Hybrid/Online Course Designations and Policy

I. Vision

To further its mission to provide a distinctive transformative education, Saint Mary’s College (SMC) seeks to achieve excellence as an innovative provider of online pedagogies consistent with its core values, including its student-centered community and its commitment to integrative and collaborative learning that is broadly accessible, intellectually stimulating, and consistently engaging for all learners.

II. Rationale for Using Online or Hybrid Course Design

Pedagogical:

1. Students can revisit and review materials through rich-media content
2. New ways to assess student learning, such as collaborative online fora
3. Engagement with material and other students in differing ways that foster multiple learning styles
4. Improves competency in digital literacy skills, best principles and practices
5. Increased cultural competency through mediated collaboration with geographically diverse communities

Access:

1. Increasing the accessibility of our Saint Mary’s programs for students from a wider geographic area, especially professional working adults
2. Students have contact with more global environments

Definitions

A. **Online Course:** A course where most or all of content, and the instructor facilitation and student engagement, is delivered online. The course typically has no face-to-face meetings.

B. **Hybrid Course or Program:** A course or program that blends online and face-to-face delivery. A portion of the course or program content and the instructor facilitation and student engagement is delivered online. The program or course typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings.

C. **Technology-Enhanced Course:** A course that uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. May use a course management system or web
pages to post the syllabus and assignments. **This is not considered an online or hybrid format.**

D. **WASC Distance Education Policy:** SMC’s accreditation mandates that programs of study leading to the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree offered at the College must be offered less than 50% online. For undergraduate programs, the 50% rule applies only to credit hours required for a major, not the entire bachelor’s degree.

Note: The definitions above are presented to clarify current approaches to technology-enabled pedagogies. They are not meant to constrain faculty wishing to experiment with new approaches to teaching in a digital learning environment.

**IV. Policies for Online and/or Hybrid Instruction**

A. **Faculty Support, Rights, and Responsibilities**

1. Criteria for student success in online and hybrid course sections and programs shall be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in classroom-based course sections, and these criteria shall be clearly communicated to students.

2. Students enrolled in online or hybrid course sections are subject to the same academic regulations applicable to students enrolled in any SMC course section. Academic standards and appropriate behavior shall be clearly communicated to students in online and hybrid courses and sections and programs [For example, the Academic Honor Code].

3. Faculty shall have the same control and ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their online or hybrid course-related materials, as outlined in section 3.8 of the [Faculty Handbook](#).

4. Faculty hiring practices, standards, and expected qualifications for online or hybrid courses will remain consistent with current hiring, retention, or promotion practices.

5. Faculty teaching online or hybrid courses will be subject to the same responsibilities, student evaluation, and peer assessment, and will enjoy the same rights as faculty teaching traditional courses. The principles outlined in the SMC Faculty Handbook will apply equally to online and hybrid courses.

6. Faculty members who teach online or hybrid courses shall have adequate opportunity to receive training in online instruction and accompanying technology and be encouraged to make use of any of the resources and training provided by the College.

7. Each time a new or existing course or section will be taught online or with a hybrid format, the Department will communicate with the Registrar’s Office to ensure that the course will be linked in the online course index to allow time for technical support.
8. Accessible design will be incorporated into the creation of all new courses or sections with online components (hybrid or online). Existing online course content will be made accessible as online materials are redesigned or modified or when a student with a disability enrolls in the course.

9. All online and hybrid courses listed in the Class Schedule shall be hosted on the learning management systems supported by ITS or by the sponsoring school.

10. Any course or section that uses online or hybrid instruction shall indicate so in the course syllabus. In addition to information specified in Schools’ syllabus guidelines, the following information should be included in course syllabi for online and hybrid course sections:
   a. Prerequisite technical competencies
   b. Contact information for technical assistance
   c. On-campus meeting requirements, if applicable
   d. Where and how faculty will track online student activity
   e. Standards for online etiquette
   f. Alternative procedures for submitting work in the event of technology problems

11. Department chairs and program directors have the responsibility to inform faculty of the modes of delivery for the course, including any on-campus meeting requirements and technological requirements of relevant course sections, programs, or degrees offered by the department or the program. Faculty shall have access to this information before being assigned any course.

12. Faculty office hours for online or hybrid courses will remain consistent with current SMC practices and policies.

B. Student’s Responsibilities, Privileges, Rights, and Identity Management

1. Responsibilities: Students enrolled in hybrid or online courses have the same responsibilities as students enrolled in courses in the traditional classroom. These include adhering to academic standards governing academic honesty and appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the SMC Student Handbooks, and course policies as outlined in course syllabi.

2. Privileges: Students enrolled in hybrid or online courses have the same privileges as students in the traditional classroom. These privileges include instructional and technical support, advisement, library support, and support for students with disabilities. (Note: This support may need to be expanded as demand increases.)

3. Rights: Before enrolling in the course, students in hybrid or online courses will be informed of specific requirements and support resources for that mode of delivery in addition to the requirements for the program and degree.
4. Identity Management: When students log into the online classroom, they must use their own unique usernames and passwords. Sharing identification or logging in as another user will result in academic sanctions.

C. College Support for Students in Hybrid and Online Courses

1. Students taking online or hybrid courses and sections have the same basic privileges as other SMC students. Each hybrid course or section will be designated as such at the time of preregistration. Each student enrolled in an online or hybrid course section or program shall be informed of available instructional and technology support, student services/advisers, library resources, and support services for students with disabilities.

2. Technical support consistent with that available to all other SMC students shall be made available to students in online and hybrid learning environments.

V. Approval of Online or Hybrid Courses and Degree Programs

A. New Online or Hybrid Degree Programs

1. Departments are responsible for deciding which courses or sections as well as which degree or certificate programs will be offered in an online or hybrid format.

2. Departments will develop policies regarding the process for determining which courses or sections as well as which degree or certificate programs will be offered in an online or hybrid format.

3. New online or hybrid degree programs or program modifications (including majors, minors, options, certificates, and subject matter preparation programs) shall be reviewed in accordance with the usual GPSEPC/UEPC review process.

4. Any department or degree program in which at least 50% of the instruction is offered online shall meet the requirements of Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and, if applicable, other accrediting institutions.

5. No individual, program, or department shall agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver courses or programs on behalf of SMC without prior approval from the appropriate Dean and in consultation with ITS.

B. New Online or Hybrid Courses

1. New online or hybrid courses are approved through the regular curriculum review process following the same process as any new course, in consultation with the
designated person responsible for technology planning within the school or program, and/or the Director of Educational Technology in IT Services.

2. All faculty should be aware of universal design principles and accessibility best practices and strive to incorporate them in their classroom delivery and materials. New course and program proposals should address how universal design and accessibility best practices will be incorporated.

C. Converting Existing Courses or Sections to an Online or Hybrid Format

1. The use of online or hybrid instruction requires consultation with the department chair or program director to ensure programmatic concepts are maintained.
2. In addition, faculty will consult with the designated person responsible for technology planning within the school or program, and/or the Director of Educational Technology in IT Services.
3. The faculty will follow the guidelines of GPSEPC/UEPC for approval.
4. All faculty should be aware of universal design principles and accessibility best practices and strive to incorporate them in their classroom delivery and materials. Course and program proposals should address how universal design and accessibility best practices will be incorporated.