

Distance Education Task Force
Institutional Commitment to Distance Education Recommendations
Presented to Academic Senate and College Council 4/28/11

Background:

Cerro Coso Community College began its current Distance Education program with the establishment of online courses and degrees in 1997/1998. The program was initially developed according to the guidelines that were the precursor to the existing ACCJC Accreditation Standards. The online program was considered innovative and a statewide model, resulting in high level recognition around the country and the awarding of the Chancellor's CVC4 Statewide Rural Region Grant. While the College had offered interactive television (iTV) classes via the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office previously, the widespread addition of iTV and hybrid courses developed with the new buildings on the Bishop and Mammoth campuses in 2005. iTV classrooms were added on the IWW and KRV campuses soon after and course offerings expanded accordingly. In the last few years, the investment, focus and support for Distance Education has eroded. Decisions have been made for growth in online class offerings, program development, and the scheduling of courses without the evaluation of data to support the decisions and follow-up assessment of the effectiveness of these practices. The previous focus on student preparation and support services, faculty preparation, and ongoing classroom support has also eroded with lack of leadership and oversight for the program. This lack of planning, evaluation and support has resulted in instability in the program and has impacted student success and retention. The President appointed the Distance Education Task Force to review these issues and make recommendations for the future of our Distance Education Programs.

The members of the task force:

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After a series of telephone, face to face, and online meetings, the task force examined existing guidelines , reviewed prior and past practices, and created recommendations as they relate to the following categories of concern regarding distance education at Cerro Coso Community College.

- A. Staffing and Organization Structure
- B. Student Preparation and Services
- C. Faculty Preparation and Ongoing Training
- D. Ongoing Course/Classroom Support
- E. Faculty Assignment and Load
- F. Distance Education Committees and Reporting

The backgrounds, referring guidelines, recommendations with timelines and budget implications, rationales, and resources for each of the above concerns follow.

A. Staffing and Organization Structure
Introduction
Due to the fact that approximately 50% of the FTE at Cerro Coso is generated through some form of Distance Education there is a need for both administrative oversight and programmatic and instructional coordination and support. The College has been suffering from a fluctuating lack of oversight and staffing as it relates to Distance Education for some time.
Guiding Principles and/or Requirements
<p>1. Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education: Standard III: Resources A. Human Resources</p> <p>The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the institution advertise specifically for personnel with expertise and experience in DE/CE? d. The institution assures adequacy of technical and physical plant facilities including appropriate staffing and technical assistance, to support its electronically offered programs... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the staffing structure appropriate (and fully qualified) to support the programs now operational and envisioned in the near term?
Recommendation
<p>The Distance Education Task Force recommends the creation and filling of the following <u>additional</u> positions to support Distance Education at Cerro Coso:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dean of Distance Education and Liberal Arts (New)- This would be an administrative position providing enrollment management, oversight, training, accountability, and planning and evaluation for all forms of Distance Education 2. Distance Education Coordinator (New)- This would be a Classified position providing coordination and facilitation of faculty and student support, resources for course and staff development, coordination of practices to improve and sustain academic integrity, and training for all forms of Distance Education <p>Timeline: Fall 2011</p> <p>Budget Implications: Hiring of two new positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Distance Education and Liberal Arts- • Distance Education Coordinator- Classified/Range 47.0 <p>Rationale: This proposed structure will fulfill the identified institutional needs, as well as provide needed coordination, planning and evaluation for the disciplines constituting General Education and the Liberal Arts degree.</p>
Resources
<p>ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Guide-to-Evaluating-Distance-Education.pdf</p> <p>Chancellor's Office- Distance Education Guidelines http://www.lasc.edu/uploads/pdf/DistanceEdcccoGuidelinesMar2004.pdf</p> <p>Higher Learning Commission: Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs</p>

http://www.ncahlc.org/download/Best_Pract_DEd.pdf

Distance Education Coordinator's Online Project

<http://www.deconline.org/Module1/mod1.htm>

B. Student Preparation and Services

Introduction

Lack of student preparation and support negatively impact success and retention rates for classes offered via Distance Education. On average, for Distance Education courses, retention rates are 10% below and success rates are 15% below those of traditional courses. The concept that “Students do not do optional” has been promoted statewide and is observable in the percentages of students who do not complete the matriculation process and for those who test into Basic Skills classes, but choose not to take them. While Student Services has been a focus for Cerro Coso’s Distance Education Program from the beginning, there has been little focus on and evaluation of the consistency and accuracy of information available on our websites. In addition, there has been little evaluation of whether the means and processes for delivery of service at a distance is still effective, efficient, and technologically current. Tutoring has been delivered in a variety of ways for Distance Education Students, including Smarthinking, Student and Teaching Assistants in the classroom, and College sponsored tutors from the LAC. Currently, there is no comprehensive, consistent tutoring support available to Distance Education Students.

Guiding Principles and/or Requirements

ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Standard II Student Learning Programs and Services

B. Student Support Services

The institution recruits and admits students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student Support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

- How does the institution determine that students admitted to its DE/CE programs are able to benefit from these programs? How is this information taken into consideration in admissions policies and procedures?
- How does the institution assure access to appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services such as but not limited to orientation, tutoring and counseling, delivery of materials to students with remote access to information?

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College Structure

Student Services

Clearly recognized in both accreditation guidelines and previous Academic Senate papers is the need to provide a full range of student services for distance education students, in addition to satisfying their obvious instructional needs. The March 2007 *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* identified integrated, comprehensive services as vital to student success in the basic skills areas. This is no less true but perhaps even harder to achieve in the distance education arena. Colleges need to determine how to provide student access to the following services:

- Registration including access to catalog and class schedule information;
- Matriculation components including orientation, assessment, placement and counseling;
- Bookstore;
- Library services;
- Financial aid;
- Supplemental services including tutoring, testing and specialized services such as EOPS (Extended Opportunity programs and Services) and Disabled Student Programs where appropriate.

Notice that the regulations governing delivery of instruction differ from those governing student services or supplemental instruction. A good example of this is that tutoring must be done in a synchronous environment, whereas course content delivery may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Recommendation

The Distance Education Task Force recommends that:

1. The Institutional Researcher should conduct research to assess:
 - the impact of the current course, PDEV C052 Becoming a Successful Online Student, on student success and retention.
 - success and retention rates in ITV and hybrid courses.
 - success and retention rates by course length during the Fall and Spring semesters.
 - success and retention rates in courses conducted primarily or entirely through software, and publisher websites
 - success and retention rates based on student registration date.

Timeline: Completed Summer 2011

Budget Implications: Assigned as regular duties, no additional budget implications.

Rationale: Data needs to be gathered and evaluated to begin to identify where loss points are in our Distance Education Programs that affect success and retention. While this list is not exhaustive, it provides a starting point looking at possible factors influencing success and retention, the effectiveness of current intervention strategies, and baseline data for evaluating additional intervention strategies.

2. A subcommittee of Pedagogy and Technology Committee in collaboration with a counseling representative, develop a **required** modular self-assessment orientation/tool for first time, online students to assess readiness for courses offered via Distance Education.

Timeline: Implemented Spring 2012

Budget Implications: Assigned as regular duties, no additional budget implications.

Rationale: Students need to be able to assess whether distance education is a fit, understand expectations, know in advance about material and technology requirements, and have access to equivalent support to onsite students. In order to be effective, this will have to be a required component of Cerro Coso's Distance Education Program. The learning environment should be one in which the students have the greatest opportunity to be successful.

3. The Vice President of Academic Affairs initiate a process for implementing comprehensive, ongoing, and consistent tutoring support for Distance Education.

Timeline: Completed Summer 2011

Budget Implications: Actual costs are unknown at this time but will require the allocation of additional resources. The amount will depend on the selection of the services of a third party, implementation of an in-house solution or some combination of the two.

Rationale: Tutoring support is just as important, if not more so, to Distance Education Students as it is in onsite students. The lack of a comprehensive, consistent means of providing tutoring to online students would seem to have a direct impact on the success and retention of online students. Accreditation specifically requires that equivalent services be provided to Distance Education Students for this reason.

4. The Counseling Department, Webmaster, and the Student Services Executive Council collaborate on the development of a student support site with specific sections for Distance Education. The site should minimally include the following:

- a means to assess readiness for online courses in the area of academic skills and technical skills
- information on accessing/ordering texts and materials
- information on establishing and using the Cerro Coso email account
- clear and consistent instructions for accessing online and hybrid courses
- suggested tips and strategies for success in courses taken via ITV, hybrid, or online
- instructions on the process for enrolling in the college and registering for courses
- publications, including the college catalog, schedule of courses, and student handbook
- policies and procedures, including the Student Conduct and Student Complaint policies and procedures

- access to all available services, including orientation specific to Distance Education classes, assessment, counseling/advising, financial aid, tutoring, and library.

Timeline: Completed Fall 2011

Budget Implications: Actual costs are unknown at this time, but will require the allocation of additional resources if technologies are identified to improve the delivery of student support services at a distance.

Rationale: While comprehensive Student Services are currently available at a distance, review and centralization of student information and services will improve access to students and make it more likely that students will take advantage of available information and services.

5. The Vice President of Students Services evaluate Board Policy and Procedure that limits implementation of best practices in student preparedness and student support (such as Probation and Disqualification and limits on prerequisites based on lapse of time) and initiate changes in areas where student success could be better supported at the District level.

Timeline: Completed Fall 2012

Budget Implications: Assigned as regular duties, no additional budget implications.

Rationale: Policy should not be a barrier to implementing practices that are likely to improve student success and retention.

6. The Academic Senate initiate a discussion regarding maximum class size for courses offered Distance Education.

Timeline: Completed Fall 2012

Budget Implications: Unknown at this time

Rationale: Review of the guiding documents and best practices for Distance Education clearly draw a connection between the number of students in Distance Education classes and success and retention. The consistent recommendation is that there should be no difference between the class size in traditional classes and Distance Education classes.

Resources

Guidelines:

ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education

<http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Guide-to-Evaluating-Distance-Education.pdf>

Guidelines for Creating Student Services Online

<http://wcet.wi:he.edu/wcet/docs/beyond/overview.pdf>

Community College Models/Resources:

Clark State Community College

https://www.clarkstate.edu/online_learning.php

Cypress College

<http://www.cypresscollege.edu/academics/DistanceEducation>

Houston Community College- SmartMeasure

<http://de.hccs.edu/de/smartermeasure--01>

Rio Hondo

<http://online.riohondo.edu/orientations/oo/index.htm>

San Diego Community College District

<http://www.sdccdonline.net/newstudents.htm>

Yavapai College

<http://www.yc.edu/v4content/information-technology-services/tels/students/default.htm>

Student Preparation:

SmarterServices-measuring online learner readiness

<http://www.smarterservices.com/>

CCRC- Online Learning: Does It Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students?

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=846>

CCRC- Online Learning: Coursetaking Patterns and Performance Among Underprepared Community College Students

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?uid=731>

C. Faculty Preparation and Ongoing Training

Introduction

Limited support for Distance Education, in general, and faculty training, specifically, have been a recent and real problem for the College. Faculty are often assigned Distance Education classes with little or no training or understanding of successful instruction in that environment. Faculty are not provided with an orientation of the expectations or a process for review and feedback on effective course implementation.

Guiding Principles and/or Requirements

Title V

5207. Course Quality Standards. (adopted July 2002 - replaces 55372)

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to DE as are applied to traditional classroom courses, in regard to the course quality judgments made pursuant to the requirements of section 55009 of this part, and in regard to any local course quality determination or review process.

55209. Course Quality Determinations. (adopted July 2002 - replaces 55374)

Determinations and judgments about the quality of Distance Education under the course quality standards referred to in section 55207, shall be made with the full involvement of faculty in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 2 (commencing with section 53200) of chapter 2 of division 4 of this part.

55211. Instructor Contact. (adopted July 2002 - replaces 55)

In addition to the requirements of section 55009 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district-governing boards shall ensure that:

(a) All approved courses offered as distance education include 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, e-mail, or other activities.

55213. Separate Course Approval. (adopted July 2002 - replaces 55378) Each proposed or existing course, if delivered by distance education, shall be separately reviewed and approved according to the district's certified course approval procedures.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 70901 and 66700, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education:

Standard II

A. Instructional Programs

The institution offer high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with its mission. Instructional programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improved teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes...

1. The institution demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location of means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and upholds its integrity.

Standard III

A. The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs...by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness...Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development...Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

5. The institution provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on identified teaching and learning needs.

6. How does the institution determined the professional development needs if its personnel involved in DE/CE?

7. What development programs on teaching methodologies in distance education does the institution provide?
8. What impact do professional development activities related to DE/CE have on the improvement of teaching and learning? How does the institution evaluate that improvement.

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A Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee is required at every college, and ensures the quality of curriculum by providing a venue for the review of course outlines, programs, and distance education offerings. As noted above, colleges must have a process by which courses to be offered via distance education, whether new or existing, undergo a separate review focusing on features unique to the use of technology. This review must verify adherence to the course outline of record and state mandates concerning regular effective instructor-student contact. In addition, the separate review should address provision of student support services, such as technical support, access to library resources, and accommodations for students with disabilities.

Effective Practices for Hiring, Training, and Supporting Faculty New to Distance Education

As mentioned above, state mandated minimum qualifications for faculty hiring are based upon academic degrees and/or occupational experience and do not generally include technology skills. While it is possible to include technology skills by raising local minimums, this raises interesting questions of uniformity and equity and is a non-trivial change in college hiring policies. This makes the hiring of pre-trained individuals something of a challenge. It is, however, possible to specify technology skills as a desired qualification in individual position announcements. A perhaps better route is the provision of suitable professional development after a discipline expert is hired. This is, of course, more difficult to achieve for the large number of part-time faculty used at most colleges. So possible strategies include:

- Consider possible use of board approved local minimum qualifications;
- Consider use of “desired qualifications” for specific new hires;
- Use specialized professional development opportunities and system projects, such as @ONE and California Virtual College (CVC);
- Develop internal training and development activities related to using educational technology;
- Use sabbatical leaves and other step/column advancement to encourage acquisition of new skills.

Effective Practices for Support of Faculty and Students in Courses Using Technology

The result of the coordinated college discussion and planning described above should be an environment that systematically provides the institutional support that faculty and students need to succeed in their use of technology. Some effective practices are described here:

- Instructional design support should be available for course development;
- Technical assistance should be readily available for faculty who wish to develop courses or maintain websites;
- Ongoing faculty training opportunities for pedagogy, course management systems and development software should be available;
- Institutional technology standards should include adequate technical staff, scalable infrastructure, and email for students and faculty;
- Faculty should have access to current computer technology and high speed Internet access;
- Development software should be available to faculty who are able to create media content for courses.

Recommendation

The Distance Education Task Force recommends that:

1. The Pedagogy and Technology Committee develop “Guidelines for Effective Practices in Distance

Education” to minimally include the following:

- all forms of Distance Education; ITV, hybrid, and online
- effective student contact
- practices to promote academic integrity and address student authentication
- faculty preparation
- effective use of instructional technology
- minimum course requirements
- ADA compliance

Timeline: Spring 2012

Budget Implications: Assigned as regular duties, no additional budget implications.

Rationale: Faculty teaching via Distance Education need to have clearly communicated expectations, guidelines, and effective practices. This needs to be defined to develop a common language and understanding of what a faculty member is agreeing to when committing to teach a class offered via Distance Education. These minimum standards will benefit both faculty and students.

2. The College provide resources to revise the Online Faculty Training curriculum to be offered as training modules, either in-house or through Contract and Community Education.

Timeline: Fall 2011

Budget Implications: Actual costs are unknown at this time, but will require the allocation of additional resources depending on need to contract the services of a third party, implement an in-house solution or some combination of the two.

Rationale: The need for faculty training and preparation for teaching via Distance Education is a well-documented best practice and has long-been a focus for Cerro Coso. While the format for delivery will have to change, the need for offering the training for our faculty has not.

3. The College provide resources to support faculty in developing high-quality, interactive, content rich courses by providing ongoing training, professional development, and ongoing assessment of emerging technologies to enhance courses offered via Distance Education.

Timeline: Fall 2011

Budget Implications: Actual costs are unknown at this time, but will require the allocation of additional resources

Rationale: On-going faculty training and support are essential to offering high-quality courses that are engaging for students and instructors. This should increase student involvement, retention, success, and effective contact between instructors and students.

4. CIC develop a process for reviewing individual course sections that are offered, or proposed to be offered, via Distance Education delivery. The review should give CIC an opportunity to determine how the course content, student contact, and student learning outcomes are adequately presented in the online environment and equivalent to the course offered in traditional delivery.

Timeline: Spring 2012

Budget Implications: Unknown at this time

Rationale: Currently, the process requires the completion of a Distance Education Addendum form. This process, however, does not account for widely differing approaches to teaching courses via Distance Education from instructor to instructor. A review of individual sections to be offered would allow an opportunity to confirm the sufficiency of each section, review strategies for delivering instruction, and allow for a discussion of how the Student Learning Outcomes will be achieved. This practice is consistent with the approach taken at many other California Community Colleges.

Resources

Title 5 Regulations on Distance Education:

http://www.ccccurriculum.info/Curriculum/RegulationsGuidelines/Regulations_DistanceEd.htm#55207

ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education

<http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Guide-to-Evaluating-Distance-Education.pdf>

Quality Matters Program:

Quality Matters created a set of forty specific elements, distributed across eight broad standards, by which to evaluate the design of online and hybrid courses. The web-based, fully interactive rubric is complete with annotations that explain the application of the standards and relationship between them.

<http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric>

Effective Student Contact

Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges

[Guidelines for Good Practice: Effective Instructor-Student Contact in Distance Learning](#)

Mt. San Jacinto

<http://www.lasc.edu/uploads/doc/DistEd,MSJC,Contact.doc>

Solano Community College

<http://www.lasc.edu/uploads/doc/DistEd,SCCContact.doc>

Practices to Promote Academic Integrity and Address Student Authentication

Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education

<http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/cigs/studentauthentication/BestPractices.pdf>

Student Authentication

<http://wcet.wiche.edu/learn/student-authentication>

Are Your Online Students Really the Ones Registered for the Course?

Student Authentication Requirements for Distance Education Providers

http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/publications/Briefing_Paper_Feb_2008.pdf

Training/

@One Trainers Bureau

<http://www.onefortraining.org/bureau/index.php>

Palomar College:

Validation of Preparedness to Teach Online:

http://www.palomar.edu/accreditation/FollowUpReportEvidence/Validation_Preparedness_to_Teach_Online.pdf

Northern Arizona University- Quality Checklists

Teaching Checklist

http://www.nau.edu/~d-elearn/support/tutorials/quality_checklist/quality_checklist.php

Technical Checklist

http://www.nau.edu/~d-elearn/support/course_support/technical_checklist.php

An insider's guide to teaching and learning in the online classroom

10 Principles of Effective Online Teaching:

Best Practices in Distance Education

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/principles-of-effective-online-teaching-best-practices-in-distance-education/>

San Jose City College- Faculty Resources on Moodle

<http://www.sjcc.edu/OnlineLearning/Moodle/MoodleRes-Faculty.html>

Accessibility/Universal Design

Distance Education, Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

http://htctu.net/publications/guidelines/distance_ed/disted.htm

Accommodations and Universal Design

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Faculty/Strategies/>

Universal Design of Instruction

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Faculty/Strategies/Universal/>

The World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative resources

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

Web Site Compliance Solutions (replacement for BOBBY)

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/rational/offerings/websecurity/webcompliance.html>

D. Ongoing Course/Classroom Support

Introduction

During its history of offering distance education courses, the College has implemented various ancillary support programs to assist in the day to day operation of the courses. This has included proctoring, third-party tutoring, teaching assistants, third party plagiarism checking sites, and design compliance. Proctoring became too cumbersome for instructors and was abandoned. Third-party tutoring became too expensive and College implementations have not been used well. Student assistants were used in online courses for a while but abandoned for various reasons and while teaching assistants are available for some iTV courses, there is need for more. The College still subscribes to a third-party plagiarism checking program (TurnItIn) but it is felt that it could be used more effectively. The design compliance position was grant funded and no longer exists. There are questions about the academic integrity of courses without this type of support. In addition, questions were raised about class sizes, library resources for Distance Education students, and faculty awareness of new features in the Moodle course management system.

Guiding Principles and/or Requirements

1. WCET: Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education

Assessment and Evaluation:

14. Use proctored test sites where appropriate.

2. ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

The Institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services and Library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated learning outcomes.

A. Instructional Programs

7. In order to assure the academic integrity of the teaching-learning process, the institution uses and makes public governing board-adopted policies on academic freedom and responsibility, student academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs and worldviews.

- What mechanisms for verification of students enrolled in DE/CE programs does the institution have? Do these mechanisms include a secure login and password and/or proctored exams and/or other effective technologies and practices for verifying student identity?

B. Student Support Services

a. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method.

- How does the institution assure access to appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services, such as but not limited to orientation, tutoring and counseling...

C. Library and Learning Support Services

1. The institution supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing library and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery.

Standard III. Resources.

Title V

55208. Faculty Selection and Workload

(b) The number of students assigned to any one course section offered by distance education shall be determined by and be consistent with other district procedures related to faculty assignment. Procedures for determining the number of students assigned to a course section offered in whole or in part by distance education may include a review by the curriculum committee established pursuant to section 55002(a)(1).

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impinge upon or detract from any negotiations or negotiated

agreements between exclusive representatives and district governing boards.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code.
Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

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Notice also, that while not mandated, it is specifically authorized by Title 5 §55208 that the Curriculum Committee may consider the issue of class size in distance education sections. This number is often set by either administration or by collective bargaining without sufficient consideration of the distance education learning environment. Class size clearly has a significant impact on the likely success of student-instructor interactions, as suggested in one of the Department of Education red flags mentioned previously. And research has consistently shown the relationship of class size to success in distance learning². It is important for local academic senates and the Curriculum Committee to lead this conversation.

Recommendation

The Distance Education Task Force recommends that:

1. The Distance Education program staff implement a proctoring support program for online courses. This would include classified position support and exploration into existing proctoring programs at other institutions. In addition, based on the exploration, a computer software program may need to be purchased and implemented.
Timeline: Spring 2012
Budget Implications: This would fall under duties of the recommended Distance Education Coordinator. Cost of software is unknown at this time.
Rationale: The members of the Task Force feel that the use of proctoring for many programs would increase the academic integrity of the Distance Education program and more closely reflect what happens in face to face courses.
2. The Distance Education program staff makes an extensive tutoring program available to all distance education students. This could be done via a third-party vendor such as SmartThinking or developed in-house. The Tutoring program should be integrated into the existing course management system.
Timeline: Spring 2012
Budget Implications: Unknown at this time
Rationale: The members of the Task Force feel that the use of tutoring would help increase the success and retention rates for students in Distance Education courses.
3. The College continues to subscribe to TurnItIn and that the Distance Education program staff investigate ways to integrate it into the existing course management system.
Timeline: As soon as possible
Budget Implications: Increased use of TurnItIn could raise the yearly subscription rate.
Rationale: It is widely felt that plagiarism is on the rise. The members of the Task Force feel that the more widespread use of TurnItIn would increase the academic integrity of courses across the College – those offered via distance education and face to face.
4. The College expands the availability of Teaching Assistants to ensure that they are able to be in all iTV classrooms.
Timeline: Fall 2011
Budget Implications: Additional classified TA hours are needed.
Rationale: Instructors that teach via iTV need technical and classroom support at all sites that have students. Equipment needs to be monitored and problems need to be fixed. Handouts need to be

printed and distributed. Tests need to be distributed, proctored, and collected.

5. The LRC staff continue to look at ways to increase availability and awareness of services to Distance Education students.
Timeline: Fall 2011
Budget Implications: Assigned as regular duties, no additional budget implications.
Rationale: Students in Distance Education courses need access to LRC materials in order to be successful. Materials and services must be available to Distance Education students to sustain the academic integrity of the courses.

6. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Faculty Chairs reduce the size of the typical online course from 45 to 40.
Timeline: Spring 2012
Budget Implications: Not known at this time
Rationale: Increased class size reduces the meaningful interaction between instructor and students and students and students. This can create dissatisfaction for students which, in turn, can impact student retention and success rates.

7. The Distance Education program staff develop and implement a method of informing faculty of available features in Moodle and provide training in the use of those features.
Timeline: Fall 2011
Budget Implications: Not known at this time.
Rationale: Faculty cannot implement new methods of increasing student learning and academic integrity in their courses if they are not aware of new features in the course management system.

Resources

WCET: Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education

http://www.wiche.edu/attachment_library/Student_Authentication/BestPractices.pdf

ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education

[http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Guide-to-Evaluating-Distance- Education.pdf](http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Guide-to-Evaluating-Distance-Education.pdf)

Tutoring Online: Increasing Effectiveness With Best Practices

<http://lacmsig.pbworks.com/f/tutoring%20online.pdf>

SMARTHINKING

<http://smarthinking.com/>

Ask Online- tutoring platform

<http://www.askonline.net/>

San Bernardino Valley College-Online Writing Center

http://www.valleycollege.edu/Online_College/online_writing_center_tutoring.php

Southwest College- Academic Success Center

http://www.swccd.edu/~asc/wphomepage_3_contents.html

E. Faculty Assignment and Load

Introduction

The assignment of 100% online had previously taken place without evaluation of how this load best meets the needs of the institution, students and a program. The recent response to this was to implement a policy prohibiting the assignment of a 100% online load to any faculty member. While the first approach has led to barriers created in best serving the needs of students, the program and the institution; the second approach does not allow for consideration of specific circumstances under which a 100% online load may make sense and be effective.

Guiding Principles and/or Requirements

State Academic Senate Paper: Ensuring the Appropriate Use of Educational Technology: An Update for Local Academic Senates

Workload Issues

There are many questions that are probably ultimately resolved in a collective bargaining contract as a workload issue, but where wider consultation with the academic senate or college community would be useful. The answers significantly affect both the educational experience of students and other functions of the college, such as departmental activities and governance. Just as class size has a significant effect on the quality and success of the mandated effective instructor-student contact, so can the teaching load of the faculty member. The academic senate should be involved in such conversations to ensure that distance education classes are only treated differently from on-campus classes if there is good educational justification. *In addition, reduced on-campus availability of faculty who teach distance education sections impacts their ability to participate in traditional collegial meetings and set the decision-making climate of their institution.*

Recommendation

The Distance Education Task Force recommends that 100% online load not be assigned to faculty as a general rule. However, the Task Force recommends that a set of criteria be developed and a process made available for a faculty member to request a 100% online load based on a defined set of criteria. The criteria may include:

- a description of how the assignment of 100% online load best meets the need of students, the program, and the institution
- a plan for how the faculty member will fulfill the contractual obligation to participate in the College community.

The Task Force further recommends that, should the criteria above be considered to be successfully met, the request for the assignment of a 100% online load will require the Faculty Chair's assessment indicating the recommendation on whether or not the request should be approved, with explanation attached, for the VPAA to consider in decisions on assignment of load. The request will then move forward to the President for final approval.

Finally, the Task Force recommends that the assignment of 100% online load only be approved for one semester. The request would need to be reviewed and approved for each subsequent semester in recognition of the changing needs of programs, students, and the institution.

The Task Force recognizes that circumstances may arise in which a faculty member may need to be assigned a 100% online load based on class cancellations.

Timeline: Fall 2011

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: This approach will require careful consideration and evaluation before a 100% online load is assigned, but will also allow for the flexibility to consider a proposal that demonstrates that the assignment of 100% online load will best meets the need of students, the program and the institution.

Resources
Ensuring the Appropriate Use of Educational Technology: An Update for Local Academic Senates http://www.asccc.org/node/175019

F. Distance Education Committees and Reporting

Introduction

Several committees and task forces have been created and charged with aspects of Distance Education. These committees and task forces have reported to several different groups and committees. There has been an overall lack of cohesiveness in structure, commitment, participation, and consistency.

Guiding Principles and/or Requirements

ACCJC: Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs:

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

1. Institutional leaders create an environment of empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning and implementation.
2.
 - a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relates to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.
3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.
 - Do the written policies of governance procedures specify appropriate roles for all staff and students, including students enrolled in DE/CE? How can these roles be practically performed?

Recommendation

The Distance Education Task Force recommends that the President implement a participatory governance Distance Education Committee with the following recommended composition:

- Vice President of Academic Affairs- Co-Chair
- Faculty member- Co-chair
- Dean of Distance Education and Liberal Arts
- IT Manager or designated IT staff member
- 2 Faculty members (One a counselor)
- 2 Classified staff
- 1 Student representative

Budget Implications: None

Timeline: Fall 2011

Rationale: Distance Education has suffered from turn-over in administration and lack of leadership. A

Participatory Governance Distance Education Committee would allow for ongoing and consistent oversight and support of Distance Education across the College. It is the opinion of the members of the Task Force that this is an essential component of the Distance Education program at Cerro Coso.

Resources

Shasta College- Distance Education Committee

<http://www.shastacollege.edu/cms.aspx?id=2600>

Fullerton College- Distance Education Advisory Committee

<http://pac.fullcoll.edu/FC%20governance.htm>

San Mateo County Community District- Distance Education Advisory Committee

<http://www.smccd.edu/edservplan/deac/default.shtml>