

PASSED

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Open Letter Regarding Distance Learning

Dr. Nathan Hatch
Provost
University of Notre Dame
300 Main Building

Dear Dr. Hatch,

The Academic Affairs Committee from ^{of} the Student Senate has reviewed the issue of distance learning over the course of this semester. If utilized properly, we believe that distance learning via the Internet and video classes could provide many rewarding opportunities to supplement classroom work.

Our research includes gauging interest from students and discussing possibilities with faculty. Furthermore, Senator Dave Brenner has met with Deans from the Colleges of Engineering, Arts and Letters, and Business. The colleges differ on both current and potential distance learning opportunities. The Business school ^{offers} does offer one class over the Internet for MIS students abroad, and it has further demonstrated its expertise within this field through the Executive MBA program. Arts and Letters does not offer such opportunities and does not anticipate the potential needs or benefits of distance learning. Similarly, Engineering does not provide students with these prospects, but they are willing to experiment. Consequently, we believe that the one common feature between these colleges is the need for more dialogue and exploration of distance learning alternatives.

Distance learning will never replace faculty-student interaction as the primary means of education at Notre Dame. Furthermore, we recognize that residentiality and the campus atmosphere are defining features that contribute to Notre Dame's academic excellence. However, there does appear to be limitations in taking certain classes that distance learning might be able to alleviate. This could open doors to new study abroad opportunities, electives, or class sequences. In summary, distance learning could yield many benefits, but those potentials are currently ^{untapped} ^{unexplored}. The Academic Affairs Committee believes it would be in the best interest of students and faculty to explore these enriching possibilities and looks forward to further discussion of this topic with you. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Trip Foley
Student Senate Chair

Kate Schlosser
Academic Affairs Chair

Dave Brenner
Academic Affairs Committee

