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Attendance Verification Issues for Online Students

Submitted by: John Dyer

2/7/2016

Question:

Regarding first day attendance verification, are online students told of the requirement to verify their attendance, and a method to do so?

Rationale:

Each semester many faculty, administrators, and staff spend an inordinate amount of time getting students back into online classes for which they do not verify their attendance. I provide an attendance verification quiz in Folio with an email requiring students to submit the quiz to verify attendance. It seems many students (especially freshman) do not immediately engage in their online courses via Folio, and do not read my Folio emails and News Feeds until the end of the first week. As such, I mark them as "Not Attending," when in fact they plan to take the course but started engaging late. This results in a first week of chaos due to attendance verification issues, while instead, faculty, admin and staff should be concentrating on our regular tasks instead of spending valuable time and resources on these "special cases." Perhaps students taking online courses should be hit with a barrage of emails from the Registrar requiring them to verify their own attendance using a link in MyGSU, and if they fail to do so they pay the price for not following simple instructions. If we can have them evaluate a course online, then we can have them verify their own attendance online. I would also like to know how other faculty address this issue.

Response:

Senate Minutes 2/15/2016: Another RFI from John Dyer was re: attendance verification in online classes, which can sometimes be problematic. Various professors have various methods and deadlines, and so the situation is rather chaotic. Dyer wanted to know if there was a better way.

Barbara King (CLASS) asked if we have a recommendation for the time frame for online attendance verification. Moderator Humphrey noted that it is supposed to be the same as in a regular course. King, though, noted that online classes don't have a particular meeting day, and asked if we are supposed to do it the first day, second day, by the third day, or what. Moderator Humphrey noted her own practice re: deadlines, but Adam Bossler (CLASS) noted that this was what King was talking about – each professor having different practices, which is very confusing especially since students might be taking multiple online courses in any given semester. He thought a more straightforward policy as to when students are expected to do attendance verification would help students probably even more than the faculty. Humphrey noted that this was something to pursue with the Registrar.