

Online/Blended Course Policy Questions and/or Concerns

Faculty Senate 5/1/18

- Is this policy the best way to address concerns about faculty face-to-face time with students?
- Many were concerned that this policy had more to do with faculty members not being on campus as much as they should rather than a policy regarding online/blended courses.
- Many senate members would like to see the title change to reflect that this policy is about on-campus face time with students and not just about online/blended courses. Specifically, members expressed concern that the administration, in writing this policy, is not being upfront about what the policy is really trying to address.
- Does this policy apply to those faculty members who have a course overload, in terms of the “assigned teaching load,” referred to in the policy? For example, if one’s “assigned” teaching load is a 3/3 and one is teaching an overload of 4/4 does the policy only apply to the 3/3 load?
- Who is in charge of tracking this policy?
- How does this policy affect office hours (e.g., if one is teaching online/hybrid/blended does this change the number of office hours a faculty member must have face to face? More specifically, when faculty members have an online course, it is permissible to also have online office hours)?
- There were concerns about hybrid vs. blended courses; they are not the same thing, yet, in this policy, they are used synonymously.
 - Many expressed concerns that hybrid and blended courses (at least at Cortland) are not the same. Many hybrid courses are being offered MW in-class and F online so that students will not only register for the courses, but that they won’t miss course work from skipping Fridays because their assigned Friday work is online. In addition, senate members expressed that a “Flipped” classroom (which is supported by research) uses the hybrid model and thus this policy is impacting a faculty member’s choice of teaching pedagogy. The general consensus was that the administration needs to review this part of the policy, provide definitions of hybrid vs. blended courses, and seriously consider how the current policy might inadvertently impact instructional learning practices that faculty have made to improve student learning (e.g., the flipped classroom).
- Several members mentioned that this policy seems like a step backward rather than forward.
- How would this policy affect medical leaves; if the faculty member is only able to teach online, due to some sort of medical/disability situation, how does this policy affect something of that nature (i.e. maternity, Family Medical Leave Act, disability)?
- What about major programs that are strictly online (e.g., Sport Management, REC certificate, the new PE and Literacy programs); since each faculty member is only allowed to teach 50% of his/her course load online, how would this policy affect these programs?
 - Related to the above comment was a concern that not all faculty members have the skill or training to teach online and thus the reason why some members of fully online programs/certificates teach most of not all online courses, while other members of their department do not. If some members do not want to teach online than how will these online programs deliver their courses under the new policy?
 - Members also mentioned that it they feel like the administration has encouraged many graduate programs to create and deliver their programs online, only now to back out of these agreements.