



DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Monday, September 27, 2010, 3:30–5pm, Room 1096, TLC

ATTENDEES: Rory O'Brien, Rachel Mayo, Francine Van Meter, Georg Romero, John Govsky, Jennifer Cass, Dale Attias, Kip Nead, Letitia Scott-Curtis, Nancy Stucker, Nancy A. Brown, Craig Hayward

The DE Master Plan strategies were discussed and progress thus far on achieving the goals outlined in the plan, Strategy #B3a. Since the DE Master plan was approved by the Board in June 2009, the committee has revised the evaluation process for faculty teaching online, put the student evaluation of online instructor form on the web, and developed a list of DE competencies for Deans. This semester, the committee will work on developing a DE digest for the Faculty Handbook, and research and identify success and retention strategies.

Francine shared a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, "Preventing Online Dropouts: Does Anything Work?" by Marc Parry

<http://chronicle.com/blogPost/Preventing-Online-Dropouts-/27108/>

The article suggests that nothing works, that students drop online courses for many reasons not related to what happens in the course. For example, they may drop because of changes in work duties or family responsibilities. The author also acknowledges things like financial aid issues play a large role in determining if a student completes an online course. Letitia commented how we as instructors often feel guilt when students don't perform well and we must realize the circumstances are often not under our control.

Francine suggested we look at the distance committee's role in leading the way in the use of technology-mediated instruction and best practices for effective instructor-student contact. The culture of student communications has changed and we have an opportunity to examine first hand what works and what doesn't. A short video on the culture of social networks and education was viewed. Many Web 2.0 applications are now available to Cabrillo faculty and staff, including Google docs, calendar, moderator, and site tools. Another consideration when selecting communication tools is whether or not they are accessible via mobile technologies.

The stats for Blackboard were presented, and as of 9/9/2010, there were 7,918 student Blackboard accounts, 192 faculty Blackboard accounts, and 320 fall sections, including 87 distance education courses. Over 50% of the Blackboard accounts used for hybrid or web-enhanced instruction. Hybrid is defined as any portion of face-to-face contact hours is replaced with online contact, and that portion is less than 51% of the course.

IT will be installing the new version of Blackboard on the test server this week. Application support staff will go through training, and hopefully before Thanksgiving we'll have 15-20 classes tested and ready for faculty owners to review and test. Once we are able to assess the progress of the installation and training for support, training will be scheduled for the 192 faculty who currently have accounts. The transition timeline may allow for summer online courses to use Bb 9.1 and all courses fall 2011.