

Interim report on this year's discussions of an on-line major:

1. **Our main problem:** We are concerned that some of our majors are taking their political science courses primarily on-line with grad students and lecturers, and they seldom or never have a class with a professor. They have no one to ask to supervise a senior thesis or write letters of recommendation for grad school or law school. Further, in the current situation, we are not being clear with our students as to what classes they can expect to see offered on-line. Finally, we are currently in violation of WASC requirements because we offer most of the classes required for the major but have not been approved to do so.
2. **Our main question is this:** What would an on-line major look like that is consistent with the educational values we have as a department? What is "our way" of doing on-line classes?

We discussed two options:

1. **"Scale up"** to offer a major that meets WASC requirement, either as 100% on-line or as a hybrid program. If we scale-up to an on-line major, the rules for that major will need to be the same as the rules for our face-to-face major.
2. **"Scale down"** so that we offer less than 50% of our requirements over a 4 year period. To do this we would probably have to offer mostly electives, and refrain from offering most required classes.

To move forward, what do we need to know?

- **Degree of faculty commitment to an on-line major.** Most faculty are not comfortable with an on-line major taught mostly (or entirely) by graduate students and lecturers, yet we are not enthusiastic about teaching the on-line classes ourselves. Four faculty members have taught on-line classes, and are willing to continue but not particularly eager to do so. To move forward, we need a clearer idea of who is willing to be a part of the planning and delivery of an online major.
- **Degree of student demand for an on-line major.** It is likely that some students living off-island, and students carrying heavy family and work responsibilities, would welcome the on-line major. We don't know how many students this would be. We also don't know whether students expect online classes to be easier, which is an element of potential "demand" that is not compelling.
- **Financial consequences:** Given that most of our discretionary income comes from Extension classes, and that on-line classes are, overall, more likely to attract adequate enrollment, what is the effect of this choice on department activities? We fund graduate student and faculty travel, dissertation awards, and other valued activities with this money.

- **Graduate student consequences:** Currently, our graduate students get significant teaching experience and financial support from teaching on-line classes. What will be the cost to them if we scale down? Or the advantages if we scale up?
- **Consequences for attracting transfer students:** There may be a trend in the UH system for transfer students to finish their AA degree and transfer to an on-line institution rather than to Mānoa. Does an on-line major attract them to Mānoa?
- **Labor implications:** Can a faculty member teach an on-line class during the regular semester as part of their regular two course load? Or would it be an overload? Would it be offered through Extension or through the regular Mānoa curriculum? If offered through the regular Mānoa curriculum, then what happens to the income to the department that would have come from Extension?
- **Implications for advising:** How do we advise on-line students effectively?
- **What about the small number of majors who have an intense need for a particular class** that we don't offer on-line (often Pols 390) – can we address this by letting everyone know it won't be available on-line, so they can plan? Or is this a small enough number that we could accommodate them some other way (e.g. through a 399)?

What do we know, based on initial and somewhat cursory analysis:

- Money: generally speaking, required courses attract more students than electives (with the exception of classes on film and media, which typically do well); dropping the required classes could result in about 15-20% less income, probably around \$7000-9,000 total for the year
- Looking at the on-line classes offered in 2017-2018 (fall and spring only, not summer), about half the enrolled students are political science majors. Non-majors probably care more about focus designations and class topics, but not about major requirements. Probably there is competition for these non-majors enrollees from other on-line offerings.
- Some classes attract enrollment because they meet a requirement or elective of another department (e.g. 315, 316 are included in the College of Business's curriculum) or because they meet a requirement or elective in the cross-list partner)
- Face-to-face classes general enroll better during the regular year, so we might actually lose enrollment if we swap f-to-f classes for on-line classes.

What could a hybrid major look like?

- We could create a plan wherein most of the on-line classes are taught by grad students and other lecturers, with a few taught by faculty
- We could require 9 credits of face-to-face classes taught by faculty.
- We could stop offering any 4XX classes on-line so capstones would have to be done face-to-face.

- We could require certain classes to be taken f-to-f or require some number of classes which must be taken f-to-f but let the specific classes vary from student to student. We would need to be able to track which courses a student takes are on-line and which ones are f-to-f.

What resources would we need to build an on-line program?

- Some instruction in technologies and organization
- A better platform – Lulima is problematic
- Time and opportunity to think through what we want