The ad hoc Online Education Committee recommends the following action item for consideration by the Faculty:

Creation of a Standing Online Education Committee

*Current situation:*

The SLA committee for online education is an ad hoc committee.

*Proposal:*

Create the Online Education Committee as a new standing appointed committee:

Section 4.X Online Education Committee

1. The Online Education Committee will support the work of the Graduate and Undergraduate Curriculum Committees by providing guidance related to online education as they pertain to any policy changes, curriculum revisions, or to new courses or programs. The Committee will also review existing courses that are changed to an online format, and examine data on online education in the SLA to inform faculty and the Dean’s Office of trends that may be relevant for planning and decision making.

2. The Committee will collaborate with the Teaching and Advising Committee to facilitate the adoption of best practices related to online education in the School by promoting and disseminating resources related to online education for faculty. The committee will collaborate with the Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Teaching and Advising Committee to advise on other School policies affected by online education, such as evaluation of online courses by peers and students, consideration of online teaching in promotion and tenure, and other unique considerations posed to the School, departments, and faculty by online education. The Committee will facilitate involvement in collaborative online programs offered through IU Online by maintaining a repository of legal agreements (MOUs) for programs involved in IU Online, and surveying faculty involved in those programs.

3. The Online Education Committee shall consist of five voting members and two non-voting members. The voting members shall consist of four faculty selected by the Executive Committee and an Executive Committee representative. At least one voting faculty member must be a representative of a department or program that participates in an IU Online collaborative degree or program. The nonvoting members will consist of a representative from the Dean’s Office and an invited representative/liaison from UITS or eDS.​

*Rationale:*

Online courses have been encouraged by both campus and SLA strategic plans for several years. Currently, online education takes place in SLA in a variety of forms: existing and new asynchronous online courses, existing and new hybrid courses that tie in person attendance with online sessions, and entirely collaborative online degrees through IU Online. This results in two primary tracks of online development: courses developed online for SLA departments and programs that are not part of IU Online and degree-based curriculum developed for the IU Online Collaborative programs. As such, online education has become an ongoing, significant part of teaching and learning in the School.

To be effective, the Online Education Committee will need to collaborate with the Graduate Curriculum Committee, the Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committee, the Teaching and Advising Committee, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee. This Committee will support the work of the Graduate and Undergraduate Curriculum Committees by providing guidance related to online education as they pertain to any policy changes, curriculum revisions, or to new courses or programs. After initial approval by the Graduate or Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Online Education Committee will review proposals for new online (or hybrid) courses and programs for issues related to teaching in the online environment. Final approval of proposals for new or significantly revised graduate or undergraduate degrees or certificates, and their presentation to the Faculty Assembly for approval, will remain with the respective Curriculum Committee. The Online Education Committee will also review existing courses that are changed to an online format.

The Committee shall promote best practices in online education in the School by disseminating resources to faculty in coordination with the Teaching and Advising Committee, and directing faculty to existing campus and University resources for online teaching. The committee will collaborate with the Teaching and Advising Committee, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee, to advise on other School policies affected by online education, such as evaluation of online courses by peers and students, consideration of online teaching in promotion and tenure, and other unique considerations posed to the School, departments, and faculty by online education.

The Committee will facilitate collaboration with IU Online, by maintaining a repository for legal agreements (MOUs) for all IU Online collaborative programs involving SLA departments, and surveying SLA programs that have participated, or considered participating, in IU Online programs for lessons learned. Finally, the committee will examine data on online education in the SLA to inform faculty and the Dean’s Office of trends that may be relevant for planning and decision making.

Although some standing committees currently address issues related to smaller pieces of online education, no committee oversees online education in terms of its impact on the School of Liberal Arts. Individual faculty members can change an existing course to the online format with no guidance and no checks that the course they are offering is putting the entire program in violation of federal rules and thereby, potentially, putting the school at financial risk. Therefore, a standing committee on online education is an advisable next step.

*Known and expected benefits:*

A standing committee will increase and improve online education opportunities in SLA by promoting and disseminating resources related to online education for faculty. The committee will also provide for centralized consideration of some common challenges encountered by faculty teaching online, such as accounting for technological and pedagogical requirements unique to the online environment. The committee would also consider other new challenges and opportunities presented by online education, such as its role in tenure and promotion, curriculum development, and teaching evaluation by peers and students. In particular, a standing committee would permit clearer understanding of and approach to collaboration with IU Online by being able to be integrated in the School’s curriculum approval processes led by the existing Curriculum committees.