

## **Special Program Review of UAF eLearning and Distance Education**

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Committee members: Paul Layer (chair), Nickole Conley, Martha Mason, Philip Patterson, Todd Sherman, and Teisha Simmons  
Staff support from Sylvan Robb

### **INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

eLearning and distance education are in the midst of large changes, both at UAF and most higher education institutions. Changing technology, improved connectivity, and people's increasing comfort with online offerings for all manner of products and services has caused people to expect college classes to be online as well. The structure of distance education, formerly offered through the Center for Distance Education in CRCED, now structured as eLearning and Distance Education, has seen a lot of changes at UAF in recent years.

Those changes have led to several previous studies on distance education at UAF. In 2013 the UA system-wide report, the *Report on University of Alaska e-Learning* was presented to the Board of Regents. At the same time, *E-learning across UAF: 2013* was prepared that addressed many of the challenges and opportunities facing UAF as we move forward. eLearning has continued to change so rapidly that even with the availability of those recent reports, the Committee felt more current information was warranted. It requested that the Office of e-Learning and Distance Education (eLearning) conduct a self-assessment that builds on those documents and looks to the future. That assessment: *UAF e-Learning & Distance Education Self-Study Draft 3.1* is included as an appendix to this report.

eLearning's report was very thorough, but the Committee wanted to collect data from other perspectives. To gauge the impact and perceptions of eLearning at UAF, the Committee asked UAF Deans to answer a number of questions about their experiences with eLearning. The Committee also sent a three question survey to other schools and colleges to which it had access via membership in higher education related associations. Data were requested and received from schools in the PAC12 +3, other WICHE institutions, and from EDUCause. Individual committee members also reached out informally to their counterparts at UAA and UAS for information. The results of those surveys are incorporated in this narrative. The Committee also reviewed all available financial data for eLearning.

Historically, classes offered through the Center for Distance Education (CDE) were correspondence study courses with instructors functioning primarily as paper graders. The unit operated as a separate academic unit with a full range of student and faculty support services. In its current incarnation, eLearning is a new entity having only been around since arising from the former CDE in May 2012. eLearning's current funding structure is even newer with just three

semesters completed. Initially, eLearning continued to offer yearlong (open enrollment) courses and print based courses as CDE had. Both of those types of offerings have been phased out in the last several years. In their 2014 self-study, eLearning reports that the operations have been streamlined for consistency and effectiveness.

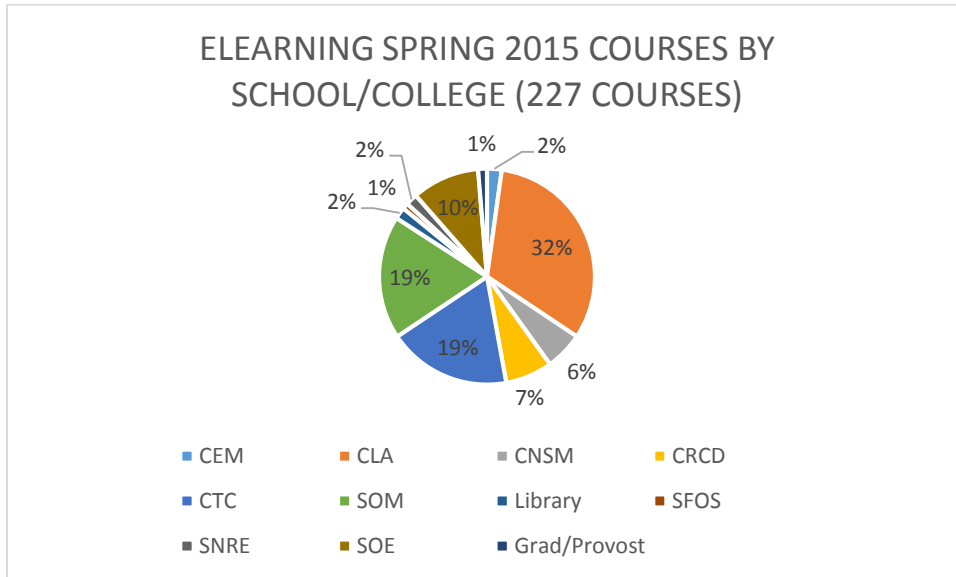
eLearning also inherited a piecemeal approach for tuition sharing and paying instructors that had every unit doing something different. Beginning Fall 2013, a new tuition sharing model was implemented. For Fairbanks campus courses the tuition split is 60% to the unit and 40% to eLearning except for CRCD where 75% of tuition from eLearning goes to CRCD and eLearning keeps 25%. Under the current model, the units pay the instructors. This new structure was designed to “hold harmless” the various academic units and as a result, eLearning now functions with two different fiscal models; UAF as a whole has five different systems. In FY14 under the current model, eLearning generated \$3.3 million in tuition (from 27,801 SCH) that went to the schools, colleges and rural campuses who hired and paid instructors.

|  | Regular, in-person Fairbanks campus academic        | eLearning (only includes 100% asynchronous classes)  | Summer Sessions, Maymester, Wintermester                 | CRCD/CTC  |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Tuition  | Academic unit: 60%<br>Central (Admin Services): 40% | Fairbanks Campus:<br>Academic Unit: 60%<br>Central 0%<br>eLearning: 40%<br>CRCD (including CTC):<br>Academic Unit: 75%<br>Central 0%<br>eLearning: 25% | Academic Unit: 0%<br>Central 0%<br>Summer Sessions: 100% | Academic Unit: 100%<br>Central 0%*<br>*CRCD administers their own facilities.                       |
| Who pays faculty?                              | Unit  | Unit   | Summer Sessions  | Unit  |
| Who gets non-resident surcharge (NRS) revenue? | Central   | No one is charged NRS  | No one is charged NRS                                    | Rural campuses: No one is charged NRS<br>CTC: Central   |
| Other  | Course fees go to the unit.                         | There is an eLearning fee (\$25 per credit hour) for online classes that goes to eLearning   |  | Rural campus students are not charged Fairbanks campus related fees. CTC students do pay those fees |

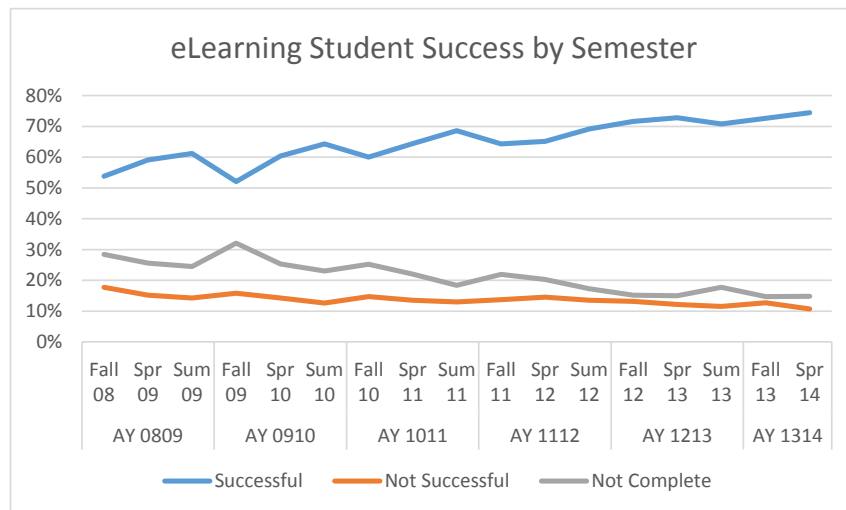
Because the financial structure was recently changed and will continue to change as eLearning moves onto the UAF campus for Fall 2015, it was difficult for the Committee to see trends or predict stability under the current fiscal structure.

As is the case nationally, UAF eLearning has seen an increase in SCH for eight consecutive years. Including only online courses, enrollment in semester-length online courses increased 327% between Fall 2006 and Spring 2014 and will continue to do so as our student look for ways

to streamline their education and develop new skills. Beginning Summer 2014 eLearning has been offering semester-length classes using the same tuition model in effect the rest of the year, with 195 courses scheduled to be taught in the 2015 Spring Semester. With increased enrollment, it's imperative that we choose a revenue model that not only works but continues to allow UAF's distance education to grow and stay ahead of the curve as technology changes for distance offerings.



eLearning has moved to a more structured model that moves students through courses as a cohort and follows up with struggling students at two key points during the semester. As a result, student success rates (final grade of C- or better) have increased from 58% in FY07 to 74% in FY14.



UAF, as with all online university offerings, needs state authorization to offer online courses to students in other states. This fall UAF was accepted as a participating institution in the Statewide

Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) initiative which allows us to offer classes to students in other states. There are currently 11 other states where UAF can offer online courses; this number is expected to continue to grow. eLearning offers about 200 courses each semester. The UAF core curriculum is now fully online as are the 17 complete programs shown below.

#### Graduate Degrees

- Administration of Justice, M.A. (College of Liberal Arts)
- Masters of Education track in Online Innovation and Design, M.Ed. (School of Education)
- Master of Business Administration, M.B.A. (School of Management)

#### Bachelor Degrees

- Homeland Security and Emergency Management, B.E.M. (School of Management)
- Justice, B.A. (College of Liberal Arts)

#### Associate Degrees

- Applied Accounting, A.A.S. (Community & Technical College)
- Applied Business, A.A.S. (Community & Technical College)
- Healthcare Management
- Human Resources
- Management
- Marketing
- Public Administration
- Associate of Arts, A.A. (Community & Technical College)

#### Certificates

- Accounting Technician (Community & Technical College)
- Applied Business Management (Community & Technical College)
- Design and Construction Management Graduate Certificate (College of Engineering and Mines)
- Healthcare Reimbursement (Kuskokwim Campus)
- Medical and Dental Reception (Kuskokwim Campus)

#### Occupational Endorsements

- Bookkeeping Technician (Community & Technical College)
- Medical Billing (Kuskokwim Campus)
- Medical Coding (Kuskokwim Campus)
- Medical Office Reception (Kuskokwim Campus)

eLearning has three key areas it is focusing on: improving access to higher education, empowering students to successfully complete eLearning classes, and supporting students in finishing their degrees. eLearning offers five core services: program development (course development), student support (for students in eLearning courses), student assessment (exam proctoring), faculty development and support (iTeach, etc.), and innovation (keeping up with trends in online learning). eLearning aligns and supports academic units under the new model.

In addition to efforts by eLearning, CRCD--through its rural campuses--has provided and continues to provide “distance” course alternatives. Many of these courses are done without the support or interaction with eLearning (which can be confusing to students). Many Fairbanks campus programs also offer courses outside the traditional in-class approach. Most of these efforts are “synchronous” with an instructor lecturing to students face-to-face and/or via video or audio, “flipped” where the students view taped lectures or notes prior to coming to class, or a combination of the various deliveries. To better define these concepts, the *E-Learning Across UAF: 2013* report defines “e-learning” as 0% location based, “blended” as 1-20% and 21-50% location-based, and “traditional” as greater than 50% location based, but even these definitions confuse “e-learning” and “distance learning.”

As eLearning better defines its role relative to the other units at UAF, the dividing line of “asynchronous” for eLearning and “synchronous” for courses offered through schools and colleges, has been used. However as discussed above, this line is blurred when “blended” courses are considered. This blurring has a direct impact on the revenue model for eLearning and impacts the quality of UAF’s offerings. Departments are developing courses that have a significant asynchronous or distance component but do not use the resources of eLearning. The tuition to the department is the same whether they use eLearning or not. The advantage to the department is that they would not have to support an instructional designer. The disadvantage is that we are not making good use of the designers to provide the best product to our students. How can academic programs better partner with the services that eLearning can provide?

## ANALYSIS

### Department, School and College Opinions and Analysis

A survey of open and close-ended questions was sent out to School and College deans at UAF. Responses were received from the Career and Technical College, the School of Management, the School of Education, the School of Natural Resources and Extension, the College of Natural Science and Mathematics, and the College of Liberal Arts. Respondents included individual deans, individual deans with faculty input, and in one instance, from an individual dean that included direct responses from at least three faculty members.

According to respondents, the numbers and percentages of eLearning courses currently offered varied greatly with each school or college. The exception was the School of Management that has its entire program online. All respondents indicated that they intended to increase online course offerings through eLearning. Reasons for these intentions included student demand, remaining competitive with other institutions, increasing student enrollment, and the costs associated with offering face-to-face and online sections of courses simultaneously. Three of the six respondents indicated interest in pursuing additional online program offerings, however, none indicated specific timelines. The other three respondents indicated that they were not pursuing the development of any additional online programs at this time. Reasons for not offering courses through eLearning included appropriateness (considering the course content), faculty already familiar with other distance options (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate, video), and the need for synchronous course components. As a group, respondents indicated that barriers to offering online courses included locating qualified faculty, sufficient student demand for online courses, faculty time to prepare and develop online courses, and the current revenue distribution. The latter comment is interesting considering the revenue model was intended to be “neutral”. Clearly that is not the perception of the units.

Four out of six respondents indicated that eLearning did increase their enrollments. Three of those respondents indicated that eLearning made courses more accessible to students, especially for those outside of Fairbanks. One respondent questioned whether eLearning offerings increased enrollment any more than other distance technologies (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate, video). Suggestions for ways eLearning could increase enrollment included working with departments on more aggressive marketing and giving funds back to the departments so that they could hire more faculty.

Respondents saw eLearning’s role as that of a partner in helping to develop online offerings. One respondent specifically mentioned that eLearning should be seen as a “service center.” eLearning’s role in helping with technical issues and proctoring exams was also mentioned. Respondents also believed that eLearning should play a role, along with departments, in the marketing of courses and programs. Three of five respondents (one did not directly respond to

the query) believed there were competing interests with the current model of eLearning: Summer Sessions was mentioned, as were face-to-face classes.

There was little uniformity between respondents as to how eLearning's new fiscal model has impacted their schools and colleges. One school indicated that they had participated in the current model before last year, two indicated that there continues to be some confusion regarding the model, and two respondents indicated that the new fiscal model had impacted them minimally, since their eLearning offerings were miniscule.

As to how eLearning contributes to student learning outcomes, two respondents indicated that student outcomes were the responsibility of faculty. Most indicate that contributing to the development and structure of online learning was important. Most respondents mentioned that faculty had participated in iTeach and that results were positive. One respondent mentioned that faculty had also participated in other programs, but it was not make clear if this was in conjunction with already adopted online courses. One respondent mentioned having eLearning conduct iTeach seminars specific to their school. Responses as to experiences in working with eLearning are generally positive, especially for first-time users, however, there were comments about needed services beyond first-time users and scheduling courses without departmental approval. eLearning's assistance to students was seen as a strong characteristic.

Most of the respondents questioned the current service and fiscal model of eLearning.

### **CRCD Analysis**

Some CRCD faculty, deans, and directors were also surveyed for their impressions of eLearning and distance education in general. Responses from 12 people including campus directors, faculty, and associate deans show a wide variation of opinions. Most respondents plan to expand the number of online courses, however it is not clear if eLearning would be involved in course development or assist in delivery. The results from that survey are included as an appendix to this document.

### **UA Peer Analysis**

Deans from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) College of Education and the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) School of Education were interviewed concerning their eLearning models. The dean of UAA, along with her instructional designer, indicated that the University had tried multiple models for developing online courses in the past. Currently, the university had initiated an *Academic Innovation and eLearning* department (which sounds similar to UAFs eLearning). However, the College of Education and the School of Nursing had retained their own instructional designers to facilitate online course offerings. The dean at UAS indicated that each school at the university had instructional designers who facilitated online course design and offerings. Both deans indicated that online courses were a priority at their universities. The dean and instructional designer at UAA were not able to elaborate upon the tuition model used for

online courses at their university. The dean at UAS indicated that the departments only received 40% of student tuition fees whether face-to-face or online. Both deans indicated that online courses were part of full-time faculty workloads. They also indicated that part-time faculty taught online courses.

### **External Peer Analysis**

A brief survey was emailed to all Pac 12 + 3 universities. Six responses from five universities were received in the short timeframe: Arizona State University (ASU- we heard from an Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences *and* the Executive Vice Provost and Dean of their Online and Extended Campus-their responses were, for the most part, unified), University of Hawai'i Manoa (UHM-one of the +3 universities; UAF and UBS are the other two), Oregon State University (OSU), University of Oregon (UO)and University of Washington (UW). The full responses are attached as a separate document. All of these universities teach the majority of their classes as Face-to-Face (F2F) offerings.

The responses were varied and several seemed parallel to what we have done and are doing at UAF.

1) *How is the online education department/program structured at your institution? I.e.: Is it a separate unit? Is it structured as an IT unit, academic unit, recharge unit or academic support unit or is it integrated into the various academic departments?*

Two universities had listed no uniform structure and had, essentially, decentralized offerings (UO, UHM) of online courses through the respective departments/colleges. Each of these schools have units that deal with online courses in addition to the departments/colleges offering online education.

Two (OSU, UW) had variations of instructional/administrative units which appear to be separate entities that support the academic units offerings online. ASUOnline is structured as both an IT and academic support unit and is a separate college at ASU.

2) *Is online learning a priority at your institution?*

Two definite “yes” (OSU & ASU), one “Depends on who you ask!” (UW), one listed it as a part of a larger priority (UHM-priority=technology for academic innovation) and one, UO, answered “no” yet candidly reported that they had to “figure out a strategy for online education”.

3) *What is the tuition model at your institution for online education? Is it similar to an academic unit? For instance, at UAF, academic units receive 60% of tuition dollars, revenue for the college, while 40% goes to administrative services. Are there additional fees for online courses?*



Again, like UAF, there are numerous tuition cost models, even in the same institution. For the sake of brevity: UW's is fee based and not available through regular tuition; OSU has a higher tuition for "ecampus" courses; UO has same tuition as F2F classes though with an exception when run through the Academic Extension unit where the tuition is higher than in-state tuition yet much lower than out-of-state tuition; UHM's tuition, with a few exceptions for cohort programs, has the same tuition as F2F classes; ASU is similar to UO's in that the tuition for ASUOnline classes is more than F2F classes but less than out-of-state tuition. The tuition revenue share models were too varied to summarize.

4) *Are online courses usually taught by full-time faculty? If so, is it part of their workload?*

All universities responding to the survey have their online courses taught similarly to UAF's. Some of the instructors are a part of full-time (FT) faculty workloads, some are adjuncts or instructors, and some are taught as by FT faculty as overloads.

### **Student Services Analysis**

As reflected in some of the deans' comments above, there are some student service issues with the current structure. The student services part of eLearning grew out of the fact that CDE was very independent from the rest of UAF. Thus eLearning offers an array of student services and advising that, in many ways, duplicates what takes place in the Registrar's office and in schools and colleges.

The office of the Dean of Students reports that there as many issues from students with eLearning as there are with the more typical course delivery. If anything, the students with e-learning are somewhat more confused about how to access resources and are not as connected to the campus environment. They noted that eLearning is definitely NOT for everyone. Students who are successful through this methodology have to be both self-motivated and self-disciplined. They also need to be more assertive about seeking assistance.

### **Staffing**

In their organizational chart in the self-study, eLearning reports 27 staffing lines. Of these, six are in the general area of Student Services, six are in program development, two are in IT and there are nine instructional designers. In their narrative, eLearning reported that the position of Associate Director was eliminated in 2014 and the duties reassigned and they laid off one other employee.

A major function of eLearning is in instructional design. In FY12 eLearning developed 75 new courses or courses with major revisions; 96 in FY13, 87 in FY14 and anticipate 138 in FY15. These designs are done in conjunction with the faculty in the associated school or college. The designers also do routine maintenance and coordinate with faculty. eLearning designers also are engaged in faculty development, innovation exploration, and consulting on courses.

## Fiscal Analysis and Forecast

| Item                        | FY08            | FY09            | FY10            | FY11            | FY12            | FY13            | FY14            |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Expenditure</b>          | <b>\$ 2,690</b> | <b>\$ 3,168</b> | <b>\$ 3,414</b> | <b>\$ 4,401</b> | <b>\$ 4,391</b> | <b>\$ 4,568</b> | <b>\$ 3,333</b> |
| Commodities                 | \$ 86           | \$ 171          | \$ 133          | \$ 202          | \$ 143          | \$ 124          | \$ 127          |
| Contractual Services        | \$ 325          | \$ 340          | \$ 407          | \$ 636          | \$ 553          | \$ 454          | \$ 429          |
| Equipment                   | \$ 14           | \$ 23           |                 | \$ 61           | \$ (0)          | \$ 6            |                 |
| Miscellaneous               | \$ (1)          | \$ 0            | \$ -            | \$ 240          | \$ 1            | \$ (41)         | \$ (40)         |
| Salaries & Benefits         | \$ 2,196        | \$ 2,583        | \$ 2,778        | \$ 3,167        | \$ 3,579        | \$ 3,974        | \$ 2,728        |
| Student Aid                 |                 | \$ 1            | \$ 17           | \$ 26           | \$ 38           | \$ 2            | \$ 30           |
| Travel                      | \$ 71           | \$ 50           | \$ 79           | \$ 68           | \$ 76           | \$ 48           | \$ 60           |
|                             |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                             |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Item                        | FY08            | FY09            | FY10            | FY11            | FY12            | FY13            | FY14            |
| <b>Revenue</b>              | <b>\$ 2,746</b> | <b>\$ 3,139</b> | <b>\$ 3,162</b> | <b>\$ 4,430</b> | <b>\$ 4,388</b> | <b>\$ 4,362</b> | <b>\$ 2,817</b> |
| Federal Receipts            | \$ 7            |                 |                 |                 | \$ 0            |                 |                 |
| General Funds               | \$ 336          | \$ 419          | \$ 400          | \$ 260          | \$ 259          | \$ 80           | \$ 486          |
| Indirect Cost Recovery      | \$ 1            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| State Inter-Agency Receipts |                 |                 |                 |                 | \$ 33           |                 |                 |
| Student Tuition & Fees      | \$ 2,202        | \$ 2,606        | \$ 2,646        | \$ 3,878        | \$ 3,876        | \$ 4,196        | \$ 2,331        |
| U of A Receipts             | \$ 25           | \$ 3            | \$ 1            | \$ 1            | \$ 0            | \$ 6            | \$ 1            |
| UA Intra-Agency Transfers   | \$ 176          | \$ 111          | \$ 116          | \$ 292          | \$ 220          | \$ 79           |                 |

FY14 represented the first year of the revised fiscal model for tuition distribution. With the transfer of responsibility for paying instructors to the units, expenditures were reduced 27 percent from \$4.6 million to \$3.3 million. At the same time units started to receive 60 percent of tuition (75 percent for CTC) causing income from tuition and fees to drop 44 percent from \$4.2 million to \$2.3 million. Part of this shortfall was made up by a substantial increase in GF. Eighty-two percent of the expenditures for eLearning are in salaries and benefits. The second largest expenditure (13 percent) is in contractual services including the lease of the offices on University Avenue which ends this summer.

There are a lot of uncertainties with regard to eLearning's budget and future, but one thing is currently known: eLearning offers several different types of course delivery that have various cost and revenue sharing models associated with them. Units are all using various models which, as reflected in the comments above, have created some anxiousness and resistance to work with eLearning. It's unclear from the budget details or eLearning's self-study how many courses they develop, are developed collaboratively or strictly developed within the units.

To achieve a sustainable revenue model outcome, the costs of the alternative modes of delivery for online education must be able to be calculated with accuracy and consistency. At this time UAF eLearning has had a variety of funding models over the last three years and prior to that, had been subsidized by the College of Rural and Community Development. Given the timeframe

and depth of this review we were unable to identify if eLearning has ever had a successful standalone funding model. They report being on track to finish the year within budget.

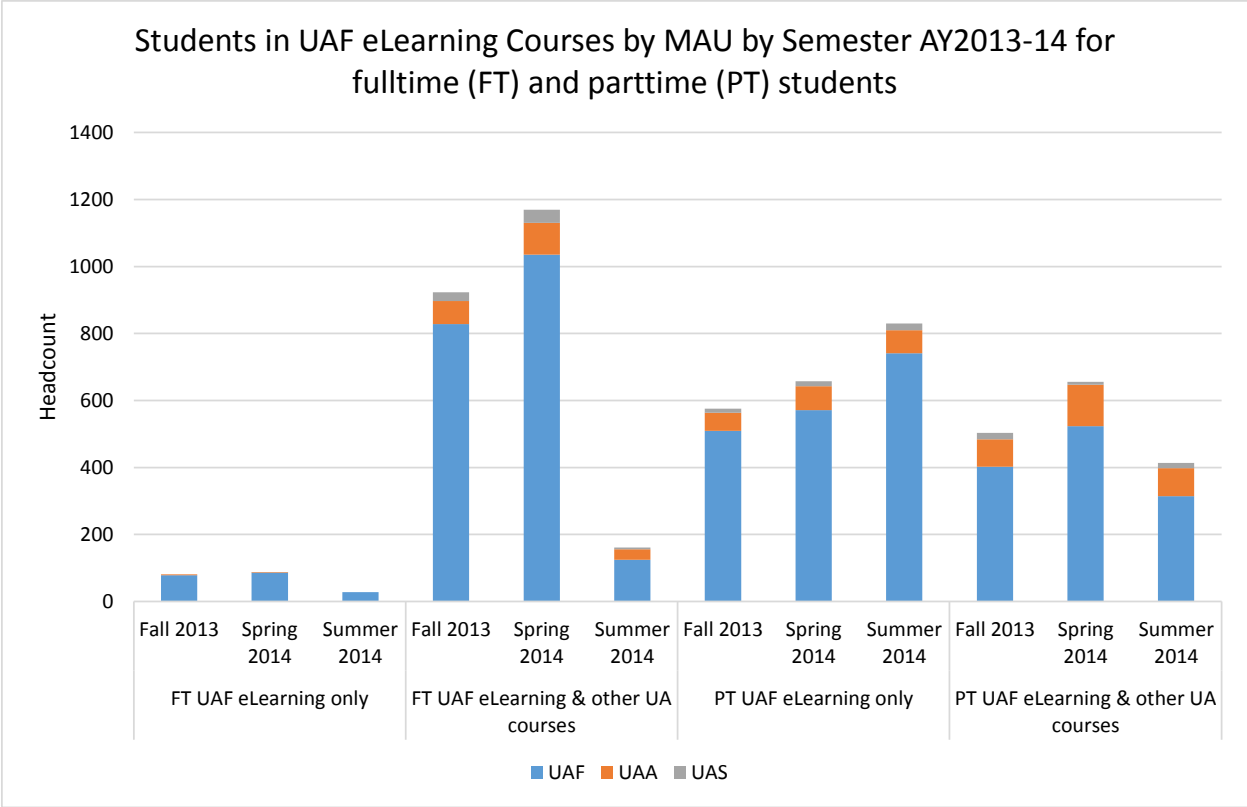
eLearning revenue and expenditure data from FY08 thru FY14 shows that only two years of funding in their history since FY08 (FY08 & FY11) have NOT been in the red. It's unclear with the exception of FY14 why eLearning continued to run large deficits outside of the inconsistent funding models. We do know that FY14's financial setback was due to revenue model changes made early in the year that were not anticipated. eLearning was separated from CRCD in 2012 and moved under the Chancellor's Office, the revenue model was changed and base support from CRCD was swapped for a 75/25 tuition model along with changes to the allocation of summer tuition creating a net effect of \$-1.2M approximately half of which was absorbed by central.

With eLearning returning to the Fairbanks campus, their fiscal situation will be changing yet again. They will no longer have to cover the lease for their space on University Avenue (~\$200k/yr), however they will be using campus facilities and so a model where they support the central administration will need to be implemented. In addition they will have to pay for VOIP phones, OIT services, student parking and UAF catering for iTeach events. In FY14, under the new fiscal model, eLearning accrued a total of \$2.33 million in tuition and fees. A 5 percent return to contribute to support of central to offset facility costs would be ~\$120k.

### **Expected growth**

Of all of the "units" at UAF, courses taught through eLearning represent the largest area of growth. The Planning and Budget Committee recommended that additional courses and programs be put online to enhance eLearning's revenue, and recent growth in online courses as documented in the eLearning self-assessment seems to support this initiative. However what is not known is how the growth in eLearning impacts "traditional" on-campus enrollments and whether this growth represents a significant new market or is just providing current UAF students with more flexible learning options. That is, are we attracting new students to UAF through eLearning or are we taking students away from traditional classes as is seen nationally, or are we recruiting new students to UAF?

A review of student enrollment shows that about half of all students taking eLearning courses are full-time students, and of those, ~90 percent are taking both eLearning and traditional classes. For part-time students, about half are taking eLearning and other classes. This suggests that students are using eLearning classes as more flexible alternatives to on-campus classes and are not 'new' students to the system. Thus it is not clear to the committee if adding more classes would attract new students to UAF or simply provide more opportunities for students to opt out of the classroom setting or take advantage of in-state tuition. This apparent trend requires additional analysis and we need to better assess potential new markets for eLearning.



Related to this growth is the interaction between courses offered through eLearning in conjunction with the Fairbanks campus programs and those offered through CRCD. CRCD has a long tradition of distance delivery using various modes, and these have been accomplished many times with little or no support from a centralized eLearning office. How should eLearning best coordinate with the rural campuses? A survey of directors had varied opinions, however whatever new configuration for eLearning is developed, UAF should have a coordinated effort between the main campus schools and colleges, eLearning and CRCD for its courses and degree programs.

A third concern that the committee discussed was what the impact of adding more traditional degrees to online offerings would be. Many for-profit and non-profit institutions are putting basic degrees in business, education and other fields online and these are also available to students in Alaska. Given the relatively modest size of UAF’s eLearning efforts when compared to efforts and resources at other institutions in the for-profit, (e.g., University of Phoenix) and non-profit, (e.g., Arizona State University), what would draw non UAF students to take courses or degrees through UAF eLearning? The committee did not have an immediate answer, but we discussed the idea that eLearning could focus on Alaska or arctic-specific curricula and high-demand degrees that would carve out a unique niche in the eLearning landscape.

## **MODELS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Models:**

Through our analysis and based on input from internal and external groups and discussions by the Planning and Budget Committee, the review committee discussed several structural changes to eLearning that could be considered. Each of these has advantages and disadvantages.

Current model: eLearning operates as it has with a full-service office including student support, instructional design, faculty development and IT. The system has only been in place for one year and it needs time to develop and be properly assessed. The greatest disadvantages of this model are that there is some duplication of services, it doesn't accommodate different instructional styles (it sets a hard line between 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous' offerings and it isn't well coordinated with most of CRCD.)

Academic gateway: eLearning acts as the unit that offers the courses and programs either in cooperation with or independent of the schools and colleges. This is a structure that CDE employed and is one several other universities have developed. UAF has moved away from in order to better integrate course offerings with academic departments and the committee does not support this model.

Service Center model: eLearning acts as a service/recharge center like OIT with regard to the instructional design team. Under this model, student services and IT are integrated with existing offices. The Interior Aleutians Campus of CRCD has been working with design consultants at eLearning to improve their offerings using this model. If this is employed, units would bear the cost of course development (to use the services) and there would need to be a mechanism to support the design team, perhaps through a modified tuition model.

Distributed model: Schools and Colleges and Campuses have their own or shared eLearning consultants/designers on staff. They develop and manage their own courses. Some shared services could be done. The disadvantage is that the units don't have the resources to hire these designers under the current tuition model. With eLearning getting some tuition revenue, they have the resources to hire design staff.

## Recommendations:

The current fiscal and structural model has only been in place for one year so it is difficult to assess whether it would stabilize eLearning's finances. One basic recommendation for the cabinet to consider is to let the model play out for another year to see if the current growth continues and if both eLearning and the units can see results that stabilize eLearning's fiscal house. If it does, it is possible that eLearning could be self-sufficient in its current configuration and staffing, however the move on campus provides an opportunity to look at different models described above that could produce savings, especially in the area of duplicated or shared services.

1. To synchronize eLearning with traditional academic units, UAF administration needs to incentivize collaboration between the two. Faculty who have been teaching traditional classes look at developing eLearning offerings as extra work and are generally not open to changing what they have been doing. A report published in 2010 by The Advisory Board Company entitled *Engaging Faculty in Online Education* found that lack of incentives to encourage faculty to buy in was the greatest barrier to expanding offerings. As expressed in the surveys, many academic units and their associated faculty will not support expending funds on developing courses if they feel that they are taking away students from traditional courses or increasing faculty workload with little in return.
2. eLearning needs to better market its course design services to schools and colleges (including CRCD) with standard price structures and products. Right now if a unit wants a course designed, there isn't a clear cost structure.
3. Like other units on campus, eLearning will need to contribute part of its revenue to Administrative Services to support its on-campus offices.
4. CDE and now eLearning developed as a stand-alone entity with its own support staffing. Once they are integrated on campus there is a possibility for shared services:
  - a. eLearning student support functions should be integrated with UAF admissions and advising (eLearning currently has six positions in this office).
  - b. eLearning IT should be integrated with OIT. (eLearning currently has two positions in this office).
5. eLearning and the academic units should focus on courses and degree programs that take advantage of the unique opportunities and challenges that Alaska has with regard to our position in the arctic, close ties to rural communities and specialized education. This will create a niche for eLearning that would make it competitive with other national distance education competitors.