DISTANCE EDUCATION – FROM COMPLIANCE TO QUALITY

Dolores Davison, ASCCC Vice President
Sam Foster, ASCCC Area D Representative and Chair, ASCCC Accreditation Committee
Margarita Pillado, ASCCC Accreditation Committee
Overview of Today’s Session

• Legal Requirements around Distance Education Courses in the California Community Colleges
  • ACCJC Requirements
  • Federal Requirements
• Demonstrating Regular and Effective Contact and Effective Practices in Online Pedagogy
  • College Examples
    • Foothill College
    • Glendale College
    • Los Angeles Pierce College
• Accessibility
Breakout Description

• While federal, state, and accreditation policies and regulations require that all learning opportunities, regardless of method of delivery, be of equivalent quality and academic rigor, Distance Education courses are subject to more scrutiny for compliance in terms of instructor/student and student/student interaction, and accessibility requirements. Fortunately, there are faculty-led initiatives that provide resources and professional development opportunities to ensure instructional design grounded on compliance but striving for continuous academic quality.
USDE Federal Regulations

• Definition of Distance Education
  • 34 C.F.R §602.3 (ACCJC Policy on DE and on CE)
    “Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs 1 – 4 to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:
    1. the internet;
    2. one-way or two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices;
    3. audioconferencing; or
    4. video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs (if used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in 1 – 3)”
Title 5 and ACCJC Requirements

• Title 5 definition: “…instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology….” (Title 5 § 55200)

• ACCJC definition: “…a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which support regular and substantive interaction between the student and instructor….”

• [https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Distance-Correspondence-Education.pdf](https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Distance-Correspondence-Education.pdf)
DE Approval Requirements

• “If any portion of the instruction…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….” (Title 5 § 55206)

• “Web-enhanced” courses (in which all class meetings are face-to-face but some course materials are available online) are exempt from the separate-approval requirement.

• Many colleges document the separate approval via a DE addendum to the COR.
DE Course Approval Requirements

- Regular and effective contact requirement:
  - For California Community Colleges, district governing boards shall ensure that “Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously, ....” (Title 5 § 55204(a))
  - Without regular effective contact, a distance education course may be reclassified as a correspondence education course, which may earn less apportionment.
  - Regardless of the college’s location, regular and effective contact must be instructor-initiated and part of the course design.
Areas Faculty Can Design to Ensure Alignment to Locally Decided DE Policies and Assure Compliance

- Syllabus
- Visible Application of Regular & Effective Contact Policies in Weekly Design
- Accessibility
- Student Services
Designing the DE Syllabus – Glendale College

• Provide several methods of contact (campus email, phone, Skype, etc.) and indicate your expected response time. *Instructors MUST USE CAMPUS email!
  • Example: I will respond to your email within 24 hours, M-F, and 48 hours on weekends and holidays. If you do not hear back from me within this time, please assume I did not receive your email and resend it or try to contact me through another format (ie, private message in the course site).

• Explain the instructor’s role in the course and discuss how you will provide regular effective contact?
  • Example: I am looking forward to working closely with you this semester, and you can expect me to play an active role in the course. I will post announcements every week, join you in weekly class discussions via Skype to help you understand course concepts, facilitate class discussions in the Discussion Forums in CANVAS, provide detailed feedback on major assignments via turnitin.com, AND participate with everyone in our collaborative space like titanpad.com or sharable Google Docs. Please reach out to me if you need help—that’s why I’m here!

• Define online attendance in terms of academic engagement rather than logging in. Link to the campus Attendance & Participation Policy.
  • Example: Attendance in an online course is determined by participation in academically related activities. You will be considered present if there is evidence of your participation in course activities including, but not limited to, submitting an assignment, taking a test, participating in an online discussion, and working in a group. You will be considered absent if there is no evidence of your participation in the academic activities of this course. Students who do not complete the first week’s assignment or are absent for two weeks or more of the course may be dropped.
Demonstrating Regular and Effective Contact – Glendale College

What is your DE definition of Regular and Effective Contact?

- Can a visitor to a course see in Canvas (or other campus supported CMS) that interaction is regular and effective as defined BY THE CAMPUS (and printed in the catalog and schedule of classes)?

Acceptable methods of regular and effective contact as defined by Glendale Community College Academic Senate:

Instructor-Student Examples:
- Archivable personalized feedback via CMS or district email
- Frequent interaction in discussion boards within the CMS. (Any discussion of grades must remain private)
- Archivable and ADA compliant Chat/IM
- ADA compliant Synchronous Sessions / Closed captioned video conferencing
- OFFICE HOURS ARE NOT a form of instruction
Regular and Effective Contact (as defined at Glendale College)

Student-Student Examples:
- Messaging via the CMS
- Discussion boards
- Chat/IM
- Synchronous/Asynchronous Document Editing
- Synchronous/Real-time group communication tools
- Collaborative projects: group blogs, wikis, webpage, other eTools
Regular And Effective Contact (as defined at Glendale College)

**Student-Content Examples:**
- Synchronous/Asynchronous ADA compliant Modules/Lessons *within the CMS*
- Synchronous ADA compliant Lectures (recorded/streaming/chat)
- Transcribed audio files
- Closed Captioned Podcasts/webinars/screencasts
- Closed Captioned Videoconferencing/CCCConfer
- Discussion Boards *within the CMS*
- ADA Compliant 3rd party auxiliary platforms (You must be prepared to allow the accreditation team member in your 3rd party platform if requested)

**Student-Interface (CANVAS) Examples:**
- Technology devices
- Internet browsers
- Software applications
- Modules/Lessons *within the CMS*
- Discussion boards *within the CMS*
- Other CMS Activities
Regular and Effective Contact--
Foothill College

- *Indicates regulatory language (either State requirement and/or Academic Senate guidance)

**Regular & Effective Contact**

- Attendance documentation
  - *Faculty must record a weekly academically related activity such as discussion forum posting, online quiz, reflection, assignment, exam, email, field trip, telephone call or electronic communication at least through week 7 or the drop with W deadline for each student in an online class.

- Regular and effective contact between faculty and class/students
  - *Instructor response time to course-related, student-initiated communication: standard needs to be 24-48 hours M-F under normal circumstances.
    - Instructor needs to inform students and provide them an alternative method for resolving issues if instructor will be unavailable and/or non-responsive for more than 2 days.
  - *Instructor-initiated communication: standard needs to be that the instructor is visibly engaged with the class on a weekly basis.
    - The course design needs to include a discussion forum (or the equivalent) within the course management system (or an agreed-upon course delivery system), in which the instructor is visibly present and actively monitoring the discussions at a minimum on a weekly basis.
• **Faculty Presence in Delivery of Content**
  • The instructor’s own voice and his/her own original content has to drive and shape the course narrative (content).
  • Examples of ways an instructor’s own original content can drive and shape the course narrative:
    • Instructor-authored content in modules in the form of text and images, video, audio, original PPT (*adhering to Foothill’s accessibility standards, which can be found at: [http://www.foothill.edu/fga/accessibility.php](http://www.foothill.edu/fga/accessibility.php))
    • Instructor-authored assignments and assessments (e.g. tests & quizzes).
    • Instructor-authored announcements (see above under regular and effective contact).
    • Instructor-authored discussion topics and responses.
    • If publisher's content is used (e.g. PPT, video, tests and quizzes), it is integrated with the instructor’s own material in the modules and assessments.
Foothill College – Assessment

**Assessment**

- Assessments should clearly evidence a commitment on the part of the instructor to match the curriculum and learning objectives, as well as the instructor’s own course content, and provide the students with meaningful feedback in a timely manner.
- Assessments should clearly evidence a commitment on the part of the instructor to minimize opportunities for cheating and promote academic integrity.

Examples of ways an instructor can minimize opportunities for cheating and promote academic integrity:

- Require frequent assessment activities throughout the duration of the quarter.
- Utilize a variety of assessment types, some of which utilize the Course Management System’s built-in technology to minimize cheating, such as randomized questions on all exam types and randomized answer order on objective exams.
- Require a proctored exam.
- Provide students opportunities for self assessment.
Accessibility

• Provide all distance education students maximum opportunity to access distance education resources "anytime, anywhere" without the need for outside assistance.
• Criteria is organized around the following four principles, which lay the foundation necessary for anyone to access and use Web content. Anyone who wants to use the Web must have content that is:

1. **Perceivable**: Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they have the ability to comprehend (it can't be invisible to all of their senses), e.g.:
   - Provide text alternatives for non-text content.
   - Provide captions and alternatives for audio and video content.
   - Make content adaptable; and make it available to assistive technologies.
   - Use sufficient contrast to make things easy to see and hear.
Accessibility (continued)

Anyone who wants to use the Web must have content that is:

2. **Operable**: User interface components and navigation cannot require interaction that a user is unable to perform, e.g.:
   - Make all functionality keyboard accessible.
   - Give users enough time to read and use content.
   - Do not use content that may cause seizures.
   - Help users navigate and find content.
Accessibility (continued)

3. Understandable: Information and the operation of user interface cannot be beyond the users’ comprehension, e.g.:
   - Make text readable and understandable.
   - Make content appear and operate in predictable ways.
   - Help users avoid and correct mistakes

4. Robust: Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies
Student Resources

• It will be extremely effective to have the following links and/or files in all DE course shells:

  • Academic Honesty
  • Distance Education Student Page
  • DSPS Handbook
  • Student Services A-Z
  • WELCOME LETTER
  • SYLLABUS
Other Helpful Suggestions

- If a video message is sent, ALSO provide the link to the video message via CANVAS in the corresponding week.

- Make sure videos are closed caption and images have alt-texts. Contact your Instructional Designer for any accessible instructional design assistance via CANVAS.

- If announcements are emailed, ALSO provide the announcements via CANVAS in the corresponding week.
Resources

- California Virtual Campus – Online Education Initiative (CVC-OEI)
  - Online Ecosystem - a suite of online support resources that are free to consortium colleges and available through the CCC Foundation’s College Buys program at a discounted rate to colleges that are not yet part of the Consortium.
    - QuestSmarter
    - Cranium Café
    - NetTutor
    - Proctorio
    - WorldWideWhiteboard
    - NameCoach
Resources (continued)

• CVC-OEI Online Academy
  • POCR (Peer Online Course Review)
  • Online Course Design Rubric
• Webinars
What Senates can do

• Work with the DE Coordinator/Director/Dean to identify opportunities and resources for faculty professional development and student success in the online learning environment
• Collaborate with administrators and budget committee members to institutionally support resources for the continual development of DE faculty
• Adopt resolutions in support of DE initiatives beyond compliance with regulations or standards
Example from Los Angeles Pierce College

- 2018-10-22_NMP_F18-2_DEVTC_DE_Certification_Renewal
- 2018-10-22_NMP_F18-3_DEVTC_DE_Re-Certification
- 2018-10-22_NMP_F18-4_DEVTC_DE_Virtual_Office_Hours
- 2019-03-11_NMP_S19-03_DEVTC_Local_Adoption_of_the_CVC-OEI_Course_Design_Rubric
Thank you!

- For further information, please contact the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges at info@asccc.org