**Online Faculty Action Team**

**Brief description of the ACTION Project Team’s charge (100 words or less):**
Faculty at UCO currently teach a 4-by-4 load which translates into an approximately 12-hour teaching load per semester. Specific requirements are found in the RUSO policy manual [here](http://www.ruso.edu/PolicyManual.aspx):

3.1.7 a

**Full-Time Appointments.** Full time faculty instructional and non-instructional duties as assigned by the university. Instructional duties include but are not limited to the teaching of assigned classes, evaluating the students in the classes, and meeting with those students who require assistance in their classes. Non-instructional duties include but are not limited to conducting research and other scholarly activity, advising students, serving on committees, sponsoring organizations, and participating in professional organizations. A full-time faculty member should generally carry an instructional load of twelve (12) to thirteen and one-half (13.5) hours per semester and a non-instructional equivalent load of four and one-half (4.5) to six (6) hours per semester so the full-time load would be the equivalent of eighteen (18) hours per semester.

Based on this definition, a full-time faculty member teaching a 40-hour work week would carry a credit hour load of 18 hours each semester if they did nothing but teach. For T/TT faculty, service and research account for about a third of this 18-hour load (4.5 to 6 credit hours). Some faculty are able to request and obtain release time from their instructional loads for additional service and research activities.

With the emergence of online courses and online programs, many UCO faculty now teach a combination of online and traditional in-class courses. As the number of online courses offered at UCO continues to grow, some faculty (including T/TT faculty) may have opportunity or need to teach fully online. There may be unforeseen or negative implications in having faculty who teach fully online:

- Should these faculty be required to spend time on campus? This could affect whether we are able to hire faculty who reside in another state.
- Should we have tenure-track faculty in these positions? This will affect our service and research expectations for these faculty, since they will be judged on these during promotion and tenure discussions.
- Do we expect these faculty to support our Transformative Learning efforts?

One mechanism that has been discussed at UCO is to have a two-track tenure and promotion system, one track for traditional faculty and another for online faculty.

The Action Team will seek to identify potential problems and policy gaps that could result from having full-time faculty who teach all of their courses online. The team will review best practices and policies at other institutions to determine if others have found a successful ways of addressing this issue including, but not limited to, a two track tenure and promotion model. The team will develop a recommendation as to whether additional policies are necessary to manage purely online faculty. If the recommendation is to have additional policies for this purpose, then the team will develop a set of policies that can be submitted to the Provost’s Cabinet for review.

**Expectations and anticipated outcomes from this ACTION Project (this should help define the scope of the ACTION Project):**

1. A summary of how other institutions are handling faculty who teach purely online.
2. Conduct focus groups of 1) deans, 2) chairs, and 3) faculty to solicit input about potential problems and possible solutions in managing purely distance faculty.
3. Produce a recommendation in favor or opposed to developing additional policies for purely distance faculty.
4. If the team recommends that the university have policies for purely online faculty, then the team will develop a set of policies to be included in its recommendation. The team will work with Academic Affairs to vet this recommendation to campus stakeholders in one or more forums for final input.

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**ACTION Project Sponsor:**
John Barthell, Provost

**ACTION Project Team Leader:**

**ACTION Project Team Facilitator(s):**
Dr. April Haulman (CIED), Dr. Stacy Southerland (MLNG)

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CLA: Wayne Stein (ENG)
CMS: Dr. Luis Montes (CHEM)
Fac Senate: Ms. Lea Garcia (APSS)
Academic Affairs: Dr. Linda Banks (AA-CeCE)

**List the organizational areas and critical processes most affected by this ACTION Project:**