DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

March 2010

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DISTANCE EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The first Distance Education (DE) courses began prior to the spring quarter, 2006 at Lake Tahoe Community College. The motivation of establishing a DE program grew out of an attempt to provide “access” to students who could not attend the traditional face-to-face courses at our college.

From that date forward, the DE program continued to grow and experience success in terms of student enrollments and it provided the type of flexibility our students desired to address their busy lives and their desire to continue with their educational pursuits.

Today, LTCC offers a selection of courses from several different disciplines online to meet student demand. This strategic plan is written in order to provide a snap-shot of where our program is at this moment and what strategic plans and recommendations need to be made to enhance the DE program at LTCC. It is also written to underscore LTCC’s commitment to financial and technical support that allows the DE program at LTCC to continue with substantial support.

The Distance Education Committee was formed in fall 2009 to write the first Distance Education Program Review. Committee members included:

- Nancy Barclay, Distance Education Coordinator
- Dave Burba, Technology Specialist
- Sandi Jorgensen, Assistant to the Dean of Instruction
- Tracy Thomas, Interim Dean of Student Services
- Treva Thomas, Director of the Tutoring Learning Center
- Esta Lewin, Counselor
- Aaron McVean, Institutional Researcher
- Cheri Jones, Director of Admissions and Records
- Susan Middleton, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs & Student Services
- Diane Rosner, Dean of Instruction

The committee looked at the current support structure in place for the Distance Education program. In addition, the committee reviewed areas that are in need of additional support with the goal of providing a wide range of services to our Distance Education students.

Final Recommendations

After thorough review of the DE program at LTCC, several recommendations are offered to continue to move towards excellence with DE course offerings. These recommendations will also assist LTCC in providing integrated planning for the fiscal, technical and human resources needed to deliver DE courses. In addition, LTCC can use these recommendations as a guideline to provide ongoing and continuous evaluation that will lead to improvement of our DE program. These recommendations follow.
Strategic Goals Based on Recommendations in DE Program Review

The goals listed below will become the “action plan” of the Distance Education Committee, once this Program Review is adopted and approved by the shared-governance bodies of LTCC. The timeline for implementation will be a 3 year period.

A. Student Support

**GOAL #A1:** Develop a comprehensive online tutoring program that offers online tutoring in all disciplines offered face-to-face. This could include possible resources like live chats through ETUDES, and online whiteboards for tutor/student interaction.

**GOAL #A2:** Develop a web portal for access by DE students to receive comprehensive student support services, assessment, financial aid, online student orientations, counseling, and library resources.

**GOAL #A3:** Develop a quarterly review process that assesses the level of technical support for online students. Analyze the collected findings from live or online student helpdesk “tickets” to streamline the process for students.

**GOAL #A4:** Develop a new online campus-like climate to support students and provide opportunities for them to feel part of the campus community.

**GOAL #A5:** Develop a procedure to improve retention of DE students. For example: electronic communication for “Early Alert” emails, and automated “SARS” (Student Automated Retention System) telephone calls.

B. Faculty Support

**GOAL #B1:** Provide programs, services, and the necessary additional technical support staff to assist faculty in the development, design, evaluation, and on-going maintenance of new and existing quality distance learning courses. This could include funding for faculty “mentors” to assist the current part-time Distance Education Coordinator.

**GOAL #B2:** Develop and implement a long-range plan for distance learning staffing and resource requirements.

**GOAL #B3:** Hire one full-time coordinator/director, to assist faculty in the development, design and on-going maintenance of distance learning courses. This new position could also identify new niche markets for online program development opportunities.

**GOAL #B4:** Establish methods to aid faculty in continuous evaluation of distance learning courses and programs to improve student performance and retention.

**GOAL #B5:** Identify resources for the establishment of continual funding to support faculty development for online faculty to enhance the interactive nature of their courses, building of community, and improve student retention. This could include funding for Webinars, Online Seminars and the annual Etudes Summit.

**GOAL #B6:** Identify, develop and promote models of best practice.

**GOAL #B7:** Conduct staff development seminars to highlight the quality distance learning courses developed by our LTCC faculty; highlight course components that are innovative and show exceptional academic rigor and pioneering techniques.
C. **Institutional Support**

**GOAL #C1: Admissions and Records:** With the support of the new ERP, implement the automated processes listed in the DE Program Review to provide DE students with the forms and waivers necessary to transact their business online.

**GOAL #C2: Budget Review Process:** Identify budgetary resources to support the infrastructure for the DE program. Evaluate the institutional commitment to support said infrastructure.

**GOAL #C3: Academic Senate:** Develop evidence of institutional effectiveness that will require LTCC to apply SLOs and Assessment strategies to all distance education courses.

**GOAL #C4: Institutional Researcher:** Develop a mechanism to systematically compare traditional face-to-face Assessments with those of DE courses.

**GOAL #C5: VP of Instruction:** Create an official portion of the College Catalog that documents and clearly explains the college’s DE program.

**GOAL #C6:** Hire a part-time Director of Distance Education in 2010/2011, who oversees and manages the DE program.

D. **Staff Support**

**GOAL #D1: Support Staff:** Hire adequate support staff specifically assigned to the Distance Education Program to provide help desk services and to interact regularly with online students in an effort to promote student engagement and retention.

**GOAL #D2: Computer Staff:** Provide adequate staffing in Computer Services to manage the technical aspects of supporting online students (e.g., data uploads).

**GOAL #D3: Training:** Provide regular comprehensive training and professional development to staff of the Distance Education Program in order to increase knowledge, improve services, and maintain technical proficiency.

**GOAL #D4: General Training:** Provide general training as needed to staff indirectly involved with the program to ensure a basic level of understanding of systems and offerings. The objective of this goal is to allow the staff of Admissions & Records, Student Services, Instruction Office, and instructional departments to provide general assistance and referral to the Distance Education Program staff.

**GOAL #D5: Best Practice:** Identify, develop, and promote models of best practice.

**GOAL #D6: Long Range Plan:** Develop a long-range plan for future staffing by identifying the FTES and/or enrollment breakpoints at which staffing needs to be adjusted. Because staffing changes are not automatically triggered by increases or decreases in course sections (which automatically causes the number of instructional faculty to be adjusted), the planning process is intended to promote adequate staffing levels and ensure that students receive exemplary support.
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Distance Education Program Review

1. Overview/Introduction
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From that date forward, the DE program continued to grow and experience success in terms of student enrollments and it provided the type of flexibility our students desired to address their busy lives and their desire to continue with their educational pursuits.

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2. Definitions
Lake Tahoe Community College has adopted a definition of Distance Education which is consistent with the AACJC and the California Community College’s Chancellor’s Office definition. That definition is 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 this chapter 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 Disability Act (42 U.S.C. Section 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. Section 794d).*

**NOTE:** Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code; Title 29 United States Code Section 795d, and Title 42 United States Code Section 12100 et seq.
3. **Members of the Strategic Planning Team**
   In an attempt to honor the Shared Governance structure at Lake Tahoe Community College, the members of the Distance Education Strategic Planning represent a wide range of participants to ensure that all aspects of the DE Strategic Plan are addressed. These members presently include:
   - Nancy Barclay, Distance Education Instructional Support Coordinator (Instructional faculty)
   - Dave Burba, Computer Services Support
   - Cheri Jones, Director of Admissions and Records
   - Treva Thomas, Tutoring and Learning Center Director (Instructional faculty)
   - Tracy Thomas, Interim Dean of Student Services
   - Esta Lewin, Student Services Counselor
   - Susan Middleton, Interim Vice-President of Academic Affairs & Student Services
   - Diane Rosner, Dean of Instruction
   - Sandi Jorgensen, Assistant to the Dean of Instruction
   - Renee Pegues, Assistant to the Dean of Instruction

   The following individuals participate in monthly meetings to address areas of concern and provide recommendations to the DE program at LTCC.

4. **Educational Policies regarding DE**
   The educational policies of LTCC regarding the DE course offerings are to contain the same rigor and breadth stated in the face-to-face course outline of record that have been approved by the LTCC Curriculum Committee. In addition, the same Title V requirements are applied to DE courses. Academic Standards for online courses are the same as for all other face-to-face courses. In addition, the same academic freedom is awarded to all faculty either teaching online or in the traditional face to face mode.

   A separate approval process is required for all courses offered by DE. This includes the following procedures:
   - Faculty members interested in offering an existing course online must first speak with the Department Chair of the area and the Dean of Instruction.
   - Faculty are required to complete the Distance Education form that is eventually approved by the Curriculum Committee.
   - Prior to the Curriculum Committee reviewing the DE form, the faculty are required to meet with the Disability Resource Specialist to ensure that the course meets all Disability Resource requirements. The LTCC Disability Resource Center is aligned with the Chancellor’s Office Regulations and Guidelines on Distance Education Guidelines dated 2008.
   - Faculty are required to participate in the online training prior to being able to teach online. This applies to Etudes only. (See Section 5, Faculty Training).
   - All DE addendum forms are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee every 6 years as course outlines of record come up for their cycle of Title V review.
5. **Faculty Training**
Faculty wishing to teach online are required to enroll in a mandatory online training offered by ETUDES, LTCC’s Course Management System (CMS) provider. This training introduces faculty to the different components contained in the ETUDES CMS. This training must be successfully completed prior to an instructor actually teaching a course online. LTCC will reimburse instructors upon successful completion of the training course.

ONGOING training is also provided by the Distance Education Coordinator. These trainings have been in the following manner:
- Face-to-face in-house trainings
- Online trainings
- Webinars
- Etudes Conferences (May 2009 in LA, May 2010, San Francisco)

The continual challenge for our small college is budget. Although a firm commitment has been made to support faculty trainings in regards to DE, the funding can remain a challenge.

Faculty who teach online are evaluated by a trained instructor. These evaluations follow the current face-to-face procedures contained in the Faculty contract. Student evaluations are also part of the evaluation process and contribute to the continual feedback that our online instructors receive.

Intellectual Property Rights policies and procedures are contained in the current Faculty negotiated contract and provide clear information regarding this topic.

6. **Faculty Support**
For the past two years, LTCC has supported the online faculty with a part-time Coordinator. This Coordinator is charged with the following responsibilities as the part-time position allows:

- **Faculty Support**
  - Handbook/orientation
  - Provide guidance
  - Field questions from potential online instructors and current online instructors
  - Establish user group
  - Provide trainings (e.g., John Reid and his streaming video; orientation to Etudes; what it’s like to teach online)
Liaison with Vivian Sinou and Etudes
Liaison with Help Desk Function
Enhance our distance learning websites
Become knowledgeable in online teaching best practices and regularly disseminate ideas to faculty
Teach/arrange/organize Etudes workshops
Develop expertise in ETUDES course management system.
Develop a structure for new online faculty: training, implementing development sites, launching new sites.
Orientation of new online faculty to the entire process for developing and launching a class online in an ETUDES platform.
Serve as a resource for all online faculty in terms of emerging technology, pedagogical considerations in teaching in an online environment, best practices, retention strategies, and related areas. Regularly disseminate such information. Support should be oriented to (1) faculty considering teaching online; (2) faculty new to teaching online; and (3) veteran online faculty.
Provide instruction design support to assist online faculty. Field questions from online faculty.
Serve as the liaison with ETUDES and Computer Services.
Conduct frequent communication with online faculty (e.g., emails).
Work with A & R, Instruction Office, and Computer Services to facilitate communication with online faculty and ensure online faculty email distribution list is accurately maintained.
Enhance and provide oversight of online course pages on website and update as needed.
Provide pedagogical support to faculty for ETUDES course development.
Each quarter, conduct introductory workshops for students new to online learning.
Evaluate and refine “Student Readiness” self-assessment for students to take (off the Online Courses page). Create a means to reach out to potential online learners in terms of making them aware of what it takes to be a successful online student.
Liaison with other departments to address support needs for online students (e.g., ordering of textbooks online).

- Develop a "how to" handbook for faculty seeking to teach online and/or create a web presence for faculty to explore online teaching (include assessing if teaching online is right for me; steps to get ready to teach online; resources for support; best practices; FAQs).

- Conduct at least one faculty training per quarter in emerging online strategies, good practices in teaching online, exploring online teaching for potential online teachers, and other issues related to online teaching and learning.

- Other duties as assigned.

Additionally, the LTCC faculty have access to the ETUDES "User Group" after their initial trainings. This "User's Group" provide assistance to online faculty by the ETUDES trainers and also allow online faculty to connect with other faculty around the state of California who use the ETUDES platform.
7. **Student Training prior to taking a class online**
LTCC offers its students website information regarding their readiness to take an online course. In addition, a minimum of two face-to-face online workshops are conducted each quarter so students are more familiar with the Etudes platform and the online environment.

It is felt that more could be done to assist the students in this area. Please see the Final Recommendations section of this report.

8. **General Student Support**
LTCC is committed to providing student support and counseling services to students to ensure their success with the online platform and success in achieving their educational goals. DE courses are structured to permit completion of Student Learning Outcomes and objectives in the same manner that traditional courses do. With that in mind, LTCC has provided the following in terms of student support services related to the DE courses:

- LTCC has purchased a 24/7 Helpdesk feature of ETUDES. This allows our students to be able to receive assistance 24/7.
- LTCC’s Computer Services department is actively involved in trouble-shooting any issues that arise.
- The Instruction Office at LTCC serves as the point of contact for students who may be experiencing issues regarding their online course during the beginning of the quarter.
- The DE Coordinator is also informed of student issues, as is the Director of Computer Services and the Etudes CEO.
- Faculty hold online office hours to meet the needs of their online students.
- Adjunct faculty are encouraged to apply for online office hours to meet the needs of their students.
- LTCC ensures the protection of student privacy.

Admissions & Records has recognized the need to improve access to services for online students. During winter 2004, the campus piloted online registration. After a successful test of the online registration system, WebReg was launched for all students in spring 2004. Using this system, students could register for courses, drop courses until the drop with no record deadline, and pay fees via the Internet. A home-grown online admission application was also implemented to provide a mechanism for admission and application updates. The registration system was supplemented by the existing online schedule of courses. A student ID lookup form was created to allow secure, self-service retrieval of student ID numbers.
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During summer 2006, new Admissions & Records content was developed in conjunction with a redesign of the LTCC Web site. The new Web site pages included detailed information on a variety of topics such as registration, residency, add/drop procedures, fees, forms, grades, and transcripts. The college catalog was also posted online on the new site. In May 2008, the CCCApply online admission application (common application of the California Community College system) was implemented to improve access and reduce issues associated with the home-grown application. In the fall of 2008, the online registration system was upgraded to allow students to declare the pass/no pass grading option online.

While online students outside the Tahoe area may use the forms available on the Website to conduct business by fax (or by e-mail with scanned signed documents), this process is cumbersome and needs to be improved. In 2008, the college was awarded a Title III grant which provided funding for the implementation of an ERP system. With the capabilities of this new system, the Admissions & Records Office hopes to automate the following processes in the future:

- Withdrawal (drop with a W notation)
- Late registration with instructor permission
- Late refund/drop/withdrawal petitions
- Incomplete grade forms (electronic process for student-instructor interaction to agree on condition of incomplete)
- Schedule conflict waivers
- Self-service change of basic demographic information which does not affect residency (e.g., e-mail address)
- Transcript/Enrollment verification requests
- Other petition processes are also being reviewed in conjunction with Student Services and the Instruction Office with the goal of potential automation.

9. **Student Support: Counseling & Student Services Support**

There are several services that are provided to our online students. They include the following:

- BOG application online
- FAFSA application online
- Registration services online
- Access to counselors online
- Online student orientation through eTudes
- Access to forms via A & R and Student Services
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- Online technical support through ETUDES Student Help Desk and the Instruction Office
- Online catalog
- Online schedule
- Online office hours with online faculty
- Online Library services including online resources available to students
- Online bookstore services
- Online unofficial transcripts
- Online grades
- Online employment listings
- Online internship listings

LTCC is currently working on providing additional services to online students. Please see the "Final Recommendations" section of this report for specifics.

10. **Disability Access**
Ensuring that our DE courses (including all materials and resources) are accessible to students with disabilities is a shared institutional responsibility and taken very seriously at LTCC. The online faculty go through a rigorous process and work with the Disability Resource Center staff to ensure that their course content is explained thoroughly to the DRC specialist and that appropriate accommodations are made if a DRC student needs assistance. LTCC is in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and provides accessibility for persons with disabilities with reference to our online DE courses. LTCC follows the Chancellor’s office “General Principles” in ensuring that DE courses are accessible to students with disabilities. (Please see Appendix “A” – Distance Education Guidelines, Chancellor’s Office, California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs Division)

11. **Library Support of Distance Education**
The LTCC library supports distance learners in a number of ways:
- Hands-on, customized support, training, and instruction in accessing and completing courses
- Course reserves offered in print and online formats, linked directly through our online catalog
- Electronic resources, such as e-books and subscription databases, in all subject areas
- Toll-free phone reference service offered via the CCC Confer “LTCC Library Meeting Room” which is available anytime the library is open
- Online research tutorials available 24/7 from the library web site
- Electronic style guides for MLA, APA and other citation formats
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- Email reference for Inter-Library Loans and other library services
- Online plagiarism prevention resources

The LTCC library supports DE instructors in a number of ways:
- Course reserve dual-format textbook set up and liaison with bookstore
- Research and ‘extra credit’ assignments expertise
- Assistance locating curriculum content in multi-media formats
- E-reference for Inter-Library Loans and other library services
- Materials purchasing services at faculty request
- Online plagiarism prevention resources, including Turnitin.com class set up and on-demand originality reports

All full-time library staff are ETUDES certified, and trained in using CCC Confer to provide hands-on research tutorials to individuals or groups via toll-free conference calls. In 2010 the library plans to develop its own online multi-media tutorials, using screen capture software, which will be available 24/7 from the library web site.

12. Authenticate Student Participation
Several assurances take place to ensure that the student who registers in a DE course is the same student who participates in and completes the course. This includes providing the majority of our DE courses with ETUDES, a secure CMS that requires the student to “log-in” with a student ID number and an additional password. Only registered students are eligible to receive these log-in privileges.

LTCC ensures the protection of student privacy and will notify students at the time of class registration of any charges associated with verification of student identity.

LTCC has two additional CMS that are currently being used in DE courses. These are:
1) Moodle:
   - This CMS site is secure.
   - Students are required to login and have a password to participate.
   - Students must show a valid ID in order to take the face-to-face exams.
2) Yahoo Groups: Scott Lukas’s course management system uses Gradesource and this assigns each student a unique code that they have to use. As well, they log into Turnitin.com and Google Groups, thus providing redundancy in terms of verifying their identities.
13. **FTES Calculations**

FTES is calculated in compliance with Title 5 regulations. Prior to regulatory changes which became effective in June 2008, there was a significant difference in the potential FTES generated in lecture courses compared to those courses with a lab component. The changes implemented allowed LTCC to utilize weekly student contact hours rather than credit hours in the calculations. This revision to the independent study accounting method reflected the equivalent student effort required regardless of whether the lab course was held on campus or in the virtual classroom.

![FTES Generated by Credit Distance Education](image)

14. **Final Recommendations**

After thorough review of the DE program at LTCC, several recommendations are offered to continue to move towards excellence with DE course offerings. These recommendations will also assist LTCC in providing integrated planning for the fiscal, technical and human resources needed to deliver DE courses. In addition, LTCC can use these recommendations as a guideline to provide ongoing and continuous evaluation that will lead to improvement of our DE program. These recommendations follow.

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**STRATEGIC GOALS based on RECOMMENDATIONS in DE Program Review**

The goals listed below will become the “action plan” of the Distance Education Committee, once this Program Review is adopted and approved by the shared-governance bodies of LTCC. The timeline for implementation will be a 3 year period.

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GOAL #B3: Hire one full-time faculty coordinator/director, to assist faculty in the development, design and on-going maintenance of distance learning courses. This new position could also identify new niche markets for online program development opportunities.

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1. **Background Support Information**

During the 2009-10 academic year, the *Distance Education (DE) Program* Review committee participated in an extensive review of LTCC’s current expanding *DE Program*. This proposal for additional support is based on the findings and *Final Recommendations* of the Committee’s report. For additional background material, please review the attached *DE Program Review*. This proposal is also supported by the growing number of LTCC online students and FTES generated revenue as demonstrated by the chart below.

![FTES Generated by Credit Distance Education](chart_image)
In addition, AACJC mandates that *DE programs* are supported by the institution and that quality oversight support and resources be allocated that demonstrate the institution’s financial support to their DE program.

2. **Staffing Proposal**

Hire a part-time *Director of DE* in 2010-11 who oversees all aspects of the *DE program*. This person will:

a) Oversee and manage the *DE Program* in all aspects of its entirety
b) Interface with all departments on campus that are impacted by the *DE Program* including:
   - Student Services
   - Admissions & Records
   - Tutoring and Learning Center
   - Disability Resource Center
   - Instruction Office
   - Student Helpdesk
   - Library
   - Computer Services
c) Interface with the technological and ETUDES support of online students
d) Interface with the part-time faculty DE coordinator
e) Drive the student support side of the *DE Program*
f) Ensure that the *DE Program Review Final Recommendations* are being addressed
g) Participate and oversee accreditation requirements of ACCJC and assist with writing the self study document in coordination with the Dean of Instruction and the Accreditation Committee

h) Work with Academic Senate to alleviate concerns and promote a distance education program that showcases high quality, effective online instruction.

i) Confer with counterparts at other colleges to identify best practice models that can be adopted at LTCC.

j) Coordinate with the ERP Implementation Team to utilize the tools available in Datatel Colleague to best support online students and improve self-service options.

k) If TRIO grant is funded, work closely with the TRIO program staff to improve success of online students in the TRIO program.

l) Monitor and develop methods of improving retention rates in online courses.

m) Create web site content, schedule content, and messages to communicate with online students in an effort to enhance student engagement.

3. **Future support to implement in Year 2: 2011-12**
   - Fund final recommendations not completed in year one
   - Move Helpdesk out of Instruction Office and develop another model of student helpdesk support
   - Conference/travel for part-time DE Program Director
   - Professional development.
   - Monitor effectiveness of implementing DE Program Review Final Recommendations

4. **Future support to implement in Year 3: 2012-13**
   - Adjust budget and staffing to reflect changes in enrollment and FTES.
Cost Breakdown for DE Support

1) CURRENT Expenses and Support as of 2009/2010 AY
   a. Etudes Licensing and Usage Costs $24,555.00
   b. Etudes Helpdesk Support $ 8,300.00
   c. DE Faculty Support part-time Coordinator $28,604.00
   TOTAL: $61,450.00
   Eliminate Helpdesk ? in 2010: - 8,300.00
   TOTAL Expenses for 2010: $53,150.00

2) NEW Proposal Expenditures for Additional Support
   a. 20 hours /week @ $34.88/hr for DE Director, Range 54, Step 1
      (Per Susan Walter, February 2010)
   b. 11 months/year (48 weeks)=$33,484 x 5.229% Benes = $1,750.00.
   c. TOTAL NEW Director Costs with Benes $35,234.00
   d. Office Supplies $ 200.00
   e. Internet Marketing of LTCC’s DE program $ 2,000.00
   f. Total Request for NEW Position: $37,434.00

3) NEW Proposed Total Expenses/Costs: $90,584.00

4) Revenue Source: (Revenue generated by courses offered through
   Distance Education courses for 2009/10)
   TOTAL REVENUE: $1,266,356.47

   Existing Support as a
   Percentage of FTES Revenue: 4.85%

   New Proposal and Existing
   Support as a Percentage
   Of FTES Revenue 7.15%

*There are costs associated with the support of the DE program that is
currently being absorbed by the Instruction Office.*
APPENDIX A
Prepared by:

Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges

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California Community Colleges
Distance Education
California Code of Regulations Title 5 and Related Guidelines
August 15, 2008

Overview

The Board of Governor's for the California Community Colleges approval of the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 related to distance education (DE) covered in these guidelines permits colleges to explore and develop educational initiatives using advanced communication and computing technologies to address student access issues related to geographical, cultural, disability, and facility barriers.

This document is designed to provide overall guidance and assistance to individuals seeking to understand the system's rules which apply to the design, approval, conduct, and reporting of distance education within California Community Colleges. It should be noted that the regulations cited in this 2008 Omnibus Version and their accompanying clarifying commentary were not approved by the Board of Governors all at the same time. The regulations regarding the standards and criteria for DE courses were approved by the Board on July 9, 2007. Regulations regarding DE attendance accounting standards were approved by the Board on June 16, 2008. Earlier regulations changes regarding the rules for immediate supervision and control within DE were approved on January 15, 2002. All three sets of regulations and guidelines have been combined in this 2008 Omnibus Version to provide the reader an all inclusive reference on Distance Education regulations.

Draft guideline language was jointly developed by the Educational Technology Advisory Committee working in conjunction with staff from the Academic Affairs Division of the Chancellor's Office. The final version of the guidelines included in this package was reviewed and edited by the Chancellor's Office.

While the clarifying guidelines following each regulation is not legally binding, it is important to note that district and college observance of the guidelines will play an important part in the community college system's continued review and evaluation of Distance Education activities and any subsequent revisions of these regulations. Districts following the guidelines are assured that the Chancellor's Office will likely find them to be in compliance with all regulatory requirements. The guidelines are subject to revision by the Chancellor as deemed necessary, upon the advice from relevant advisory committees and in accordance with the Board of Governors’ Standing Order 409.

In what follows, the Title 5 section titles are in bold and the regulations are in italics. Each regulation is followed by a guideline. The regulations included are located within two chapters of Title 5: Chapter 6, "Curriculum and Instruction" and Chapter 9, "Fiscal Support." A total of 14 Title 5 DE regulations are included.
Chapter 6, Curriculum and Instruction

Standards and Criteria for Courses

55200. Definition and Application.

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 this chapter 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).


Guideline for Section 55200

The Board of Governor’s approval of distance education (DE) regulations for the California Community Colleges permits colleges to explore and develop educational initiatives using advanced communication and computing technologies to address student access issues related to geographical, cultural, disability or facility barriers.

Ensuring that distance education courses, materials and resources are accessible to students with disabilities is a shared institutional responsibility. Faculty need to receive appropriate training in order to ensure that they understand what constitutes accessibility, and institutions must provide faculty with both the necessary training and resources to ensure accessibility. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12100 et seq.), section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794d), and California Government Code section 11135 all require that accessibility for persons with disabilities be provided in the development, procurement, maintenance, or use of electronic or information technology by a community college district using any source of state funds. (See Legal Opinion M 03-09). Title 5, section 55200 explicitly makes these requirements applicable to all distance education offerings.

The following are a few general principles that should be followed in ensuring that distance education courses are accessible to students with disabilities. They embody the general concepts of the law but do not provide a detailed legal analysis of the ADA requirements. Persons utilizing this document who are unfamiliar with the ADA and
section 508 may wish to consult district legal counsel or the college ADA Coordinator or DSP&S Coordinator for further information. A separate and more detailed set of revised guidelines on accessibility and distance education will be issued by the System Office at a later date.

1. One of the primary concepts of Distance Education (DE) is to offer students “Learning anytime, anywhere.” Therefore, all DE resources must be designed to afford students with disabilities maximum opportunity to access distance education resources “anytime, anywhere” without the need for outside assistance (i.e. sign language interpreters, aides, etc.).

2. Distance education resources must generally be designed to provide “built-in” accommodation (i.e. closed or open captioning, descriptive narration) and/or interface design/content layout, which is accessible to “industry standard” assistive computer technology in common use by persons with disabilities.

3. Whenever possible, printed information should be provided in the alternative format preferred by the student (i.e. Braille, audio tape, large print, electronic text, MP3, DAISY). When choosing between possible alternative formats or methods of delivery, consideration should be given to the fact that methods which are adequate for short, simple or less important communications may not be equally effective or appropriate for longer, more complex, or more critical material. (Example: Use of a telephone relay service may be an acceptable method for a faculty member to respond to a brief question from a deaf student during his/her office hours, but would not be appropriate as a means of permitting that same student to participate in a class discussion in a course conducted by teleconference.) Issues concerning accommodation should be resolved through appropriate campus procedures as defined under title 5, section 56027.

4. Adoption of access solutions which include assigning assistants (i.e. sign language interpreters, readers) to work with an individual student to provide access to distance education resources should only be considered as a last resort when all efforts to enhance the native accessibility of the course material have failed. This is particularly true since colleges have for several years received funding to assist them in providing access to distance education. In the event that a student files a discrimination complaint, a district relying on the use of readers or interpreters to make a distance education course accessible will bear the burden of demonstrating that it was not possible to build in accessibility.

5. Access to DE courses, resources and materials include the audio, video and text components of courses or communication delivered via existing and emerging technologies. Access includes the audio, video, multimedia and text components of Web sites, electronic chat rooms, e-mail, instructional software, CD-ROM, DVD, laser disc, video tape, audio tape, electronic text and print materials. Where access to Web sites not controlled by the college is required or realistically necessary to completion of a course, the college must take steps to
ensure that such sites are accessible or provide the same material by other accessible means.

6. Distance education courses, resources and materials must be designed and delivered in such a way that the level of communication and course-taking experience is the same for students with or without disabilities.

7. Any DE courses, resources or materials purchased or leased from a third-party provider, or created or substantially modified “in-house” after August 1999, must be accessible to students with disabilities, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity or result in undue financial and administrative burdens on the district.

8. In August 1999, the Chancellor’s Office began requiring that the curriculum for each DE course and its associated materials and resources be reviewed and revised, as necessary, when the course undergoes curriculum review pursuant to title 5, sections 55002 and 55206, every six years as part of the accreditation process. Thus, this process should now have been completed for all distance education courses. If a college has not yet reviewed its distance education courses to ensure accessibility, it should do so immediately. However, in the event that a student with a disability enrolls in an existing DE course before this review is completed, the college will be responsible for acting in a timely manner and making any requested modifications to the curriculum, materials or resources used in the course, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity or result in undue financial burden on the district.

9. In the event that a discrimination complaint is filed alleging that a college has selected software and/or hardware that is not accessible for persons with disabilities, the Chancellor’s Office and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights will not generally accept a claim of undue burden based on the subsequent substantial expense of providing access, when such costs could have been significantly reduced by considering the issue of accessibility at the time of initial selection.

10. In all cases, even where the college can demonstrate that a requested accommodation would involve a fundamental alteration in the nature of the instructional activity or would impose an undue financial and administrative burden, the college must provide an alternative accommodation which is equally effective for the student if such an accommodation is available.

11. The college is responsible for assuring that distance education courses, materials and resources are accessible to students with disabilities. All college administrators, faculty and staff who are involved in the use of this instructional mode share this obligation. The Chancellor’s Office will make every effort to
provide technical support and training for faculty and staff involved in the creation of accessible distance education courses, resources and materials.

55202. Course Quality Standards.

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses, in regard to the course quality judgment made pursuant to the requirements of section 55002, and in regard to any local course quality determination or review process. Determinations and judgments about the quality of distance education under the course quality standards shall be made with the full involvement of faculty in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 2 (commencing with section 53200) of chapter 2.

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

Guideline for Section 55202

This section emphasizes the extent to which course quality depends upon the full involvement of faculty in the design and application of DE courses. It discusses course quality standards for distance education and combines language formerly found in sections 55207 and 55209 which it replaces. Language is added to clarify that normal course quality standards apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

55204. Instructor Contact.

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that:
(e) 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 seminars or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.
(b) Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

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

Guideline for Section 55204

This section defines what contact must be maintained between instructor and student. It is virtually identical to section 55211 which it replaces, except that language has been
added to clarify that rules related to conduct of distance education and effective instructor contact apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

Subdivision (a) stresses the responsibility of the instructor in a DE course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status. The use of the term "regular effective contact" in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record.

The last published Distance Education Guidelines, March 2004, issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors, as referenced in subdivision (b), establishes the principle that for DE courses there are a number of acceptable interactions between instructor and student, not all of which may require in-person contact. Thus, districts and/or colleges will need to define "effective contact" including how often, and in what manner instructor-student interaction is achieved. It is important to document regular effective contact and how it is achieved. Since regular effective contact was declared an academic and professional matter, this documentation must include demonstration of collegial consultation with the academic senate, for example through its delegation to the local curriculum committee. A natural place for this to occur is during the separate course approval process (see section 55206) as well as during faculty evaluations, student surveys, and program review. Documentation should consist of the inclusion of information in applicable outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session. Local policies should establish and monitor minimum standards of regular effective contact.

55206. Separate Course Approval.

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.


Guideline for Section 55206

This section has been revised to clarify that separate approval of a DE course is required if any portion of the instruction in a course or course section is designed to be regularly provided through distance education in lieu of face-to-face interaction. While only those courses that are 51% or more DE are reported as DE, the language here is intended to clarify that those courses that are less than 51% DE, but are designed to include a certain number of contact hours offered through DE, still must undergo a separate approval process. The occasional online assignment does not necessitate separate approval.
In making use of the existing local curriculum approval process, there must be documentation of "regular effective contact" as described in section 55204 consistent with local policy. For this reason, a course with any portion of a course section provided through DE in lieu of face-to-face instruction should be separately reviewed.

55208. Faculty Selection and Workload

(a) Instructors of course sections delivered via distance education technology shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments. Instructors shall possess the minimum qualifications for the discipline into which the course's subject matter most appropriately falls, in accordance with article 2 (commencing with section 53410) of subchapter 4 of chapter 4, and with the list of discipline definitions and requirements adopted by the Board of Governors to implement that article, as such list may be amended from time to time.
(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.

Guidelines for 55208

Section 55208, which addresses faculty selection and workload for distance education, is virtually identical to sections 55215 and 55217, which it replaces. This section emphasizes that faculty delivering DE courses should meet the same minimum qualifications and be selected in the same manner as faculty teaching non-DE courses.

55210. Ongoing Responsibility of Districts.

If a district offers one or more courses or course sections in which instruction is provided through distance education for at least 51 percent of the hours of instruction in the course or course section, the district shall:
(a) maintain records and report data through the Chancellor's Office Management Information System on the number of students and faculty participating in new courses or sections of established courses offered through distance education;
(b) provide to the local governing board, no later than August 31st of each year, a report on all distance education activity;
(c) provide other information consistent with reporting guidelines developed by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

Guideline for Section 55210

This section, which addresses ongoing district reporting responsibility for distance education, is virtually identical to former section 55219 which it replaces, except that language is added to clarify that the requirements of this section apply only where distance education is used for 51% or more of the instruction in a course or course section. Districts offering DE courses are required regularly to report all management information system (MIS) elements to the Chancellor's Office Management Information System Division. To fulfill this MIS reporting requirement, districts will need to ensure that data now regularly reported on each session's method of instruction within data element XFO1: “Session Instruction Method” are reliably differentiated between DE and non-DE.

This section also requires districts to report annually all DE activity to their local governing board and respond to any Chancellor's Office request for data on DE which includes the Annual Institutional Survey and the DE Faculty and Student Satisfaction Surveys. To the extent possible, local reports should compare and contrast DE to traditional instructional delivery. The Chancellor's Office will continue electronically to provide all surveys and information regarding timelines, formats, and the reporting instrument annually for the Institutional, Faculty and Student Satisfaction surveys. The results of the annual surveys will be available on the Chancellor's Office (CO) website. The surveys consist of questions relevant to distance education courses/programs offered at CCC campuses. Based on input from the technical advisory committee referenced in the Board of Governors Standing Order 409, the Chancellor may require districts to provide additional information.
Chapter 9, Fiscal Support

Attendance

Section 58003.1. Full-time Equivalent Student; Computation.

(a) Pursuant to the provisions of section 58051, the units of full-time equivalent student for apportionment purposes shall be computed for courses, including those delivered by distance education under article 1 (commencing with section 55200) of subchapter 3 of chapter 6, based on the type of course, the way the course is scheduled, and the length of the course.

(b) The governing board of each community college district shall, for each of its colleges or its district, select and establish a single primary term length for credit courses that are scheduled regularly with respect to the number of days of the week and the number of hours the course meets each week, inclusive of holidays. The units of full-time equivalent student of credit courses scheduled coterminously with the term, exclusive of independent study and cooperative work-experience education courses, shall be computed by multiplying the student contact hours of active enrollment as of Monday of the weeks nearest to one-fifth of the length of the term, unless other weeks are specified by the Chancellor to incorporate past practice, by the term length multiplier, and divided by 525. The term length multiplier for attendance accounting purposes shall be determined in accordance with this chapter, provided that the maximum multiplier for semester length terms shall be 17.5 and the maximum multiplier for quarter length terms shall be 11.67.

(c) For credit courses scheduled to meet for five or more days and scheduled regularly with respect to the number of hours during each scheduled day, but not scheduled coterminously with the college's primary term established pursuant to subdivision (b), or scheduled during the summer or other intersession, the units of full-time equivalent student, exclusive of independent study and cooperative work-experience education courses, shall be computed by multiplying the daily student contact hours of active enrollment as of the census days nearest to one fifth of the length of the course by the number of days the course is scheduled to meet, and dividing by 525.

(d) For credit courses scheduled to meet for fewer than five days, and all credit courses scheduled irregularly with respect to the number of days of the week and the number of hours the course meets on the scheduled days, the units of full-time equivalent student, exclusive of independent study and cooperative work-experience education courses, shall be computed by dividing actual student contact hours of attendance by 525.

(e) For all open entry-open exit credit courses and for all noncredit courses
otherwise eligible for state aid, except those described in subdivision (f), the
units of full-time equivalent student shall be computed by dividing actual
student contact hours of attendance by 525.

(f) For distance education courses not computed using other
attendance accounting procedures described in this section and for
independent study and cooperative work-experience education courses, the
following alternative attendance accounting procedure shall be used:

(1) For credit courses, for purposes of computing full-time equivalent
student only, one weekly student contact hour shall be counted for each unit
of credit for which a student is enrolled in one of those courses. The full-time
equivalent student of those courses shall be computed by multiplying the
units of credit for which students are enrolled as of the census day
prescribed in subdivision (b) or (c), as appropriate, for the primary term or
intersession and
duration for which the course is scheduled, by the term length multiplier as
provided for in subdivision (b), and dividing by 525.

(2) For noncredit course sections covered by this subdivision, for
purposes of computing full-time equivalent student only, weekly student
contact hours shall be derived by counting the total hours of instruction or
programming received by the students, plus instructor contact as defined in
sections 55204 or 55234, plus outside-of-class work expected as noted in
the course outline of record and approved by the curriculum committee, and
dividing the total number of hours for the course thus derived by 54. Hours
of instruction or programming received shall be independently verified by the
instructor using a method or procedure approved by the district according to
policies adopted by the local governing board as required by section 58030.
Full-time equivalent student for such noncredit course sections shall be
computed by:

(A) multiplying the average of the number of students actively
enrolled in the section as of each census date (those dates nearest to one-
fifth and three-fifths of the length of the course section) by,

(B) the weekly student contact hours as derived above in this section,
by

(C) the primary term length multiplier of 17.5, and
(D) dividing by 525.

(g) Notwithstanding subdivisions (b) and (c) of this section, the units
of full-time equivalent student for any credit course other than independent
study and cooperative work-experience education courses may, at the
option of the district, be computed by dividing the actual student contact
hours of attendance by 525. When a district chooses to exercise the option
of computing attendance for any course section by the actual student
contact hour's method, such method must be used consistently for all
attendance accounting for that section.

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

Guideline for Section 58003.1

Distance Education (DE) offerings have been mainstreamed. To effectuate this change, section 58003.1 was revised, effective July, 2002, to reflect the ability of colleges to compute DE Full Time Equivalent Student (FTES) using the same attendance accounting procedures available to a classroom-based course/section (traditional delivery). Additionally at that same time, section 55370, which previously stated, “all distance education is independent study” was deleted. Section 58056 was also revised to exempt DE courses from the “immediate supervision and control” requirements prescribed by that section. It should be noted that prior to the revision of section 58003.1, section 55370, which as noted above has been deleted, did permit “fully interactive” DE courses to use attendance procedures other than the Independent Study/Work Experience Education procedure.

The July, 2002, revision to section 58003.1 made it even clearer that DE courses can apply any attendance procedure that they are eligible to use based on the specific criteria applicable to each procedure.

This section, which describes the several available attendance accounting procedures, has then been further amended in subsection (f) to make technical changes which clarify the treatment of distance education courses. All other provisions of the section remain unchanged. The amendment establishes an “alternative attendance accounting procedure “ (previously referred to as the Independent Study or Work–Experience Attendance Procedure) which can be used to calculate FTES for apportionment purposes for independent study, cooperative work experience, and most importantly in this context also for distance education courses not computed using the other attendance accounting procedures described in this section. For credit distance education courses this alternative method generally consists of counting one weekly student contact hour (WSCH) for each unit of credit for which a student is enrolled (an exception to this general rule is discussed below). For noncredit distance education courses this alternative method consists of determining a WSCH factor from the quotient of the total hours of instruction or programming, plus other allowable instructor contact, plus authorized outside-of-class work expected as noted in the course outline of record, divided by 54. The resultant figure becomes the WSCH to be used when calculating census FTES for noncredit distance education courses.

In spite of the changes noted above, other essential requirements and criteria applicable to the various attendance accounting procedures continue to apply. For example, Title 5 sections 58003.1(b) and (c) relative to counting the student contact hours of active enrollment in the census based attendance procedures have not been amended—and as indicated above,
they speak of "regularly scheduled" days and hours. Also, Title 5 section 58023 requires that the class (contact) hour unit for classes be not less than 50 consecutive minutes. Title 5 sections 58000 and 58030 also continue to require detailed tabulations of all course enrollment and attendance and appropriate support records. The Actual Hours of Attendance procedure (Positive Attendance) provided by Title 5 section 58003.1(d) can be used if the course is irregularly scheduled and all applicable requirements are met. If the DE courses cannot meet all of the criteria applicable to the attendance procedures provided by section 58003.1(b), (c), or (d) they must be accounted for using the alternative attendance accounting procedure detailed in section 58003.1(f) and section 58009. The majority of asynchronous online DE courses will likely use this alternative attendance accounting procedure as they are not regularly scheduled nor adhere to the guidelines for "to-be-arranged" (TBA) scheduling. It should be noted that there will typically be no loss of FTES when the alternative method as described in section 5803.1 (f) is employed, unless students are being granted fewer units of credit than would be typical (e.g. if students earned 3 units for a course that meets for 4 hours each week of the term). A complete explanation of these and other essential attendance accounting and reporting requirements are provided in the Student Attendance Accounting Manual (Chapters 1 and 3.)

Thus, Credit DE courses can calculate FTES in one of four ways:

- **Weekly Student Contact Hour Procedure (Weekly Census):** Credit DE courses that are regularly scheduled with respect to the number of days of the week and the number of hours the course meets on each scheduled day and scheduled coterninously with the primary term can compute FTES under Section 58003.1(b). Instruction must occur each scheduled class meeting and students and instructor must be able to interact during the class session via some sort of communication technology. An example of a regularly scheduled Credit DE course might be a telecourse that is broadcast at the same time(s) every week of the primary term.

- **Daily Student Contact Hours Procedure (Daily Census):** Credit DE courses scheduled to meet for five or more days and scheduled regularly with respect to the number of hours during each scheduled day, but not scheduled coterninously with the primary term can compute FTES under section 58003.1(c). Instruction must occur each scheduled class meeting and students and instructor must be able to interact during the class session via some sort of communication technology.

(Note: The Student Attendance Accounting Manual (Chapter 3) provides specific guidance for the "To Be Arranged" (TBA) scheduling option as applicable to Weekly or Daily Census procedure courses. Under this scheduling option, students adhere to individual schedules for meeting with
the instructor as opposed to a single scheduled time for all students. However, each individual schedule continues to be based on regular weekly or daily contact hours depending on the applicable census based attendance procedure. In the case of DE courses, the regular contact could be met through online chat rooms, e-mail discussions, or other communication technology that allows for actual interaction between the student and the instructor. Please review the Student Attendance Accounting Manual (Chapter 3) for additional guidance on the TBA scheduling option. While the TBA scheduling option is permissible for credit DE courses, it is not anticipated that this would commonly be used.

- **Actual Hours of Attendance Procedure (Positive Attendance):** Credit DE courses scheduled for fewer than five days or that are scheduled irregularly with respect to the number of days of the week and the number of hours the course meets on the scheduled days can use the Positive Attendance procedure under section 58003.1(d). Instruction must occur each scheduled class meeting and students and instructor must be able to interact during the class session via some sort of communication technology. If a college/district wishes to use this attendance procedure for the computation of FTES, the college/district must keep track of the actual student contact hours for the course. It is possible for some Internet-based DE courses to apply to the Positive Attendance procedure. As with the weekly and daily census accounting procedures, this is an option not likely to be commonly employed for credit DE courses.

- **Alternative Attendance Accounting Procedure:** If a DE course is not structured so that it will qualify to use either the weekly or daily census procedure, and the college/district does not wish to keep track of actual student contact hours of attendance for the purposes of computing FTES, the college/district may choose to conduct the course using the alternative attendance accounting procedure under section 58003.1(f).

Please note that prior to a change to section 58009 approved by the Board of Governors at their January 2006 meeting, there was the possibility of a significant difference in the amount of FTES generated between an independent study or distance education [lab] course and a traditional delivery [lab] course. The reason is that the alternative method procedure, at that time known as the Independent Study/Work Experience Attendance Accounting Procedure, previously used only the number of units of credit as the basis for determining the student contact hours [§58003.1(f)(1)], while the Weekly Census, Daily Census, and Positive Attendance procedures use either the student contact hours of active enrollment or the actual number of student contact hours of attendance [§58003.1 (b, c, or d)]. For example, in a traditional one-unit weekly census [lab] course a student would attend class for three hours a week for 17.5 weeks (52.5 contact hours per student). If this same [lab] course was conducted as an independent study or
DE alternative method course, the weekly contact hours would have been based on the number of units and would therefore only generate 17.5 contact hours per student (1 unit of credit x 17.5 weeks = 17.5 hours per student). This is the reason why Section 58009 was amended effective June 16, 2008, to permit weekly student contact hours in distance education or independent study laboratory courses to be calculated as equivalent to those hours which would be generated for the same student effort in a laboratory course not computed using the alternative method such as in a lab course offered on campus. The latest changes to section 58003.1(f) and 58009 effective June 16, 2008, are intended to explicitly indicate that the provisions included in those sections also cover certain distance education courses.

The appropriate attendance procedure for the computation of FTES must be determined by considering the applicable criteria for Weekly Census, Daily Census, Positive Attendance, or Alternative Method such as one offered in a lab on campus, sections 58003.1 (b), (c), (d) or (f). Weekly and Daily Census computations are similar and, therefore, have been combined for the purposes of illustration.

The following are examples of the FTES computation for a course using the Weekly/Daily Census, Positive Attendance, and Alternative Method attendance accounting procedures.

Example 1

Computation of per student FTES for a three unit course

A. Weekly/Daily Census
   3 hours of weekly student contact x 17.5 weeks in semester = 52.5 hours
   52.5/525 hours = .10 FTES

B. Positive Attendance
   52.5 actual student contact hours of attendance/525 = .10 FTES

C. Alternative Method
   3 units of credit x 17.5 weeks in semester = 52.5 hours
   52.5/525 hours = .10 FTES

Example 2

Computation of FTES in a three-unit course with 20 enrolled students

A. Weekly/Daily Census
Each student would generate three hours of weekly student contact as of the census. The computation of FTES in a traditional one-unit term-length (17.5 weeks) course is:

3 hours x 20 students x 17.5 weeks = 1,050 hours
1,050/ 525 = 2 FTES

B. Positive Attendance

In this example, each student can generate a maximum of 52.5 contact hours of attendance if the student is not “absent” for any of the instruction. In this example, all students were in attendance for all the hours of instruction.

52.5 total actual hours of attendance per student X 20 students =
1,050 hours
1,050/525 = 2 FTES

C. Alternative Method

The computation is based on the number of units of credit in which the student is enrolled as of the census. The computation of FTES in a three-unit term length (17.5 weeks) course is:

3 units x 20 students x 17.5 weeks = 1050 hours
1050/525 = 2 FTES

In any of the above situations, the students will need to engage in an additional two (2) hours per week of educational activity for each one (1) hour of “lecture” time in order to meet the Carnegie Unit requirements for academic credit.

Noncredit DE Courses

As prescribed by title 5 section 58003.1(f)(2), noncredit DE courses continue to have only one attendance accounting procedure available to them. The noncredit DE procedure requires two census points (one-fifth and three-fifths point in the length of each course) in which student contact hours and active enrollment are determined. The average of the contact hours generated at these two points is divided by 525 to compute FTES. Detailed guidance applicable to this procedure is provided in the Student Attendance Accounting Manual (Chapter 3).

Section 58006. Application of Actual Student Contact Hours of Attendance Procedure.
The actual student contact hours of attendance procedure is based upon a count of students present at each course meeting, and shall apply to:

(a) All credit courses (exclusive of independent study, work experience and distance education courses computed using the alternative attendance accounting procedure described in subdivision (f) of section 58003.1) scheduled to meet for fewer than five days, or credit courses of five or more days which are scheduled irregularly with respect to the number of days of the week and the number of hours the course meets;

(b) All open entry/open exit courses;

(c) All noncredit courses otherwise eligible for state aid except those computed using the alternative attendance accounting method described in subdivision (f)(2) of section 58003.1;

(d) In-service training courses in the areas of police, fire, corrections, and other criminal justice system occupations as defined in subdivision (c) of section 58051.

(e) The attendance of students other than indentured apprentices who are actively enrolled in apprenticeship courses of related and supplemental instruction.

(f) A district may use, but shall not be required to use the actual student contact hours of attendance procedure for any other credit course, exclusive of independent study and work experience education courses, which it offers.


Guideline for Section 58006

This section provides additional detail concerning the positive attendance accounting procedure. It is amended to clarify the application of that procedure to distance education courses so as to conform with changes made to section 58003.1. All other provisions of the section remain unchanged.

Section 58007. Noncredit Courses.

Contact hours of enrollment in noncredit courses, except for noncredit courses using the Alternative attendance accounting procedure described in subdivision (f)(2) of section 58003.1, shall be based upon the count of students present at each course meeting. Full-time equivalent student in noncredit courses shall be computed by dividing the sum of contact hours of enrollment by 525, except for noncredit courses using the alternative attendance Accounting procedure described in section 58003.1(f)(2).

Nonresidents may be claimed for purposes of calculating full-time equivalent student only if they are living in California during the period of
attendance and are otherwise eligible for such purposes as provided in this chapter.

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

Guideline for Section 58007

This section provides additional detail concerning the attendance accounting procedure to be used for noncredit courses. It is amended to conform with changes made to section 58003.1. All other provisions of the section remain unchanged.

The primary student attendance accounting procedure for all but DE noncredit courses consists of a count of students present at each class meeting (positive attendance), with the FTES measure being achieved by dividing that sum of contact hours by 525. For DE noncredit courses an alternative method is authorized for determining full time equivalent student attendance, as described in section 58003.1 (f) (2). For purposes of determining weekly student contact hours, the procedure consists of adding together the total hours of instruction or programming, plus any additional "regular effective contact" as described in section 55204, plus any outside-of-class work noted in the course outline of record and approved by the curriculum committee, and then dividing that sum by 54. Detailed guidance applicable to this procedure is provided in the Student Attendance Accounting Manual (Chapter 3).

Section 58009. Application of Alternate Attendance Procedure for Independent Study, Work-Experience and Certain Distance Education Courses.

(a) For independent study, cooperative work-experience and distance education courses using the attendance accounting procedure specified in subdivision (f) of section 58003.1, one weekly student contact hour shall be counted for each unit of credit for which the student is enrolled as of the census day prescribed in section 58003.1(b) or (c), except for independent study or distance education laboratory courses. For independent study or distance education laboratory courses, weekly student contact hours shall be equivalent to those which would be generated for the same student effort in a laboratory course computed pursuant to subdivisions (b) or (c) of section 58003.1. For purposes of this section only, a "distance education laboratory course" means a distance education course which consists partly or exclusively of laboratory work.

(b) For credit courses, full-time equivalent student in courses described in subdivision (a) offered during primary terms is computed by multiplying the weekly student contact hours authorized pursuant to subdivision (a), generated as of the census date prescribed in section
58003.1(b) by the term length multiplier as provided for in section 58003.1, and dividing by 525.

(c) For noncredit courses described in subdivision (a), full-time equivalent student is computed on a census basis as prescribed in section 58003.1(f)(2).

(d) Full-time equivalent student in credit courses described in subdivision (a) which are conducted during a summer or other intersession is computed by multiplying the weekly student contact hours, authorized pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section, generated in each course, by a course length multiplier that produces the same total weekly student contact hours for the same student effort as would be generated in such Courses conducted in the primary terms, and dividing by 525.

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

Guideline for Section 58009

This section provides additional detail concerning the attendance accounting procedure to be used for independent study and work-experience courses. It is amended to also cover certain distance education courses so as to conform with changes made to section 58003.1 Full-time Equivalent Student; Computation.

Weekly Student Contact Hours (WSCH) in credit distance education laboratory courses shall be determined by counting student contact hours in the same manner as in credit non-distance education laboratory courses (e.g., the contact hours that would have been generated had the course been taught on campus). Non-laboratory credit distance education or independent study courses on the alternative attendance accounting procedure must still determine WSCH based on the number of units of credit. For purposes of this provision only, a “distance education laboratory course” means a distance education course which consists partly or exclusively of laboratory work. The following are examples of the FTES computations for a credit distance education or independent study laboratory course on the alternative attendance accounting procedure.

Example 1

Computation of a 1 unit distance education or independent study laboratory course (semester length course)

3 WSCH to represent the contact hours that would have normally been generated had the 1-unit laboratory course not been on the alternative
attendance accounting procedure – 3 WSCH x 30 students x 17.5 Term Length Multiplier (TLM) = 1,575 hours 1,575/525 = 3.0 FTES.

Example 2

Computation of a 1 unit Distance Education or Independent Study Laboratory course (Short Term Course)

3 WSCH to represent the contact hours that would have normally been generated had the 1-unit laboratory course not been on the alternative attendance accounting procedure and had actually been conducted during a primary term – 3 WSCH x 30 students x 17.5 TLM* = 1,575 hours 1,575/525 = 3.0 FTES.

* Section 58009(d) allows districts to use a course length multiplier that produces the same total weekly student contact hours for the same student effort as would be generated in such courses conducted in the primary term. In this example, the course length multiplier used is 17.5 even though the shortened term in only 8 weeks in length).

FTES for non credit distance education laboratory courses shall be computed on a census basis as prescribed in section 58003.1 (f)(2).

See Guideline for section 58003.1 for additional information concerning the alternative attendance accounting procedure.

58051. Method for Computing Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES).

(a)(1) Except as otherwise provided, in computing the full-time equivalent student of a community college district, there shall be included only the attendance of students while they are engaged in educational activities required of students and while they are under the immediate supervision and control of an academic employee of the district authorized to render service in the capacity and during the period in which he or she served.

(2)(A) A community college district may also include the attendance of students enrolled in approved courses or programs of independent study who are under the supervision, control, and evaluation, but not necessarily in the immediate presence, of an academic employee of the district who is authorized to render such service.

(B) The community college district shall determine the nature, manner, and place of conducting any independent study courses or program in accordance with the requirements of this section and article 3 (commencing with section 55230) of subchapter 3 of chapter 6.

(C) Each district conducting independent study courses shall ensure that the components of each independent study course or program for each student shall be set out in a written record or program, including the number
of units (if applicable) and hours of study required, the arrangements for consultation with the instructor, and the work product to be evaluated.

(3) A community college district may also include the attendance of students enrolled in approved distance education in accordance with the provisions of article 1 (commencing with section 55200) of subchapter 3 of chapter 6.

(b) For the purpose of work-experience education programs meeting the standards of the Carl D. Perkins Career Technical Education Act of 2006 California State Plan (or any successor agreement related to career technical education), "immediate supervision" of off-campus work training stations means student participation in on-the-job training as outlined under a training agreement, coordinated by the community college district under a state-approved plan, wherein the employer and academic school personnel share the responsibility for on-the-job supervision. The student/instructor ratio in the work-experience education program shall not exceed 125 students per full-time equivalent academic coordinator.

(c) For purposes of computing the full-time equivalent student of a community college district, attendance shall also include student attendance and participation in in-service training courses in the areas of police, fire, corrections, and other criminal justice system occupations that conform to all apportionment attendance and course of study requirements otherwise imposed by law, if the courses are fully open to the enrollment and participation of the public. However, prerequisites for the courses shall not be established or construed so as to prevent academically qualified persons who are not employed by agencies in the criminal justice system from enrolling in and attending the courses.

(d) Notwithstanding subdivision (c) and any regulations related thereto, a community college may give preference in enrollment to persons who are employed by, or serving in a voluntary capacity with, a fire protection or fire prevention agency in any course of in-service fire training at the community college in cooperation with any fire protection or fire prevention agency or association. Preference shall only be given when such persons could not otherwise complete the course within a reasonable time and when no other training program is reasonably available. At least 15 percent of the enrollment in in-service fire training courses shall consist of persons who are neither volunteers of, nor employed by, a fire protection or fire prevention agency or association, if the persons are available to attend a course. Full-time equivalent student for the courses may be reported for state aid.

(e) Subdivision (d) shall apply only to the following:

(1) Community colleges which, in cooperation with any fire protection or fire prevention agency or association, have been, as of January 1, 1980, the primary source of in-service fire training for any fire protection or fire prevention agency or association.

(2) Community colleges which, in cooperation with any fire protection or fire prevention agency or association, establish in-service fire training for any
fire protection or fire prevention agency or association which did not have in-service fire training, prior to January 1, 1980.

(f) In the event that in-service training courses are restricted to employees of police, fire, corrections, and other criminal justice agencies, attendance for the restricted courses shall not be reported for purposes of state apportionments. A community college district which restricts enrollment in in-service training courses may contract with any public agency to provide compensation for the cost of conducting such courses.

(g) Positive records of student admissions and full-time equivalent student in all in-service training courses in the areas of police, fire, corrections, and other criminal justice system occupations, as described in subdivision (c), shall be maintained by each district.

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

Guideline for Section 58051

Subdivision (a)(3) has been added to existing language to allow the inclusion of all courses offered through distance education as eligible for FTES apportionment.

58056. Immediate Supervision and Control.

(a) Subdivision (a)(1) of section 58051 requires, as a condition for claiming attendance for apportionment purposes, the immediate supervision and control of an academic employee authorized to render service in a capacity and during the period in which he or she served. Immediate supervision and control requires the presence of the authorized employee. More specifically, immediate supervision or presence is characterized by all of the following:

(1) The authorized employee is able, in terms of physical proximity and range of communication, to provide immediate instructional supervision and control; and

(2) The authorized employee is in a position to provide the supervision and control necessary for the protection of the health and safety of students; and

(3) The authorized employee is not to have any other assigned duty during the instructional activity for which attendance is being claimed. The criteria specified above are to be applied in recognition of the fact that the need for immediate supervision will vary according to the course being offered, as well as with the design or mode of instruction of such course or program.

(b) Under the following limited circumstances, attendance of students enrolled in a course or program which does not meet the requirements of subdivision (a) shall qualify for apportionment purposes if:

(1) The course or program is approved and being conducted as distance education in accordance with article 1 (commencing with section 55205) of subchapter 3 of chapter 6; or
(2) The course or program is approved and being conducted as independent study in accordance with subchapter 4 (commencing with section 55300) of chapter 6; or
(3) The course or program is approved and being conducted as work experience education in accordance with subchapter 3 (commencing with section 55250) of chapter 6 of this part; or
(4) The course or program is approved and is being conducted as health sciences education in accordance with section 58055(a).
(c) Attendance generated solely under an instructional assistant or aide does not qualify for apportionment. In addition, instructional aides shall not be used to increase the number of students in relation to the number of classroom instructors in the district. However, attendance may qualify for apportionment under the following limited circumstances:
(1) The assistant or aide functions under the exclusive direction of the authorized employee assigned to that educational activity, and not independently; and
(2) The assistant or aide performs only those duties specifically authorized by law, including, but not limited to, sections 88240-88249 of the Education Code; and,
(3) The authorized employee is able, in terms of physical proximity and range of communication, to provide necessary supervision and control of students, so that by working in conjunction with the assistant or aide, the requirements of subsection (a) of this section are met.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700, 70901 and 84500, Education Code.
Reference: Section 70901, and 84500
Guidelines for Section 58056

This section addresses the requirement that students must be under the supervision of an instructor attending an on-campus course. In the 1994 decision to open DE to all areas of instruction during an evaluation period, DE courses could only be offered as independent study. Section 58056 has now been amended to exempt DE courses from the immediate supervision and control requirement. This is critical in order to mainstream DE into the traditional mode of instruction.

Limitations on State Aid

58170. Apportionment for Tutoring

Apportionment may be claimed for individual student tutoring only if all the following conditions are met:
(a) The individual student tutoring is conducted through a designated learning center.
b) The designated learning center is supervised by a person who meets the minimum qualifications prescribed by section 53415.
(c) All tutors successfully complete instruction in tutoring methods and the use of appropriate written and mediated instructional materials, including supervised practice tutoring. This requirement may be waived by the chief instructional or student services officer on the basis of advanced degrees or equivalent training. Academic credit and apportionment for coursework in tutoring methods for purposes of this section shall be limited to two semester or three quarter units of credit, or 96 noncredit hours. All tutors shall be approved by a faculty member from the discipline or disciplines in which the student will tutor.
(d) All students receiving individual tutoring have enrolled in a noncredit course carrying Taxonomy of Programs number 4930.09, which is entitled “Supervised Tutoring.”
(e) Students enroll in the Supervised Tutoring course, through registration procedures established pursuant to section 58108, after referral by a counselor or an instructor on the basis of an identified learning need.
(f) An attendance accounting method is established which accurately and rigorously monitors positive attendance.
(g) Student tutors may be remunerated but may not be granted academic credit for tutoring beyond that stipulated in (c) above.
(h) The district shall not claim state apportionment for tutoring services for which it is being paid from state categorical funds.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 70901 and 84500, Education Code.
Reference: Sections 70901, 84500 and 87356, Education Code.

Guideline for Section 58170
In order for a college to collect noncredit apportionment for students providing tutorial assistance to other students, the tutoring must be conducted through a designated learning center under the supervision of a qualified faculty member who has earned a Master’s Degree in one subject matter being tutored or in education/ instructional psychology/ or other disciplines with an emphasis in adult learning theory, as detailed in Title 5, section 53415. Primarily, students who conduct tutoring are those who have received instruction in tutoring methods and who may use appropriate mediated instructional materials.

Academic credit and apportionment for coursework used to train tutors in tutoring methods is limited to two semester units of credit (three quarter units of credit), or 96 non-credit course hours. Prospective tutors with advanced degrees and equivalent training are not required to complete additional training preparation, although faculty from the discipline or disciplines in which the tutoring is needed must approve all tutors, irrespective of their prior education or experience.

A counselor or an instructor, on the basis of an identified learning need, must refer all students seeking tutoring. Students cannot refer themselves for tutoring. Tutees must enroll in a noncredit Supervised Tutoring course carrying the Taxonomy of Programs number 4930.09. To enroll, students must follow normal registration procedures consistent with Title 5, section 58108. No registration procedure shall be used that results in restricting enrollment to a specialized clientele.

A tutorial center may offer tutoring assistance between a tutor and tutee when they are separated by distance and are using on-line or other synchronous “real time” technologies such as videoconference, web conference, audio conference, etc. When the tutor and tutee are separated such that one or the other is not physically present in the tutoring center, the supervisor must be able to monitor the communication and a mechanism must be in place to accurately track positive attendance hours. If both the tutor and tutee are not physically present in the tutorial center, the district must ensure and be able to document, if audited, that the supervisor was actually able to, and did, monitor the interaction of the tutoring session.

Instructional and Other Materials

59402 Definitions

For the purposes of this subchapter the following definitions apply:
(a) “Instructional and other materials” means any tangible personal property which is owned or primarily controlled by an individual student.
(b) "Required instructional and other materials" means any instructional and other materials which a student must procure or possess as a condition of registration, enrollment or entry into a class; or any such material which is necessary to achieve those required objectives of a course which are to be accomplished under the supervision of an instructor during class hours.

(c) "Soledly or exclusively available from the district" means that the material is not available except through the district, or that the district requires that the material be purchased or procured from it. A material shall not be considered to be solely or exclusively available from the district if it is provided to the student at the district's actual cost and:

(1) The material is otherwise generally available, but is provided solely or exclusively by the district for health and safety reasons; or

(2) The material is provided in lieu of other generally available but more expensive material which would otherwise be required.

(d) "Required instructional and other materials which are of continuing value outside of the classroom setting" are materials which can be taken from the classroom setting, and which are not wholly consumed, used up, or rendered valueless as they are applied in achieving the required objectives of a course which are to be accomplished under the supervision of an instructor during class hours.

(e) "Tangible personal property" includes electronic data that the student may access during the class and store for personal use after the class in a manner comparable to the use available during the class.


Guideline for Section 59402

The revisions to this regulation allow districts, under certain circumstances, to charge students instructional materials fees for access to instructional materials in electronic form.

The definition of "tangible personal property" is amended to verify that electronic media may be considered instructional materials, so long as the student has the ability to use the materials after the class, in a manner comparable to the student's ability to use the materials during the class. This expansion of the definition of tangible personal property has significant impact on the district's ability to charge students for license fees or for access codes to electronic media. If students are to be charged for electronic media, the tangible personal property should have a continuing educational value to students. The continuing educational value could be in the form of the electronic course content being equivalent to a textbook, study guide, solutions manual, or test bank that students have access to beyond the class session for which the instructional materials were purchased. Additionally, the text, lessons, and problem materials should be
readily printable to hard copy to serve as a permanent record, should the student desire to retain a copy of the instructional materials. If the student can print and/or save materials accessed that are of continuing educational value, charging students for access codes is permissible. On the other hand, it is not permissible to charge students for internet access or for access to a research database.
APPENDIX B
Distance Education & Correspondence Education Manual

A Publication of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

August 2009
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Introduction and Definitions

Distance education and correspondence education are common delivery mechanisms in American higher education. A sizable proportion of institutions that are campus-based offer some portion of the curriculum and programs in a distance education format and there are a relatively small but growing number of institutions that offer educational services solely through distance education. In 2006, the Higher Education Act revised regulations that had restricted the use of distance education by institutions eligible for Title IV financial aid. Effective July 1 of that year, institutions were no longer restricted to offering less than fifty percent of a degree program via distance education in order to regain eligibility. The regulatory changes are likely to increase the number of programs campus-based institutions offer through distance education media as well as generate opportunity for some new, solely distance education based institutions to emerge in the WASC region.

The Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2009 provides greater emphasis on Distance Education and Correspondence Education and defines each:

Definition of Distance Education

"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 communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies."

Definition of Correspondence Education

Correspondence education means:

(1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor;

(2) Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student;

(3) That are typically self-paced; and,

(4) Correspondence education is not distance education.
A Correspondence course is:

(1) A course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced;

(2) A course which is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course; and,

(3) Not distance education.¹

The Commission recognizes and embraces distance education as a convenient, flexible, and effective means of providing quality education. Many working students with multiple demands on their time find that distance education meets their needs better than campus-based education.

Many campus-based students are now taking at least part of their educational programming through distance education classes. For some institutions, the pedagogical strategies successfully used in distance education classes with distant students (for example, on line chat rooms and electronic voting or feedback) have been incorporated into routine programs and services offered in classrooms on campus or provided for students who are physically on campus and don’t necessarily need to use technology to connect with the campus.

The purpose of this Distance Education and Correspondence Education Manual is to provide some guidelines to (1) team evaluators as well as (2) ACCJC member institutions as they plan, implement, or expand distance education and/or correspondence education programs or evaluate distance learning programs.

The ACCJC is obliged by its mission – to assure institutional quality – to carefully review the quality of distance education programs and services during its comprehensive evaluation visits, its follow-up visits, and during substantive change reviews.

Some Current Accreditation Concerns

Distance education and correspondence education, whether new or an expansion of efforts should consider the following. Teams evaluating institutions against the Standards should review these as well.

Mission, Educational Programs, and Curriculum

Distance education should remain consistent with and central to the stated mission of the

¹ Language is from the Federal Register 8/6/2009
institution. The educational policies of the institution regarding distance education programs should be clearly stated, and the distance education curriculum should demonstrate appropriate rigor comparable to courses offered in the traditional face-to-face format. If course materials are developed outside the institution, the academic quality of those materials should be assessed via the institution’s review policies. Academic standards for all courses and programs should be the same as for all other educational experiences delivered by the institution. Commission Standards apply equally to distance education, correspondence education, and traditional instructional formats.

Faculty

Some faculty members will be more interested in distance education than others, and most faculty who engage it will require ongoing training. Because technological currency is important, the level of support for staff development is one indicator of institutional commitment to distance education. Faculty access to appropriate technology and software as well as to support personnel is critical to a successful program. On-going evaluation of faculty involved in distance education should include appropriate recognition of all scholarly activities and be consistent with faculty evaluation in face-to-face instruction.

Students

The overriding concern for students is that the delivery of instruction be in modes appropriate for the specific content of a course. Students should expect that distance education programs will permit completion of learning outcomes and objectives in the same manner as those delivered in traditional programs. Student access to faculty should also be a major program ingredient. Issues about the evaluation of student work, including assurances that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit, must be implemented.

The institution must also publish for its students its policies to the effect that, in achieving these outcomes, it ensures the protection of student privacy and will notify students at the time of class registration of any charges associated with verification of student identity.

The academic and technical skills (as well as the commitment) required to successfully complete such a program should be made clear to students, and since a distance education environment requires certain skills and competencies to succeed, the institution should have the means to assess whether students have them. Proper training should be available for students working independently and utilizing the necessary technology. Access to student services such as admissions, orientation, financial aid, registration, advisement, tutoring, and other appropriate student services and technical support should be made available comparable to on-campus instructional programs.
Library and Learning Resources

Availability and use of appropriate, equivalent, (and sometimes personalized) learning resources are essentials of a supportive and successful distance education program. Although many of today’s institutional libraries are technologically capable of supporting learners at a distance, orientation and training are important components of effective student use of all resources for learning.

Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes

Although the Commission does not endorse a specific assessment model, providing evidence of institutional effectiveness will require that the institution apply learning outcome and assessment strategies to all distance education courses. Such strategies should take into account how distance education and correspondence education programs compare with more traditional programs in such areas as student achievement, transferability, observable and measurable learning outcomes, eligibility for financial aid, student satisfaction, and other program goals. Review and approval processes should be in place and used to ensure appropriateness of goals and objectives, as well as the effectiveness of distance education.

Organization, Planning, Human Resources

The college community must understand the connection between the distance education program and the institution’s mission and share the reasons for the program’s development. The college should demonstrate commitment to financial and technical support that allows a program to continue for a period of time sufficient for students to complete educational objectives. Integrated planning for the fiscal, technical, and human resources needed to deliver such a program must be thorough and continuous and provide for evaluation on an on-going basis and lead to improvement. Evaluation should focus on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the institution’s distance education program, as well as on assessment of student learning, retention, and satisfaction.

Facilities and Equipment

In integrating a distance education program into the institution’s mission, planning for technology-enhanced facilities and equipment appropriate to meeting program or course objectives must be part of long-range integrated planning and budgeting activities.

Catalogs and Publications

As an official document of the institution, the catalog should clearly describe the distance education program. Complete, timely, and accurate description of instructional delivery could also be presented in the catalog or in supplemental publications. If prerequisites for participation or other program requirements exist, these should be clearly stated, as should expected learning outcomes and the nature of the faculty/student interaction. Transferability of credit should be addressed in a forthright manner, as should matters regarding fees.
**Intellectual Property Rights**

The preparation of distance education instructional materials differs from the preparation of materials for the traditional classroom setting, raising questions about ownership, copyright, and fair use. Faculty and administrative personnel will need to develop policies that do not undermine faculty rights or the learning/teaching process and that address issues of copyright, ownership, and faculty compensation.

**ACCJC Policies**

There are two policies of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges that are specific to distance education and correspondence education and which should be considered when developing distance education or correspondence education programs as well as in evaluating their effectiveness. These are: (1) the Substantive Change Policy and (2) the Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education.

The development of distance education programs may represent a substantive change—a change which alters the objectives or the scope of the institution, modifies the nature of the constituencies it seeks to serve, or changes the geographic area served. Such changes are subject to Commission review and require that the institution notify the Commission in advance of program initiation by filing a Substantive Change Proposal.

The Substantive Change Policy describes the intent, processes, and procedures for substantive change. It can be found in the Accreditation Reference Handbook available on the Commission's web site: www.accjc.org.

The ACCJC Substantive Change Manual is also a useful resource for colleges offering 50% or more of a program, certificate, or degree through a mode of distance education or correspondence education. It is available on the Commission's web site.
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education


Background

Recognizing that most institutions must make use of the growing range of systems for
delivery of instruction, including various electronic means, the Accrediting Commission for
Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has adopted a policy based on principles of good
practice to help ensure that distance learning is characterized by the same concerns for
quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to more traditional modes of instruction.

As methods used to facilitate/conduct distance learning evolve, the ACCJC policies that
address distance learning also change. This policy statement has drawn from several
previous policies and is intended to replace those policies with a single, unified, and up-to-
date statement. Further development of this policy may well be appropriate in the not-so-
distant future.

Definition of Distance Education

“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
communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-
ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

Definition of Correspondence Education

Correspondence education means:

(1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which
the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission,
including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the
instructor;

(2) Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and
substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student;
(3) That are typically self-paced; and,

(4) Correspondence education is not distance education.

A Correspondence course is:

(1) A course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced;

(2) A course which is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course; and,

(3) Not distance education.”

Policy

ACCJC policy specifies that all learning opportunities provided by our accredited institutions have the same quality, accountability, and focus on student outcomes, whether they are delivered electronically or by more traditional means. The intent of the policy is to provide a framework that allows institutions the flexibility to adapt their delivery modes to the emerging needs of students and society while maintaining quality. Any institution offering courses and programs electronically is expected to meet the requirements of accreditation in each of its courses and programs and at each of its sites.

Policy Elements

• Development, implementation, and evaluation of all courses and programs, including those offered via distance education or correspondence education, must take place within the institution’s total educational mission.

• Institutions are expected to control development, implementation, and evaluation of all courses and programs offered in their names, including those offered via distance education or correspondence education.

• Institutions are expected to have clearly defined and appropriate student learning outcomes for all courses and programs, including those delivered through distance education or correspondence education.

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2 Language is from the Federal Register 8/6/2009
• Institutions are expected to provide the resources and structure needed to accomplish these outcomes.

• Institutions are expected to demonstrate that their students achieve these outcomes through application of rigorous assessment.

• Institutions are expected to provide the ACCJC reasons to believe that these outcomes will continue to be accomplished.

• Institutions are expected to provide the ACCJC advance notice of intent to initiate a new delivery mode, such as distance education or correspondence education, through the Substantive Change process.

• Institutions are expected to provide the ACCJC advance notice of intent to offer a program in which 50% or more of the courses are via distance education or correspondence education, through the Substantive Change process.

• Institutions which offer distance education or correspondence education have processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence course or program is the same person who participates every time in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. This requirement will be met if the institution verifies the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the institution’s discretion, such methods as a secure log-in and password, proctored examinations, and/or new or other technologies and/or practices that are developed and effective in verifying each student’s identification. The institution must also publish to their students, policies that ensure the protection of student privacy and will notify students at the time of class registration of any charges associated with verification of student identity.