Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education.

Policy Practices for Verification of Student Identity - Number: FDCR.A.10.050.
This policy applies to all credit-bearing distance learning courses and programs offered by the Navajo Technical University (NTU), beginning with the application for admission and continuing through to a student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from study.

Procedures

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the NTU operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), Public Law 110-315 and Higher Learning Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.050 concerning the verification of student identity in distance learning. All credit-bearing courses and programs offered through distance learning methods must verify that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. One or more of the following methods will be used:

a) An individual secure skyhawk ID and password (i.e. first intial.lastname and password)
b) Proctored examinations (Refer to E-Learning Policy - Proctoring)
c) Other technologies and practices approved by the Information Technology that have been shown to be effective in verifying student identification.
d) Pedagogical and related practices that are effective in verifying student identity (faculty review, questioning students, etc.)

Secure Login and Password
Each student has their own assigned Skyhawk ID and student-generated password to log into learning management systems.

Proctored Examinations
The E-Learning Policy on Testing and Proctored Examinations should be used as a guiding reference for proctored examinations.

New or Emerging Technologies
Third party vendors that provide robust identity verification software services (e.g., services similar to those used in the financial sector) could be used as an option by NTU.

Pedagogical and Related Practices
Online faculty have a responsibility to identify changes in students. Examples of changes could be a sudden change in academic performance, change in writing style, using more than one kind of assessment type, asking students to share important ideas learned from references, as well as odd statements by students in discussions or email.

Privacy Protection
All methods of verifying student identity in distance learning must protect the privacy of student

information. Students must be notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any fees associated with the verification of student identity.

Personally identifiable information collected by the university may be used, at the discretion of the institution, as the basis for identity verification. For instance, a student requesting that their learning system password be reset may be asked to provide two or more pieces of information for comparison with data on file, or to come to the NTU Information Technology or E-Learning Department in person with a photo ID or verification.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All users of the NTU's learning management systems are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords and any other access credentials assigned. The skyhawk ID is not a secure credential and may be displayed at various areas in the learning management system. The password used to enter the system is a secure credential. Access passwords may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned to for any reason.

Users are responsible for any and all uses of their account. Users are responsible for changing passwords periodically to maintain security. Users are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained within the most recent NTU Catalog as well as the Student Handbook. Failure to read NTU policies, guidelines, requirements and regulations will not exempt users from responsibility. Students are responsible for providing accurate and true information about themselves in any identity verification process.

Faculty teaching courses through distance education methods have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their courses comply with the provisions of this policy. Faculty are responsible for informing the NTU Information Technology of any new technologies being used to verify student identity, so that published information on student privacy can be maintained appropriately, and so that the university can coordinate resources and services efficiently. Because technology and personal accountability may not verify identity absolutely or ensure academic integrity completely, faculty are encouraged, when feasible and pedagogically sound, to design courses that employ assignments and evaluations unique to the course and that support academic integrity.

Deans and Department Chairs of different departments are responsible for ensuring that faculty are aware of this policy and comply with its provisions. Deans and Department Chairs are also responsible for ensuring that academic awards and degree programs within their program comply with the provisions of this policy.

Information Technology (IT) is responsible for ensuring university-wide compliance with the provisions of this policy and that deans and directors are informed of any changes in a timely fashion. IT is responsible for publishing university-wide information on how identity verification processes protect student privacy. IT is also responsible for coordinating and promoting efficient

use of university resources and services, and for ensuring that university level processes (e.g., admissions or registration) also remain in compliance with this policy.

The Office of the Registrar is responsible to notify students at the time of registration of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

COMPLIANCE

In accordance with the responsibilities outlined above, deans and department chairs of programs are expected to ensure that all faculty and staff within their departments remain in compliance with this policy. NTU has in place appropriate policies to promote the academic integrity of its online courses as explained in the University's catalog, and Student Handbook under academic regulations. These policies are widely disseminated throughout the University.

Training for Students

NTU will provide faculty with appropriate training to use pedagogical approaches and technology to promote academic integrity. Additionally, NTU should provide information to students regarding not sharing passwords and being held accountable for academic integrity. Syllabi and orientations should include information for students to understand issues for each online course and the university as a whole.