

Resolution to Adopt the SUNY FACT2 Recommendation to not Require the Use of Cameras for Remote Instruction

Whereas SUNY College at Old Westbury, like many colleges and universities, has chosen online and distance learning modalities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and

Whereas, it is recognized by SUNY College at Old Westbury faculty that a substantial number of the student population at SUNY Old Westbury disproportionately face socioeconomic obstacles to learning; and

Whereas, faculty utilizing Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate and other digital technology to deliver instruction and other course material must be sensitive to issues of privacy and also disadvantages that stem from socioeconomic inequities; and

Whereas, requiring the use of cameras during synchronous remote instruction delivery may highlight said socioeconomic inequities or force disadvantaged students to self-identify by requesting exemptions; and

Whereas, self-identifying may further jeopardize the general well-being of disadvantaged students and detract from achieving the intended academic purpose of requiring the use of cameras; and

Whereas, class attendance and student engagement can be tracked using active learning techniques without requiring students to turn on their cameras;

Whereas, the SUNY Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology (SUNY FACT2) already has issued a recommendation that acknowledges that synchronous online learning technologies pose new challenges with respect to student privacy and equity;

Whereas, the SUNY Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology (SUNY FACT2) recommendation is that *faculty offering classes through web conferencing digital technology like Zoom cannot require that students turn on their cameras during live classes, unless there is a pedagogical need to do so*;

Whereas, the SUNY Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology (SUNY FACT2) further recommends that any requirement of student live webcam use be disclosed to students prior to course registration and included in the syllabus, along with information on how to seek a reasonable accommodation for disability-related limitations on webcam use;

Whereas, SUNY College at Old Westbury is one of the academic institutions under the direct leadership of the State University of New York (SUNY) system; and

Whereas, the Academic Policies and Practices Committee (APPC) of the SUNY College at Old Westbury deliberated diligently and agrees fully with the SUNY FACT2 recommendations;

Be it resolved that SUNY College at Old Westbury Senate endorses the SUNY FACT2 recommendations to not require the use of cameras for remote instruction unless there is a pedagogical need to do so.

Be it further resolved that SUNY College at Old Westbury faculty, in determining what qualifies as pedagogical need, be particularly sensitive to the demographics of the general student population, and as much as possible seek alternative means to track student attendance and engagement, without requiring the use of cameras.

Submitted by the Academic Policies and Practices Committee.

[APPC 2020-2021 Membership]

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