

Charter: Task Force on Innovative Learning Models

November 2014



Timeline & Commitment

Start date: November 2014
End date: June 2015

The task force will exist from November 2014 through mid-June 2015. Throughout this period the group can expect to meet regularly by telephone and for one or two in-person meetings in Washington, DC.

Composition

- Chair: Michael Bennet
- Members:
 - Jodi Abad, Southern New Hampshire University
 - Robert Collins, Western Governors University
 - Heidi Granger, George Mason University
 - Susan Howard, Antioch University
 - Jillian Klein, Capella University
 - Kevin Jensen, College of Western Idaho
 - Sandra Neel, University of Louisville
 - JoEllen Soucier, Houston Community College
 - Noemi Targorda, University of Southern California
- CD: Susan Murphy
- NASFAA Staff Liaisons:
 - Jennifer Martin, Director, Training Initiatives
 - Megan McClean, Director of Policy and Federal Relations
 - Jesse O'Connell, Assistant Director for Federal Relations

Background & Purpose

In response to rising costs and the growth of the nontraditional student, policymakers have started to examine innovative learning models as a possible solution for higher education. Massive open online coursework (MOOCs), competency-based education, and prior learning assessments are among the types of initiatives garnering attention in the hopes that they can expand access, speed time to degree completion and reduce reliance on student borrowing.

However, much of the federal aid system was designed in an age before many of these learning models were developed. Attempting to cultivate and implement innovative learning models within the confines of the existing federal student aid system has led to regulatory challenges, not to mention concerns over opportunities for fraud and abuse. The pending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act provides an opportunity to discuss these issues and take proactive steps to thoughtfully implement meaningful reforms.

The primary purpose of the NASFAA Innovative Learning Models Task Force is to:

- Meet with experts and pioneers in innovative learning models to better understand current and future trends
- Consider the implications and challenges of administering Title IV aid to these new types of programs under existing statutes and regulations.
- Formulate recommendations for how Title IV regulations might be changed to accommodate these types of programs while protecting the federal investment and providing for program integrity.
- Identify potential future development or demonstration projects that would experiment with innovative learning models

Task Force Members' Duties & Responsibilities

Task-Force Specific Duties

- Strive for a treatment of students who enroll in programs using innovative learning models that is equitable and reasonable to the student, the school, and the Title IV programs;
- Ensure program integrity and protect the federal investment in higher education;
- Promote fairness and equity across all sectors of postsecondary education;
- Recommend policies that facilitate reductions in cost and time to degree.

General Duties

- Attend all task force meetings and participate in the deliberations. Notify the committee Chair and the staff liaison if circumstances prevent attendance at a particular meeting;
- Adhere to deadlines for submission of committee assignments;
- Review all agenda items and background documents prior to each meeting and come prepared for the discussions;
- Serve as recording secretary for a committee meeting if requested by the task force chair; and
- Utilize the most economical means of transportation when attending a meeting and promptly file a travel reimbursement request.

Indicators of Success & Outcomes

The outcome of the task force is to produce a report and recommendations to the NASFAA Board of Directors on revisions to the current statutory provisions governing the administration of Title IV aid to programs or institutions built around innovative learning models. These recommendations will be utilized in NASFAA's reauthorization efforts.

A status update will be due to the NASFAA Board of Directors by February 2015. A final report will be due to the NASFAA Board of Directors by June 2015.

Budget

Planned expenditures are \$12,000.