DISTANCE EDUCATION PLAN

2014-2017
2016 UPDATE

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION TASK FORCE

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About the Plan

Because of significant changes in the distance education mode of instructional delivery by the federal government, the Distance Education Task Force ad hoc committee was formed as a sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee to develop a comprehensive Distance Education Plan, Handbook, and curriculum processing procedure to meet instructional needs. This document is the result of careful research, collaboration with sister colleges, and attendance at Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges (ASCCC) workshops at Plenary and the Curriculum Institute. In addition, we would like to express our appreciation for the creators of the Cypress College Distance Education Plan 2011-2014. Rather than reinvent the wheel, we relied heavily on their plan in the initial development of ours.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When the Curriculum Committee was asked to update the college policy and procedure for distance education, an ad hoc task force was formed and worked tirelessly on behalf of the college. We owe a debt of gratitude to the original task force members--Patricia Flores-Charter, Elisa Hedrick, Tom Luibel, Gail Stockin, Leslie Yoder, and Susan Yonker—as well as the current task force members who have documented our progress and outlined our future: April Brenner, Beth Gray, Gail Stockin, Luke Cuddy, Mia McClellan, Patricia Flores-Charter, Somer Meade, Susan Yonker, Tom Luibel, Toni Pfister, and Tracy Schaelen.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This plan was originally approved by the Curriculum Committee in Spring 2014 and has been revised as goals are met. This update was produced in Fall 2016.

Southwestern College Mission Statement

Southwestern Community College District, the only public institution of higher education in southern San Diego County, provides services to a diverse community of students by providing a wide range of dynamic and high quality academic programs and comprehensive student services, including those offered through distance education. The College District also stimulates the development and growth of the region through its educational, economic and workforce opportunities, community partnerships and services.

Southwestern Community College District promotes student learning and success and prepares students to become engaged global citizens by committing to continuous improvement that includes planning, implementation and evaluation. The College District provides educational opportunities in the following areas: associate degree and certificate programs; transfer; professional, technical, and career advancement; basic skills; personal enrichment and continuing education.

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

Southwestern College supports faculty and staff in developing and delivering quality online learning for successful student outcomes.

About the Distance Education Plan

The Distance Education (DE) Plan reflects the Southwestern College Mission, Strategic Plan, and Educational Master Plan. The purpose is to establish common goals and criteria for quality online instruction, identify facilities and infrastructure needs, set standards for training faculty and students, and make recommendations for faculty evaluation. This plan will guide online instruction over the course of the next three academic years, 2014 – 2017. It is available to the Southwestern College community on SharePoint.

The DE plan will be evaluated annually by the Distance Education Task Force. Updates will be available on SharePoint.

The Distance Education Task Force is responsible to evaluating the DE Plan at the end of its three-year span and creating--in consultation with the DE Coordinator, Academic Technology

Committee, Academic Senate, and Instructional Support Services/Online Learning Center--a plan for the following three years.

Developing the DE Plan is a three-step process:

1. **Planning**: The current plan is presented at a DE Task Force meeting, where participants determine plan sections to be deleted, updated, or added. Suggestions for changes are documented. The DE Task Force chair establishes a timeline and guides preparation of the first draft of the plan revision by the group.

2. **Review**: This first comprehensive draft is submitted to the Academic Technology Committee, online faculty serving as DE Mentors, and Instructional Support Services/Online Learning Center for review and feedback.

3. **Final Revision & Approval**: The DE Task Force prepares the final draft of the plan based on the feedback collected during the review process. The final draft is then submitted for approval to the Academic Senate.

Distance Education in California

"People expect to be able to work, learn, and study whenever and wherever they want to. Life in an increasingly busy world where learners must balance demands from home, work, school, and family poses a host of logistical challenges with which today's ever more mobile students must cope" (*Horizon Report,* Higher Education Edition, 2012, p. 4).

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Distance Education is an important part of California higher education. Of the state's three public higher education systems, the California Community Colleges are the largest provider of distance education offerings (Steenhausen & Boilard, 2010, p.3). According to the Chancellor's Office 2011 *Distance Education Report*, from 2005 to 2010 among the California Community Colleges, there was an overall enrollment growth in distance education sessions that exceeded growth in traditional sessions by over 14 percent (p.15).

Growth is fueled by demand. Students with ubiquitous access to web and mobile technologies value, and expect, the convenience of access to course content anywhere, anytime. This expectation has been met by the adoption of asynchronous communication methods for course delivery. According to the Chancellor's Office, "Online instruction (asynchronous Internet) delivery is by the far the most widely used method of conducting DE

because it offers students the greatest flexibility in taking courses" (*Distance Education Report,* 2011, p.11).

State survey results show that California higher education students choose distance education because Internet-based courses facilitate access to a college education and integrate more easily with other aspects of their lives. Flexible learning schedules permit students to arrange work, family, and other personal obligations to suit their individual needs. According to the 2011 Chancellor's report on Distance Education, "The reasons why students take DE courses can be summarized in one word: convenience" (p. 35). Students take distance education courses because they provide a more convenient way to manage both a heavy work schedule and "personal circumstances (family, health, etc.)" (p. 34).

CHALLENGES TO DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education courses are required to maintain the same academic standards as traditional face-to-face courses and have many of the same challenges, especially as technology is increasingly infused in traditionally delivered instruction. Recommendations to the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges found in the State Chancellor's 2011 *Distance Education Report*, as well as results from the Instructional Technology Council (ITC) survey, which looks primarily at public community colleges across the United States (ITC, 2010), and observations noted in the *Horizon Report* Higher Education Edition from the New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (Johnson et al., 2012), all reiterate common challenges to post-secondary distance education.

Of the issues confronting distance education listed in these reports, the following are the most relevant to Southwestern College's DE goals and objectives for 2014 – 2017:

- 508 accessibility compliance
- Documentation of academic integrity, student authentication, regular effective contact, and last date of attendance
- Access to equivalent student services, library services, and instructional support services
- Training of faculty, including quality course design, delivery, evaluation of teaching and learning, and professional development
- Training of students for online learning
- Effective evaluation of instruction and student learning, including student learning outcomes
- Success, retention, and completion rates
- Quality of course management system

Distance Education at Southwestern College

Distance Education has quickly become a part of our college instructional delivery. The motivations (Howell, Williams, & Lindsay, 2003) to create and expand distance education offerings are strong across all levels of the college community.

- *Institutional Benefits:* The institutional and administrative motivators for offering Distance Education classes include the efficient use of physical space and the need to offer an alternative delivery method for those who cannot come to campus. Special populations served by distance education include students with children, military students, and students with disabilities.

- *Program Benefits:* Southwestern College programs have implemented distance education for a variety of reasons, including improved access for students and efficient capacity utilization.

- *Student Benefits:* Student reasons for taking Distance Education classes include a flexible academic schedule, reduction of commuting time and transportation expenses, and, for students with physical disabilities, accessibility.

- *Faculty Benefits:* Faculty members decide to teach Distance Education courses for a variety of reasons, including the promotion of student success and enhancement of traditional instructional methods, such as transferring curriculum development and teaching techniques from online to the traditional classroom.

Definitions

Distance Education at Southwestern College, like other colleges in the state, has been conducted primarily through asynchronous communication but is working toward offering more opportunities for synchronous engagement. Distance Education at Southwestern College primarily refers to the delivery of online and hybrid courses, as well as the use of an online course management system (CMS).

CCC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE DEFINITION AND REQUIREMENTS

In its *California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines*, the State Chancellor's Office defines distance education as follows:

"Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. All distance

education is subject to the general requirements of [Title 5, Chapter 6] as well as the specific requirements of this article. In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements that may be imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. §794d)" (Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division, Instructional Programs and Services, 2008).

It is important to note that section 55206 of the Guidelines also includes specific curriculum procedures for hybrid as well as online classes: "If any portion of the instruction in a proposed or existing course or course section is designed to be provided through distance education in lieu of face-to-face interaction between instructor and student, the course shall be separately reviewed and approved according to the district's adopted course approval procedures. NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code" (p. 7).

ACCREDITING COMMISSION DEFINITION

In its document, *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) includes the federal definition of distance education for accreditation purposes as follows:

"Distance education is defined, for the purpose of accreditation review as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies." (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2013, p. 2)

APPLICATION OF DEFINITIONS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AT SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

Southwestern College Distance Education is defined as instruction where students and faculty are separated by distance and interact using a variety of technologies. There are three types of courses supported by the Distance Education Program.

Online Course

An online course at Southwestern College is a class instructed entirely online. The class may meet online using the college adopted Course Management System (CMS), but not for face-to-face instruction. Instructional time follows the Carnegie Unit. This means the faculty must plan an approximate 1:2 ratio of instruction time to homework and study.

Definition for students in Schedule of Classes: Online Courses have no face-to-face classroom instruction. All instruction is online.

Hybrid Course

A hybrid course at Southwestern College is a class that offers instruction both online and face-to-face on campus. Required face-to-face meetings are included in the schedule of classes following a predictable pattern (on the same day[s] of the week and at the same time). Online instruction uses the college adopted CMS and also follows a predictable pattern. Instructional time follows the Carnegie Unit. This means the faculty must plan an approximate 1:2 ratio of instruction time to homework and study.

Definition for students in Schedule of Classes: Hybrid courses are taught both face-to-face and online. While a class may not meet every week, those meetings that are scheduled will occur on the same day and at the same time of the week.

Web-Enhanced Course

Web-enhanced courses at Southwestern College are face-to-face instructional courses that offer students access to class materials, grades, and resources online using the college adopted CMS. Web enhanced courses may offer supplemental activities and homework online, and they may include online communication and electronic submission of coursework. Web enhanced courses may **not** use Internet-based resources or activities to replace required on-campus face-to-face instruction or in-seat contact hours. Trained instructors may use Blackboard course sites.

Distance Education Academic Attendance

For distance education auditing purposes academic attendance includes, but is not limited to:

1. Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
2. Submitting an academic assignment;

3. Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;

4. Attending a study group that is assigned by the institution;

5. Participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and

6. Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; (DOE, 2010, 66952)

LAST DATE OF ATTENDANCE (LDA)

The last date of academic attendance, commonly known as the Last Day of Attendance (LDA), is the date the college uses to determine the amount of financial aid, if any, that must be returned to the Department of Education due to student withdrawal. The Department of Education (DOE) specifically requires "using a last date of attendance at an academically-related activity as a withdrawal date" and states that "it is up to the institution to ensure that accurate records are kept for purposes of identifying a student's last date of academic attendance or last date of attendance at an academically-related activity." (Dept. of Education, Reg. 66898).

Activities where students may be present but exhibit no evidence of academic engagement are excluded from determining First Date of Attendance and Last Day of Attendance, for example, "(3) Logging into an online class without active participation; or (4) Participating in academic counseling or advisement" (DOE, 2010, Reg. 66952).

Regular Effective Contact

Instruction for Distance Education must comply with all applicable Federal and State regulations. Title 5 section 55204(c) states, "Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact correspondence, voice mail, email, or other activities. Regular and effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq." (*California Education Code,* Section 55204).

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges specifically defines a distance education course as featuring "regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor" (*Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, p. 2). This requirement for regular instructor contact with students is affirmed in Southwestern College's Procedure No. 4105, which states, "Each section of the course that is delivered through

distance education will include regular effective contact (also known as regular substantive interaction by the Department of Education) by the instructor with the students."

Distance Education Enrollment Growth at Southwestern College

The Southwestern College Distance Education Program offers students online and hybrid courses. As seen in Table 1, the overall enrollment growth for Southwestern College Distance Education reflects the growth trend in the state in good economic years and a decrease in years of fiscal challenge. From 2010 to 2011 there was a growth rate of 15% (from 2044 to 2355) in distance course FTES at Southwestern College (Distance Education Governing Board Report, Mink Stavenga, 2013).

TABLE 1: FULL TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS (FTES) & COURSE SECTIONS, 2010–2011 (CUMMINGS REPORT, CENSUS DAY NUMBERS)

FALL 2011

	FTES Scheduled	FTES Earned	Efficiency	Courses Offered
Online	842	705	84%	235
Hybrid	465	352	76%	127

SPRING 2012

	FTES Scheduled	FTES Earned	Efficiency	Courses Offered
Online	992	851	86%	284
Hybrid	553	400	72%	152

SUMMER 2012

	FTES Scheduled	FTES Earned	Efficiency	Courses Offered
Online	4	2	50%	1

Hybrid	46	45	98%	11

SUMMARY 2011-2012

	FTES Scheduled	FTES Earned	Efficiency	Courses Offered
Online	1838	1558	85%	520
Hybrid	1064	797	75%	290

RATIO Distance Education vs. F2F

	Portion	Total DE Sections offered 2011-2012	ALL Sections offered 2011-2012
Online	12%	520	4352
Hybrid	7%	290	4352
Total via DE	19%	810	4352

FALL 2012

	FTES Scheduled	FTES Earned	Efficiency	Courses Offered
Online	837	759	91%	228
Hybrid	459	386	84%	133

SPRING 2013

	FTES Scheduled	FTES Earned	Efficiency	Courses Offered
Online	754	710	94%	214
Hybrid	445	378	85%	121

Distance Education Success, Retention, and Persistence

IMPROVED STUDENT SUCCESS

Successful student completion of a course is defined as performance with a passing grade or a grade of "C" or better (A, B, C, Credit, or pass). According to the most recent data for Distance Education from 2009 to 2011, Southwestern College is in the average range. Southwestern's DE success rate ranges from a low of 43% to a high of 91%. From 2005 to 2010 in the California Community College system, the success rates for distance education rose from 53% to 57% while the rates in traditional courses rose from 64% to 67% over the same time period (Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 23 – 25).

For improving student success, the California Student Success Task Force (SSTF) report from January 2012 recommends that community colleges develop and use a centralized, integrated technology which can be accessed through the campus or district web portals. This helps students to manage their educational plans, monitor their grades, and understand their level of technological skills in order to follow an appropriate pathway of success (SSTF, 2012, p. 27). Southwestern College continues to improve its internal technology to generate efficiency in processing applications, grades, and online learning access.

Table 1: The number of students in Table 1 is the total student headcount in all distance education (DE) and traditional education courses from 2005 to 2010. As shown, both DE and traditional courses increased and decreased simultaneously in correlating years.

Table 2: Table 2 is the total number of DE and traditional classes offered each year from 2005 to 2010. As shown in the table, DE increased in the total number of classes offered, while traditional education classes decreased.

Table 3: The number of students in Table 3 is a duplicated headcount, which means that students may be counted more than once. If they enrolled in two DE courses, they were counted two times, etc. The DE success rate rose slightly from 2005 to 2010, from 53 percent to 57 percent. This success rate compares to an increase from 64 percent to 67 percent for traditional education students. The gap for the success rate between traditional instruction and DE instruction closed from 11 percent to 10 percent. The success rate for DE courses

grew by 2 percentage points in one year from 2008-09 to 2009-10, while the success rate in traditional courses remained the same (Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 23-24).

Table 1: Total student headcount in all DE and traditional education course classes in California Community Colleges 2005-2010

Fiscal year	DE	Traditional education	Total	Percent of total headcount
2005-06	328,372	2,630,207	2,958,579	12.48%
2006-07	392,355	2,694,149	3,086,504	14.56%
2007-08	483,884	2,810,572	3,294,456	17.22%
2008-09	611,689	2,923,137	3,534,826	20.93%
2009-10	349,518	2,758,831	3,408,349	23.54%

Source: *Distance Education Report* 2011 (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2011)

Table 2: Total number of DE and traditional education course sessions/classes offered in California Community Colleges

Fiscal years	Distance education	Traditional education	Percentage
2005-06	21,407	456,644	4.69%
2006-07	26,121	465,680	5.61%
2007-08	32,380	486,866	6.65%
2008-09	39,178	482,756	8.12%
2009-10	39,964	440,933	9.06%

Source: *Distance Education Report* 2011 (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2011)

Table 3: Success Rates for Credit Distance Education and Traditional Education Course Sessions (Duplicated Headcount)

Credit Distance Education Sessions					
Student Outcome	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Completed	319,541	392,145	500,142	649,997	696,088
Not Completed	289,005	346,551	425,762	525,136	524,723
Total	608,546	738,696	925,904	1,175,13	1,220,811
Success Rate	**53%**	**53%**	**54%**	**55%**	**57%**
Credit Traditional Education Sessions					
Student Outcome	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Completed	5,390,916	5,469,554	5,725,712	6,208,474	6,264,182
Not Completed	3,024,343	2,963,846	3,023,945	3,105,924	3,024,017
Total	8,415,259	8,433,400	8,749,657	9,314,398	9,288,199
Success Rate	**64%**	**65%**	**65%**	**67%**	**67%**

Source: *Distance Education Report* 2011 (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2011)

Southwestern College has had similar results to the statewide Chancellor's report. Although the numbers are slightly different, they are well within the statewide average for DE classes.

RETENTION/PERSISTENCE

State retention rates are calculated based on student drops. Students who drop a course with a "W" grade are counted as not having been retained. Between 2005 and 2010 in the California Community College system, there was a difference of 6.96% between the retention of students in distance education and traditional courses. As with student success rates, when there is a decrease in DE retention, there is a decrease in traditional retention as well.

Persistence in California is defined as "…the percentage of first-time students with a minimum of six units earned in a fall term and who returned and enrolled in the subsequent fall term anywhere in the system" (COCCC, 2012, p. 767). The 2012 report shows 69.4% of the students enrolled in the community college system in California had an intent to persist from fall 2009 to fall 2010 (COCCC, 2012, p. 32). Southwestern College has a persistence rate of 69.0% which is slightly lower than the state average (COCCC, 2012, p. 684).

PROGRAM PLANNING FOR RETENTION AND SUCCESS

While the data shows student success rates in traditional lecture courses are higher than in DE courses at Southwestern College and across the state, it is important to acknowledge both the improved success in DE courses and the decrease in the disparity between DE and traditional courses, especially in the hybrid delivery format. For planning purposes, it is also crucial to target the root causes of this disparity in order to find best practices that will improve success and retention.

Although there are strategies in place to try and determine how to improve retention and persistence in distance education, withdrawal from courses appears to be another key factor in the disparity of student performance.

There are many reasons that retention and persistence remain a challenge for distance education. Students tend to withdraw from their online/hybrid courses for many reasons, including personal and professional issues (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011). In fact, DE students tend to have more personal and professional obligations than traditional students, which may cause them to drop classes at higher rates than others (Steenhausen, et al., 2010). While a heavy work schedule and "personal circumstances" were the top two reasons students gave for taking online courses, they were also the top two reasons students gave for dropping a DE course (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 35).

The highest percentage of DE withdrawal calculations were for personal problems including family, health, job, and childcare. Secondary reasons were inability to combine study and work responsibilities and the course was too difficult. Tertiary reasons were student course

load mismanagement, inability to devote time and attention to the online class requirements, and lack of instructor feedback (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011).

It is important to ensure that DE students have access to online student services, which include counseling, personal instructor feedback, academic advising, and career services (Pullan, 2011). Student services play a direct, vital role in success, including academic performance, psychological growth and program or certificate completion (Pullan, 2011). Additionally, research has shown a correlation between online retention, student orientation and feedback from instructors (Weng, Cheong & Cheong, 2009).

Research has also shown a correlation between retention, self-efficacy, and the effective use of learning strategies in postsecondary education (Weng, Cheong & Cheong, 2009). Currently, a Southwestern Business faculty member is collecting data through student surveys to determine which learning strategies students are employing while engaged in a DE course. Future surveys will target learning strategies, self-efficacy, motivation, and self-regulation in order to improve curriculum development, create a more engaging experience, and improve retention and participation in DE classes. Additionally, the DE plan includes program objectives designed to give DE students access to more online services, increase participation in the DE course orientation, create a DE student and faculty handbook, and increase the engagement and readiness to learn that may improve retention and persistence.

Distance Education Management and Support at Southwestern College

The Distance Education Program hosts web enhanced courses on the Blackboard system for all instructors in addition to hosting all online and hybrid courses. By definition and according to the official designation in the curriculum process, web-enhanced courses are considered traditional, not Distance Education courses, and yet represent a growing area of responsibility for the Distance Education Program.

DEPENDABLE COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THROUGH MANAGED HOSTING

Blackboard is Southwestern's official course management system (CMS) for DE classes. The identification of a single adopted CMS is required to meet federal regulations and auditing requirements for online courses. While some faculty use Blackboard along with publisher sites or other commercial or free web services, the college's DE program requires use of

Blackboard as the main platform for online, hybrid, and web enhanced course delivery. System maintenance, monitoring, upgrades, technical support, and systems administration expertise are all part of the managed contract.

Use of the nationally known CMS, Blackboard, assures compliance with federal regulations, basic access for students with disabilities to the print information by using a screen reader, and a more reliable and robust CMS. Other benefits may occur behind the scenes, so they are not evident to the typical user. For instance, the DE program Blackboard system administrator can depend on the assistance of expert support technicians who are available 24/7 and up-to-date on the newest software implementations. This expertise has proven invaluable for the troubleshooting and swift resolution of issues. In addition, managed hosting guarantees against network outages through the use of redundant servers and industry standard safeguards from threats to physical and data security. Remotely hosting the system also protects against data loss through natural disasters.

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE SUPPORT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Distance Education program requires current and stable infrastructure, which is reliant upon funding allocation and assignment of sufficient personnel to manage the program and technological upgrades and changes. The technical personnel are responsible for maintaining the course management system, providing stable access and storage space, and continually monitoring all technical systems related to online program delivery. Currently, two classified employees, one full-time and one at 70%, provide technical support for students and faculty in the use of the College's Course Management System.

Instructional support is provided to faculty by the Distance Education Faculty Coordinator in the form of workshops, webinars, the HOW TO Academy, custom training, and weekly instructional design office hours. Beginning Fall 2016, faculty support is also provided through the DE Mentor Program.

BUDGET

Independent budget unit designation is necessary for the Distance Education Program to guarantee program quality. Full independent budget unit designation would afford the program permanent funding, as opposed to the blend of line item and one-time funding upon which much of the program currently relies.

Line Item Designation: Our DE support position has been given a line item designation in the general fund budget. This position requires ongoing classified funding of the full-time position, the 75% position, and future classified support staff.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SENATE

The Education Code recognizes the right of Academic Senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards (California Code of Regulations Title 5. Education Division 6. California Community Colleges Chapter 4. Employees Subchapter 2. Certificated Positions Article 2. Academic Senates § 53200. Definitions. 5 CA ADC § 53200, 2009). California Code of Regulations Title 5 further defines these areas to include "curriculum ... standards or policies regarding student preparation and success, ... policies for faculty professional development activities ... [and] processes for program review." This Distance Education Plan recognizes the role of the Academic Senate in these areas, and the DE Program works with the Academic Senate to ensure that goals, objectives, and final outcomes in these matters receive the Senate's approval.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Instructional Support Services is responsible for Blackboard Learn™, and the system is hosted off site by Blackboard, Inc.

- Information Technology provides automated transfers of student enrollment information from Colleague to Blackboard.

Distance Education Program Level Learning Outcomes

The Distance Education program-level learning outcomes address student technical competency and academic support awareness:

1. Distance Education students will use the basic features of the Southwestern College CMS at a proficiency level sufficient to access course materials, actively interact with the instructor and fellow students, complete course assignments and assessments, and monitor learning and grades during the semester.
2. Distance Education students will be aware of student academic and support services as a result of direct access to links to those services available on Southwestern College CMS course sites or the Distance Education web site.

A NOTE ON COURSE LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOS)

Southwestern College instructional programs incorporate student learning outcomes into each course during the curriculum approval process. Distance Education course SLO

assessment occurs as part of a department's established course level SLO assessment process. The process of instructional assessment is not part of the Distance Education program review or this plan.

Program Goals and Objectives

Distance Education goals and objectives direct the program's development and improvement process. The DE Program is committed to offering only those new products and services that can be fully supported and funded with the technical, financial, and staffing resources available. As the College migrates from Blackboard to Canvas, many objectives are being revisited and updated.

GOAL 1: STUDENT SUPPORT & SERVICES

Provide the support and services necessary to students for successful distance learning. This goal includes objectives that ensure student access to existing college services as well as services designed to meet the special needs of distance education students. Prior to enrollment in a fully online course students must successfully pass the online readiness assessment or successfully complete CIS 90 Introduction to Online Learning (one unit).

1.1. MET Objective: Facilitate student awareness of student services using the following strategies: email reminders from technical support to all DE faculty at the start of each semester, possible system wide Blackboard announcements, and announcements/links on DE web site.

> 1.1.a Person(s) responsible: Online Instructional Support
>
> 1.1.b Timeframe: Fall 2014
>
> 1.1.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

1.2. Objective: Students are offered an online readiness assessment test or CIS 90: Introduction to Online Learning (one unit) prior to the first week of class.

> 1.2.a Person(s) responsible: Tom Luibel for flex/hurdle credit, Mark Samuels, Mia McClellan (CCC Apply)
>
> 1.2.b Timeframe: Spring 2017-Fall 2018
>
> 1.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Tenure track faculty

1.3 MET/ONGOING Objective: Work with groups campus wide, including Student Services and Institutional Technology, to improve Distance Education student access to student services.

> 1.3.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator
>
> 1.3.b Timeframe: 2014 - 2017
>
> 1.3.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

1.4 Objective: Create a Distance Education student e-handbook to provide basic information needed to be a successful distance learner.

> 1.4.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator
>
> 1.4.b Timeframe: Spring 2017
>
> 1.4.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

GOAL 2: FACULTY SUPPORT & SERVICES

Provide the support and services necessary to faculty for successful distance instruction.

2.1 MET/ONGOING Objective: Refine the faculty support area of the CMS site.

> 2.1.a Person(s) responsible: Online Instructional Support and DE Coordinator
>
> 2.1.b Timeframe: Spring 2016
>
> 2.1.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2.2 MET Objective: Increase classified support staff, currently 1.75, proportional to FTES generated by online and hybrid courses.

> 2.2.a Person(s) responsible: Dean, ISS; curriculum committee chair
>
> 2.2.b Timeframe: Fall 2016
>
> 2.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: ISS Program Review using Classified Hiring Procedure

2.3 MET* Objective: Negotiate reassigned time for Distance Education coordinator

> 2.3.a Person(s) responsible: Dean, Senate President, SCEA and District
>
> 2.3.b Timeframe: 2014 – 2015

2.3.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: 100% reassigned time. * 2-year contract negotiated.

GOAL 3: FACULTY TRAINING

Require faculty training for successful distance education instruction. This goal includes objectives that support the professional development of faculty through a beginning [capstone] training program and ongoing training in distance education instructional technology and andragogy.

3.1. MET Objective: Design and implement DE training certification for instructors currently teaching with a deadline in order to continue teaching. Once all current instructors have been trained, then begin training for instructors interested in teaching online. Instructors successfully completing the training will be compensated by a stipend or hurdle credit.

    3.1.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator

    3.1.b Timeframe: Develop Fall 2015-Spring 2016; Implement Spring-Summer 2016

    3.1.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Hurdle or Stipend for 200 faculty at 6 weeks/ 60 hours total training = $1 million. Consider use of Block Grant money.

3.2. MET Objective: Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible documents for Distance Education faculty. Offer online version for Staff Development flex credit.

    3.2.a Person(s) responsible: Staff Development and DE Coordinator

    3.2.b Timeframe: 2015-Ongoing

    3.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

3.3 MET Objective: Offer annual workshops on the creation and use of accessible images for Distance Education faculty. Offer online version for Staff Development flex credit.

    3.3.a Person(s) responsible: Staff Development and DE Coordinator

    3.3.b Timeframe: 2016 – Ongoing

    3.3.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

3.4 MET Objective: Offer annual workshops on the creation and use of accessible videos for Distance Education Faculty. Offer online version for Staff Development flex credit.

    3.4.a Person(s) responsible: Staff Development and DE Coordinator

3.4.b Timeframe: 2016 – Ongoing

3.4.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

3.5 MET Objective: Offer annual Distance Education webinars about relevant news and information, the use of new tools, and best practices in online teaching techniques with presenters drawn from experienced Distance Education Southwestern College faculty.

3.5.a Person(s) responsible: Staff Development and DE Coordinator

3.5.b Timeframe: 2015 – Ongoing

3.5.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

3.6 MET Objective: Communicate best practices for improvement in distance education success and retention through workshops, training, and dissemination of materials.

3.6.a Person(s) responsible: Staff Development and DE Coordinator

3.6.b Timeframe: 2016 – Ongoing

3.6.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

GOAL 4: LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Continually monitor and revise program requirements to meet state and federal laws and guidelines that apply to distance education in California higher education.

4.1 Objective: Work with campus-wide groups including Disability Support Services (DSS), Student Support Services, Institutional Technology, and Staff Development on an accessibility review process.

4.1.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, ISS Dean, DSS Director

4.1.b Person(s) responsible: Cognizant Administrators, Coordinators, Staff

4.1.c Timeframe: 2016 – Ongoing

4.1.d Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator and Accessibility Specialist position

4.2 MET/ONGOING Objective: Work with the Curriculum Committee to update the regular and substantive contact portion of the Curriculum Handbook and DE Addendum to reflect current federal regulations.

4.2.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, Curriculum chair

4.2.b Timeframe: Fall 2015-Fall 2016

4.2.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

4.3 MET Objective: Develop DE Handbook as an addendum in Curriculum Handbook.

4.3.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, DE Task Force, Curriculum chair

4.3.b Timeframe: Fall 2015

4.3.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

4.4 MET Objective: Adopt Regular Effective Contact policy/procedure that includes Last Date of Attendance with guidelines for instructors.

4.4.a Person(s) responsible: DE Task Force

4.4.b Timeframe: Spring 2015

4.4.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

4.5 MET Objective: Work with Admissions to align attendance policy in the College Catalog and online attendance policy in the DE Handbook.

4.5.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator

4.5.b Timeframe: 2015-2016 (effective 2016-17 catalog)

4.5.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

4.6 MET Objective: Add an ancillary text field to the WebAdvisor (Student Grade) last date of attendance box to document that the instructor has recorded last date of academic attendance.

4.6.a Person(s) responsible: Institutional Technology, Dean, Student Services

4.6.b Timeframe: Spring 2014

4.6.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

GOAL 5: PROGRAM QUALITY

Maintain a quality program through continual program improvement based on the evaluation of instruction, procedures, practices, and accessibility.

5.1 MET Objective: Complete DE Program Review following the college cycle.

5.1.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, DE Faculty, and Instructional Support Services Dean

5.1.b Timeframe: 2016

5.1.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

5.2 MET Objective: Develop a "Best Practices" online training for Distance Education teaching and learning strategies.

5.2.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator

5.2.b Timeframe: 2015 – 2016

5.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

5.3 MET Objective: Determine best CMS for college by examining Canvas and Blackboard Ultra and comparing with our current CMS, Blackboard Learn.

5.3.a Person(s) responsible: Online Instructional Support, DE Coordinator, Online faculty

5.3.b Timeframe: spring/summer 2016

5.3.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

5.4 Objective: Evaluate facilities, staffing, and resources currently used for Distance Education proctoring.

5.4.a Person(s) responsible: Dean, ISS and Learning Assistance Services Coordinator, DE Coordinator

5.4.b Timeframe: 2016-2017

5.4.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Reassigned Time for DE Coordinator

GOAL 6: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

6.1 Objective: Create a review process for data capture for students withdrawing from online and hybrid courses.

6.1.a Person(s) responsible: Dean, ISS, Online Support Services Specialist, and DE Coordinator

6.1.b Timeframe: 2017

6.1.c Additional fiscal resources needed: TBD

6.2 MET Objective: Upgrade Elucian (formerly Colleague) Intelligent Learning Platform.

6.2.a Person(s) responsible: Institutional Technology

6.2.b Timeframe: 2016

6.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Budget allocated