



DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Monday, September 28, 2009, 3:30–5pm, Room 1096, TLC

ATTENDEES: Jennifer Cass, Francine Van Meter, Nancy Stucker, Rosemary Brogan, Letitia Scott-Curtis, Rory O'Brien, Ray Kaupp, John Govsky, Ed Parrish, Barbara Durland, Rachel Mayo, Johanna Bowen.

IT Updates

Ryan Andres, System Administrator is leaving Cabrillo and that leaves only one sys admin in IT, Mikki Adams. Mikki has been working with Ryan on the Blackboard upgrades and the plan is to maintain the status quo on the Blackboard application and database servers. Barb Durland once again did a great job with getting roster information from Datatel to Blackboard, including training Kip Nead in the TLC on how to handle the many name changes that affect student account access. Pam Poandl in the Library has been uploading the daily files for section adds, and creating new Blackboard accounts. The TLC continues to provide help desk support and training on Blackboard use.

This semester we have:

- 7,691 student Blackboard accounts (up from 5,755 accounts in fall 2008)
- 278 faculty Blackboard accounts (up from 231 accounts in fall 2008)
- 265 fall sections
- over 65% of the Blackboard accounts used for hybrid or web-enhanced instruction
- 88 distance education courses

At Instruction Council earlier in the month, VP of Student Services, Dennis Bailey-Fournier stated he met with Marcy Wieland in IT and she is working on authorization codes for late adds. Francine is hoping to schedule a demonstration on the new Blackboard release sometime around the end of November. Our current version will be supported through Fall 2011.

Questions also arose regarding registration issues for co-req courses. Francine will ask A&R to send a rep to the October meeting to address faculty concerns.

DE Retention Study

The Chancellor's Office conducted a study of student retention in distance education courses for the fall semester 2008. An online survey was sent to students who withdrew from a DE course and received a grade of "W". The survey was based on a survey developed by Jurgen Hilke, Distance Education Director at Frederick Community College in Maryland in conjunction with 7 other Maryland community colleges. On Dec. 9, 2008, LeBaron Woodyard held a web meeting with 47 distance education coordinators in attendance to discuss conducting the same survey as Maryland used. Ninety-two colleges expressed interest. In the spring 2008, 8.9% of all system enrollments were DE sections. That's 351,488 students (duplicated headcount). The system wide retention rate for non-DE is 83.6%. For all DE type courses it's 77.25%. There is a 5.8% difference between face-to-face retention rates and DE. The Maryland study showed that students who registered 8-10 weeks prior to the start of the semester have higher success rates. Many of the students did not have counseling and ended up dropping because of too many classes. The majority of students who dropped with a "W" did so for personal reasons; work, family, etc.

View Cabrillo results online at:

<http://app.sqizmo.com/reports/33727/116871/NFZAUC57KNNAFFFACV98358XDIOORM/?ts=1238196962>

An aggregate study including all California Community College participants is being written currently by the Chancellor's Office to present in their annual report to the Board of Governors.

DE Student and Faculty Satisfaction Surveys

The committee reviewed the results of the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 Student Satisfaction surveys. Faculty participation in the faculty survey was poor. Francine encouraged committee members to get the word out how important this data is to the development of the DE program.

The fall student survey had 238 respondents and the spring survey 229. Several questions did not record responses which most likely was due to a faulty programming error in the survey. It appears duplicate responses were entered by students filling out a survey for each DE class they were enrolled in. Each survey contained 18 questions. Respondents indicated 48% were required to attend an on-campus orientation session. Overall, DE courses demanded the same or more time than a traditional on-campus course and the method of instruction was the same or more interesting. Students found understanding the DE material the same or harder than a face-to-face class, and 50% found interaction with the instructor was less. In both terms surveyed, over 80% stated they would take another DE course. The survey contained the usual number of comments about the challenges of an online format, instructor discontent, and course format. However, most comments were about the convenience of online course delivery.

Sample Comments from Students:

"This semester, I took four classes online, after taking only one previously. This was mainly because I worked two jobs."

"I think that by taking online courses as well as my campus courses I am able to fit my classes into a two-day schedule and still be able to work full time without being too overwhelmed by full days of school schedule (on campus). This is a very helpful program to have, and I plan on taking more in the future."

"My DE course requires much more time and homework than any other course I have taken on campus. I think that it should be worth more credits because if I took the same course on campus I wouldn't be devoting as much time as the online course requires."

"I've taken two DE classes. One online only, one classroom and online. Beyond system glitches and unclear submission processes causing late/unaccepted assignments, there is temptation for instructors to let the online classroom do the teaching. This has occurred in both classes. At that point, the topic becomes flat, students work in isolation and the power of the classroom is lost."

"Being a working adult and father of three young children, being able to access coursework online has been of great help to me for improving my knowledge and furthering my career. Though I do not think that online courses can or should completely replace all college work, they can be a great way to make progress. Please keep them available."

"First online class. English 1A. Far superior experience overall for the self motivated person trying to juggle your life with bettering yourself through school. Taking 4 of 5 classes online next semester, please keep them coming, they are allowing me rebuild my life!"

"Enjoy online classes very much. I am a firefighter and work 72 hours a week making school very difficult to attend at a campus. I find the online courses an excellent way to achieve higher learning, while meeting the demanding schedule of my job. Please continue to provide these classes."

"This was my first on-line class and as a full-time, and then some, working adult I am limited on the classes that are available as I cannot take time off from work. I found this method of learning very convenient as I could choose the time I would do my work than having to drive, park, etc., to campus. It also pushed me to expand my knowledge and become more computer/internet savvy. The instructor was very responsive and supportive to help me to learn and succeed in her class."

“It was very helpful to be able to do distance learning because I have to use voice-activated software to take notes, and it can distract others in a classroom setting. Also, I had a lot of drs. appts this semester and problems with meds, so driving was difficult at times. I'm very grateful this kind of flexible learning was available, so that I could attend college this semester and take classes toward my degree in Community Health/Health Education.”

Distance Education Degree Matrix

In spring 2008, the Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges approved a Substantive Change Proposal for Cabrillo to offer 6 online degree options to students. With cuts in course sections, some courses necessary to complete these degrees were eliminated from the DE schedule. Anthro 1, Anthro 1L, and Philo 10 were eliminated and VAPA is considering eliminating the bulk of their DE offerings. Francine addressed Instruction Council with concern over the integrity of the online degree and what that would mean to both distance students and on-campus students who meet selected degree requirements with online classes. Renée suggested Francine meet with the Deans to brainstorm ways to offer courses on a rotating basis so students can fulfill requirements within a reasonable period of time. Letitia will introduce the topic to Faculty Senate and Francine will attend on Oct. 20 to discuss what administration's position is regarding the DE degree option.

Online Writing Lab Closure

Due to staff illness and staff reductions, the Online Writing Lab closed this semester. Joseph Carter, Program Chair told Francine it was a temporary closure. Leticia was concerned about support for students in English. This was also a big concern for faculty who teach classes with a heavy writing component. A suggestion was made to ask PRO if we can find out how many students awarded degrees in the past year also took DE courses, and how many. The relationship between distance courses and students with degree goals should be researched. This data would re-enforce the need for parity in support services, and preserving courses necessary to complete degree GE patterns.