from each attended university directly to LLTC, or delivered in a sealed envelope from the university. Transfer credits will then be evaluated, and the following will be accepted: Courses in the previous 10 years in which a letter grade of D or

above have been earned. Developmental or remedial courses will not transfer to LLTC. Courses taken more than 10 years ago may or may not be approved for transfer by the department chair.

- **Auditing Classes** – A student who audits a class, participates without earning credit. "AU" will appear on the student's transcript for these courses. Auditing students are not required to take exams but must meet admission requirements and pay tuition and fees.

- **Elder Status** – Elders are welcomed at LLTC and may take one free course per semester but must purchase their own textbooks and pay any applicable fees for course materials. An elder is defined as someone 55 years of age or older. Please see Student Services for more information.

FISCAL, GEOGRAPHIC, GOVERNANCE

This section of the policy will specify how LLTC approaches the issues of course and curriculum ownership, costs (tuition, fees, etc.), and the administration of student records and financial aid, board oversight (Simonson, 2007), accreditation, and service area limitations (Simonson, et al., 2012).

Course and Curriculum Ownership – All syllabi and course plans created for

online courses at LLTC remain the property of the college, and faculty members are expected to leave permanent copies of all course materials with the college, though they may keep a personal copy and use these materials, providing a citation of LLTC's proprietary rights (LLTC, 2008). LLTC will not publish these materials with prior agreement with the author (LLTC, 2008).

Tuition Rates – The following rates for fees and tuition are the same as for face-to-

face classes (LLTC, 2015).

- **Semester Credits** – Each semester credit costs $154.
- **Tuition Refunds** – Students may receive a 100% refund of tuition and fees paid, less the $15 application fee, when _officially_ dropped from a course up to the date to _officially drop_ courses. This date is published each semester. After the official date to drop courses, a partial or no refund will be made.
- **Free Summer Classes** – LLTC offers summer classes free of tuition for all students in the summer. Application fee still applies for new students. Books may be required.

Fees

- **Application Fee** – All applicants for admission must submit a one-time fee of $15.
- **Student Activity Fee** - $25 per semester

- **Technology Fee** - $6 per credit hour
- **Replacement Student ID Card** - $10 per card replaced
- **Transcript Fee** - $5 per semester for unlimited official transcripts

Administration of Student Records – All records are kept in the Students

Services office and managed by the registrar. Requests for documents can be managed online through the LLTC website: http://lltc.edu/current/registration/index.htm. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. The registrar can be reached via email: mandy.schram@lltc.edu or phone: 218-335-4222.

Financial Aid - The following financial aid information is the same for all students

and is covered in the LLTC Catalog (LLTC, 2015).

- **Disbursement** – LLTC's Financial Aid policy is to collect all tuition and fees from the first available funding source, usually a Pell grant. If a student receives an FSEOG grant, a tribal scholarship, or a Pell scholarship, which usually arrives in the 9th week of class, the Finance Office will draw tuition and fees from the Pell grant first.

- **Financial Aid Process** – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is required and may be submitted after January 1st or after federal income tax filing. The Financial Aid staff is available to assist you through the process.

- **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** – For continued financial aid eligibility, students must meet all standards for satisfactory academic progress at the end of each semester. Leech Lake Tribal College requires that students make Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to remain in good standing and continue their enrollment to their graduation. Satisfactory Academic Progress is determined by evaluation of cumulative GPA, pace of completion, and a maximum time frame to complete their degree/certificate program. LLTC has established and will apply the following standards of satisfactory academic progress to all students. Students bear the responsibility for their own academic progress and for seeking assistance when experiencing

academic difficulty. To earn a diploma, certificate or associate's degree from LLTC, you must have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or better. You are not making Satisfactory Academic Progress whenever your cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum. And/ or your cumulative credits earned versus attempted percentage is below 67%.

- **Failure to Meet Standards** – At the end of each semester, your academic progress related to cumulative GPA, pace of completion (credit completion) and the maximum time frame will be evaluated. If you do not meet the minimum cumulative requirements, you will be placed on Academic and Financial Aid Warning after the first occurrence but continue to be eligible for financial aid during the Financial Aid Warning term.

  If, at the end of the warning period, you have met the cumulative GPA and pace of completion (credit completion) percentage standards you will be in good standing academically and continue to be eligible for Federal and State Student Aid (FSA).

  If, at the end of the warning period, your cumulative GPA and/or pace of completion (credit completion) percentage do not meet the required standards, LLTC will place you on financial aid suspension immediately. You will not be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid (FSA) or MN State Aid.

  At this point you may file academic and financial aid appeals. See Financial Aid Appeals below.

  LLTC reserves the right to withhold aid from any student, at any time, who demonstrates an attendance pattern that abuses the receipt of financial assistance. These situations may include, but are not limited to a student who withdraws from all classes for two consecutive semesters, a student who has previously attended two or more institutions and has not progressed satisfactorily, a student who does not appear to be pursuing a degree/certificate, etc.

  All periods of enrollment count when assessing progress, even periods in which you did not receive FSA funds.

If you change emphasis, credits and grades that do not count toward the new emphasis will not be included in the Satisfactory Progress determination. A student may only change their emphasis one time while attending LLTC in order to be Federal and State Student Aid eligible.

Board Oversight – Leech Lake Tribal College was chartered in 1990 by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and derives its authority from the Tribe who has responsibility for the College through the Board of Trustees, made up of enrolled members of the Leech Lake Nation (LLTC, 2016).

Accreditation – Leech Lake Tribal College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission until 2020.

Service Area Limitations – Leech Lake Tribal College currently serves students with online education who live within the boundaries of Minnesota.

FACULTY

Faculty plays an important role in the online environment that may seem on the surface to be the same as the role played in the face-to-face classroom. Teaching online, however, requires a different mindset, technological skills, and a commitment to ongoing professional development (Fish & Wickersham, 2009). Some important considerations are facilitating and encouraging collaboration, helping students to use effective time management, assisting students to become proficient with course tools, providing extra clear directions, and giving timely feedback.

Successful distance education faculty members exhibit the following characteristics: they are serious, lifelong learners, favor experimental and collaborative styles, enjoy up-front conceptual work, are skilled at facilitating group-process, make their expectations explicit, construct evaluation/assessment schemes, provide detailed, developmental feedback, and are willing to give frequent feedback (Brown, in Simonson, et al., 2012, p. 337)

Compensation – Faculty may receive a stipend, negotiated on a case-by-case basis, for instructional design and development of an entirely online class or one that is fully 50% hybrid. The time needed to develop a fully online course should be taken into consideration (Westcott, 2012).

Workload – Online class hours will be considered equivalent to face-to-face class hours in terms of instructor workload, with a maximum of 15 credits per semester.
- **Class Size** – Class size is not to exceed 20 students, except at the discretion on the instructor.

Responsibilities – (LLTC, 2008).

- **Course descriptions** – Faculty members will develop brief descriptions for each course they teach to appear in the course catalog, articulation agreements, and other college publications. Department chairs will be responsible for approving the course descriptions before publication.
- **Course Syllabi** – Faculty members will develop syllabi for each course they teach in compliance with the Master Syllabus format. Department chairs will be responsible for approving syllabi before publication and distribution to students.
- **Committee Service** – Full-time faculty is expected to serve on two or more committees. Those faculty teaching blended or fully online programs are requested to serve on the Online Learning Committee.

Online Office Hours – All online faculty is expected to hold online office hours for their online students, equal to the number of hours of face-to-face office hours (10 hours per week over a period of four days) (LLTC, 2008). These may be held simultaneously.

- **Faculty Response Rate** - Faculty are expected to respond to student communications via voice message, email, phone text, or instant message within 24 hours except on weekends. However, if students are given weekend due dates, instructors must be available to answer questions on or before the due date, depending on the time the assignment is due. (If due in the morning, instructor must be available the previous day. If due in the evening, instructor must be available that day.)

Staff Development – All faculty are required to take an online prep course for instructors and are encouraged to take part in the Quality Matters self- and peer-review process (see Course Quality under Academics, above). The online prep course consists of the following modules based on the Quality Matters rubric (Quality Matters Program, 2011).

- Course overview and introduction

- Learning objects

- Assessment and measurement

- Instructional materials

- Learner interaction and engagement

- Course technology

- Learner support

- Accessibility

Best Practices for Distance Education

- **Course design** - Effective distance education is directly correlated with effective instructional design, which is "a systematic process that applies research-based principles to educational practice" (Simonson, et al., 2012, p. 146). The UMT (Unit, Module, Topic) model is recommended for course design at LLTC (Simonson, et al., 2012). Students should be required to present course projects of their own design (Graham, Cagiltay, Lim, Craner, & Duffy, 2001).

- **Communication Methods** – Both synchronous and asynchronous communication methods should be considered for use depending on the learning objectives of a particular activity. Regardless of the communication methods chosen, interactivity is a must. Instructors should uphold clear standards for frequency and type of communication with their students and should provide both information and acknowledgment in their feedback (Graham, et al., 2001) as well as encouraging collaboration and peer-to-peer interaction (Hart, 2012).

- **Class/Group Size** – Online classes will be limited to 20 students. Grouping within the class will be left to the discretion of the instructor, for example, creating small discussion or work groups. Discussion assignments that are well designed can make meaningful group work possible (Graham, et al., 2001).

- **Expectations** – Instructors should provide deadlines (with some flexibility where appropriate), samples of completed work, and should challenge students with high expectations (Graham, et al., 2001). Assessments should be clearly tied to expected learning outcomes.

- **Feedback** – Hart (2012) reported that when feedback is constructive and meaningful as opposed to ambiguous, students are more likely to persist in their online studies.

- **Sense of Community** – It is important for the instructor to encourage students to connect by various means. Social interactions online can be ambiguous, especially with people we've never met. Purposefully creating an encouraging online classroom environment through introductions, a focus on positivity and mutual respect, and the requirement of group work can help to foster the sense of a learning community.

Assessment - The following assessment information comes from *Teaching and Learning at a Distance* by Simonson, et al., (2012).

- **Role of Assessment in Instructional Design** – Assessment can be used to evaluate and improve distance education programs, assign grades, and give the students and instructor valuable feedback about the students' learning or readiness for a course, as well as provide motivation for learning and participation

- **Characteristics and Types of Assessment** – Simonson, et al. (2012) suggest instructors ask themselves, "What do students need to know and how will we know if they know it?" when considering the type of assessment, formative or summative, to assign. The assessment should match the learning objectives (alignment), accurately estimate the students' learning gains (validity), and consistently measure students' learning (reliability), be clearly explained (clarity of expectations) Finally, ask yourself if the students' knowledge and skills are transferrable to the real world.

- **Practical Assessment Strategies** – Design assessments before starting instruction and match activities to expectations; instruction can then be based on the planned assessment. Non-graded assessments can be useful for giving students feedback and measuring learning process without the strain of grading. Using rubrics can make grading fairer and simpler, and they give students clear guidelines from which to work.

- **Assessment Activities**
  - Online Quizzes and Tests
  - Asynchronous Communication
  - Synchronous Communication
  - Portfolios
  - Papers and Essays
  - Presentations
  - Problem-Based Activities
  - Journal Writing
  - Concept Maps
  - Simulations and Games

Dealing with Academic Fraud and Unethical Behavior

- *Plagiarism and Cheating* – All students and faculty should be made aware of what constitutes plagiarism and understand the consequences for it (See Intellectual Property, below). Willful plagiarism and the careless misuse of sources out of ignorance are two different things, thus it is important for instructors to take an active role in teaching about this topic. "Relevant assessment activities…result in meaningful outcomes" (p. 288). Reading, signing, and submitting an honor code pledge with each major assignment serves as a regular reminder that academic dishonesty is a serious offence. Multiple smaller assessments may alleviate stress about larger assignments.
- *Disruption of Classes* – It is important for students to be made aware of proper behavior in the online classroom. How people are expected to communicate (the use of grammar, for example) should be clarified. The use of "netiquette" rules can be helpful.

Faculty Support –Support is available from the distance education coordinator, department heads, and the vice president of academics for course development (instructional design, creating assignments and assessments, ensuring interaction, etc.), technology training needs, facilitation of communications, and time management.

Administrative support through Student Services is ongoing throughout the semester for all students, whether online or in the traditional classroom. Technical support is available from the IT department 24 hours per day.

- **Mentors** – Mentoring is important to the teacher education process and can be accomplished even in the online environment, using electronic communication methods (Wheeler & Lambert-Heggs, 2009). LLTC encourages instructors to adopt mentors from the current faculty or from other institutions who have experience teaching online. Every effort will be made to assist with this process.

Faculty Evaluation – Students will be offered the opportunity near the end of each

semester to anonymously evaluate the teaching performance of online faculty and the online course itself (Westcott, 2012) using a standardized online evaluation form. Department chairs and the vice president of academics will carry out regular employee evaluations for online instructors (LLTC, 2008). Criteria included in the evaluation (LLTC, 2008):

- Adequacy of course proposals, syllabi, lesson plans, and student assessment plans,
- Suitability of courses to institutional and community needs,
- Student course evaluations,
- Self-evaluations and peer reviews,
- Contributions to the college and community,
- Drafting of proposals and significant institutional documents including grants and grant reporting,
- Faculty and student-faculty research,
- Service on college committees,
- Representation of the institution at professional meetings and conferences,
- Coaching or advising student activities,
- Development of new college programs,
- Consultation or technical assistance to other groups, programs or educational, institutions serving the tribal community,
- Participation in the organization of social and cultural events to promote healthy

living (p. 6).

Academic Freedom – According to the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments* (AAUP, 2006), academic freedom is essential to teaching in order to benefit the common good in the search for truth. LLTC upholds a commitment to the free exchange of ideas and expression of thought that are the hallmarks of intellectual/academic freedom both for distance educators as well as those teaching in the traditional classroom.

- **Classroom Discussions** – Faculty is entitled to full academic freedom in classroom discussions regarding their subject matter, but instructors should avoid controversial matter that has no relation to their subjects (LLTC, 2008). They should also take care to present balanced perspectives and avoid bias, especially as it relates to gender, race, religion, or any personal or individual student characteristics (LLTC, 2008).
- **Research** - Faculty is entitled to full academic freedom in research and publication of the results, subject to adequate performance of academic responsibilities (LLTC, 2008).

Selection of Materials – Faculty are responsible for choosing their own materials for courses (Westcott, 2012), and if required, notifying the book store so that purchases for students can be made prior to the start of the semester. Instructors must ensure that all materials used in the course adhere to copyright laws.

LEGAL POLICY

One of LLTC's objectives as listed in the Strategic Plan (LLTC, 2009) is to "safeguard the integrity of the College through ethical, moral, and legal decisions   and processes." In doing so, LLTC upholds the highest standards of personal and professional conduct for its faculty. Members of the administrative team hold themselves responsible for maintaining these ideals and dealing fairly and consistently with personnel.

Intellectual Property – When courses are online where hundreds, maybe thousands, of individuals can access them, violations are clear to see (Moore, 2007). In addition to a policy of adherence to copyright law, including judicious use of "fair use," faculty will receive training in intellectual property issues especially related to distance education (Moore, 2007). Course materials will be reviewed by the department heads to ensure compliance with copyright laws (Moore, 2007).

- **Copyright** - In short, copyright gives owners of works – written, musical, photographic, etc. – five exclusive rights: "reproduction, adaptation, publication, performance, and display" – and infringement is said to have taken place if any one or more of these rights has been violated (USCO, 2009). The doctrine of "fair use" puts limitations on these rights in special circumstances, such as for certain educational uses.
- **Fair Use** – Unfortunately, determining fair use is not always a straightforward task, but it begins by considering the following (USCO, 2009):
  (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
  (2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
  (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in   relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
  (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work (p. 4).

Further details can be obtained by visiting http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ21.pdf.

- **Liability** – Individuals can be held liable for copyright infringement, even if the violation was unintentional (USCO, 2009). *Ignorance is no excuse.* One who infringes on another's copyright may face civil and criminal penalties and be liable for damages and profits (USCO, 2009). These violations reflect badly on the school and will not be tolerated. Instructors are expected to teach students about copyright violations in their work and hold them to the same standard.
- **Intellectual Property of Students** – All work that students submit in their courses will become the property of LLTC (Simonson, et al., 2012).

Accessibility – Students with accessibility issues requiring the assistance or increased

time to complete tasks are encouraged to discuss the matter with Student Services. Every effort will be made to accommodate students' needs. LLTC promotes the use of course design enhancements that provide alternatives for hearing- or sight-impaired students.

- Internet – Wireless Internet is available on campus at all times and may be accessed without a password. Please see the Acceptable Use Policy below before connecting to the Internet through LLTC's wireless service.
- Computers – Students are free to use the computers in the Library, the Student Learning Center, and the computer labs in rooms 105 and 111 (when not in use).

Contracts - Faculty members are "at will" employees, in accordance with

employment law in Minnesota, even if they are contract employees (LLTC, 2008). The contract is intended to delineate the scope and term of work, benefits, and wages to be paid (LLTC, 2008).

STUDENTS

Online Self-Assessment for Online Learning – An online self-assessment is provided for students to do a "readiness check" for themselves (Simonson, et al., 2012) and includes questions in the following areas (The Pennsylvania State University, 2009):

- Attributes of self-direction
- Learning styles and preferences
- Study habits
- Technology skills
- Computer equipment capability

Online Learning Prep Course – Based on the ideas in the Online Self-Assessment (above), all online students must enroll in and successfully complete the Online Learning Prep Course, which covers student support services, online communication skills, basic technology skills, writing skills, organizational skills, goal-setting, motivation, and sound study habits.

Student Support – (Simonson, et al., 2012).

- **Admissions** – The Office of Admissions posts applications and procedures for admissions as well as deadlines for admission on the LLTC website Admissions page. Prospective students may take a virtual tour of the campus at http://lltc.edu/prospective/virtualtours.htm.
- **Academic Advising** - In addition to the advising counselors in the Student Services office, faculty members provide advising to students. Please contact Student Services to find out which faculty member is your advisor. All advisors are available for email or telephone consultations.
- **Library Services** - The library is open from 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The librarian can be contacted for research assistance at 218-335-

4240 or via Email: library@lltc.edu. Visit the LLTC website's library page for the information below and more (LLTC, 2016).

- o *Online Catalog* – To access the online catalog to see if a book is available for checkout, visit: http://www.northstarcatalog.org.
- o *Article Databases* – The LLTC library subscribes to the following article databases: EBSCO Host, INFOTRAC, and ProQuest Newspapers. To access the library's online article databases, visit: http://www.lltc.edu/academics/library/articles.htm and click on the link corresponding to these services.
- o *Websites* – Many links have been collected to help students do research and find information related to their studies as well as connect to financial aid information.

- **Bookstore** - The bookstore is open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM, and distance students may purchase their books at that time. Alternatively, books may be ordered through the bookstore and mailed to the student. Email: bookstore@lltc.edu, Phone: 218-536-4200.

- **Learning Center** – Distance education students are welcome to visit the campus and come to the learning center, which provides the following services:
  - o *Computers and printing* – Student may use the computers and printers for free for schoolwork only on a first come, first served basis.
  - o *School Supplies* – Limited school supplies are available (paper, pens, pencils, etc.) for students who need these items.
  - o *Tutoring* – Tutoring usually takes place in the Learning Center, but volunteer tutors are available for SKYPE tutoring sessions on appointment and available to answer questions via email, Monday – Friday.
  - o *Coffee and Snacks* – Students are welcome to partake in coffee and snacks free of charge.

Wellness Center
  - o *Behavioral Health Services* - The Wellness Center provides free weekly

counseling sessions (available by appointment, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Mondays) on campus. At this time, counseling is not available online but may be obtained via telephone by calling 218-335-4200.

o *Breastfeeding Support* – The Wellness Center has a lactation room for nursing mothers on campus. Distance students may obtain breastfeeding support by calling 218-335-4280.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Computer Network & Software Policy (Adapted from the Acceptable Usage Policy for Students, LLTC, 2015).

- **Support** – IT support is available 24 hours/day. Please call: 218-335-4269.
- **Learning Management System** – LLTC uses Jenzabar for its LMS. The portal for online classes can be reach via the LLTC website: http://lltc.edu. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the red LOGIN link. This will take you to the portal for your classes. You must have your unique username and password to login. A letter with this information is sent to all students before the start of the semester. Call the number above if you have lost the letter, did not receive it, or have forgotten your login information.
- **Use of Computers**
  - College computer workstations are provided solely for academic use.
  - Users are not allowed to install or uninstall software of any kind from the computer workstations without prior approval from the LLTC IT Department.
  - The software installed on all computer workstations is the intellectual property of the Leech Lake Tribal College; no one may attempt to copy or duplicate the software installed on these machines.
  - Computer workstations may not be removed, relocated, disassembled or modified in any way without prior approval from the LLTC IT Department.
- **Internet Usage**
  - Internet access and use is provided solely for academic use. Accessing improper web sites such as pornography, gambling sites, and illegal software pages will be considered a severe violation of the Acceptable Use

Policy, and may result in suspension of computer usage.

- o The IT Department reserves the right to block web sites that may pose dangers to the campus computer network.
- o The IT Department reserves the right to monitor web sites visited utilizing Tribal College workstations.
- o Using the Internet to distribute SPAM (unsolicited e-mail messages) or harassing messages to others is prohibited.
- o You may not use computer workstations for illegal or disruptive purposes. intentionally sending computer viruses out onto the Internet; monitoring of electronic communications; launching of Denial of Service (D.O.S.) attacks, harassing other individuals, which can be classified as cyber-stalking; distribution and downloading of copyrighted materials: music, videos, books, software.
- o You may not use computer workstations to provide Internet-based services without prior approval from the LLTC IT Department. Examples of Internet-based services include, but are not limited to: FTP servers, Web servers, P2P file servers, IRC servers, and Game servers.

- **Storage of personal data**
  - o The college is not responsible for lost computer files saved to the workstations and recommends the use of removable storage devices.

- **Confidentiality and Privacy**
  - o Leech Lake Tribal College will treat all information stored on computers as confidential. Disclosure of this information will be honored under one of the following conditions:
    - When authorized by the College President, Vice President, or Vice President of Operations
    - When requested by the owner of the information
    - When required by local, state, tribal or federal law

- **Violations of Policy**
  - o The college may take disciplinary and/or legal action against any individual who violates any LLTC computer policies.

o The individual suspected of violating the Responsible Use of Information Technology Policy will be notified via a formal written letter from the IT Director.

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