

Distance Education Update

Planning and Budget Council

Nov 2013

Current Status

Course Offerings: In the fall 2013 semester, 55 sections of 43 courses were offered via the distance learning modality with 34 sections offered fully on-line and 21 offered in the hybrid format, which includes both hybrid and web-assisted formats. There was a total enrollment in distance learning courses in the fall 2013 semester of 1,638 (10.8% of total census enrollment) with 1104 of these enrollments in on-line sections and 534 in the hybrid sections.

The sections in the spring semester were taught by 37 faculty – 15 full-time and 22 part-time. Because it is possible for a student to take more than 50% of the units for an Associate's degree in the distance learning format the College submitted a substantive change report for distance education to the ACCJC in spring of 2013, which was approved.

State authorization: Since monitoring has begun, we have only had 1 out-of-state student and that was in the spring of 2013.

Faculty Development: There is a central core of both full time and part time faculty teaching distance education, and most also teach on campus. Faculty have been trained for distance learning through 3 main routes – informal “training” with or without a mentor, STOT (Structured Training for Online Teaching) offered through the district and @One training supported by the State Chancellor's Office. As of fall 2013, 28 faculty have participated in STOT training and at least 5 have taken 1 or more courses through @One.

Student Support: Through WebSmart, students can perform all aspects of registration online. Financial aid services are available on-line as well. Books may be purchased through the bookstores website and other on-line book vendors. Some limited eCounseling is available, especially for more routine questions. The library offers an array of online resources and services that support all students. An on-line orientation for students is now available.

Students are encouraged, but not required, to take a self assessment to determine if online learning is the type of learning in which they would be able to engage and be successful. However, no student is prevented from enrolling in an online course based on the self assessment. This self-assessment is available on the District's Distance Education Gateway and a link is provided in WebSchedule with each online course listing. The Learning Center attempts to provide support for all classes, no matter their mode of delivery. Most of the students taking Cañada's online courses live within driving distance of the college, however many of them work. Tracking the usage of the Learning Center we have learned that most online students come to the Center rather than choosing online support.

Update on goals from last year

Our major goals last year focused on developing faculty and courses. Significant strides were made on many of the goals and objectives in the strategic plan from last year.

Goal #1: Broaden distance education course offerings to meet the needs of Cañada students

Objective 1.1 Review the rate of growth of on-line offerings and enrollment to allow planning for future offerings. Share the reflections with Deans and faculty to ensure planning and scheduling allow growth as indicated by the data review.

In our effort to broaden distance education course offerings to meet the needs of Cañada students, we continue to monitor closely the number of sections of online and hybrid courses and the enrollment in these sections. The Deans has worked hard to recruit faculty to teach online courses in areas where there is student interest. This activity resulted in a significant increase in online offerings in the summer of 2013 and significant increase in enrollment for the summer session.

Objective 1.2 Survey our students to determine which students are looking for on-line education and which courses they would be taking

We have developed a survey tool used with our online students to determine their course taking behavior and what courses they are looking for in the distance education format. Contrary to our guesses, our summer students were 95% from within the district and they are mostly interested in GE transfer courses. They feel that frequent faculty contact is the #1 support that leads to their success in distance education courses.

Objective 1.3 Develop a process and plan for determining if out-of-state students are enrolling in our on-line courses

No automated process has been developed. To date, each semester a researcher is asked to search for non-CA students enrolled in online classes, then each identified student is investigated further to see if they are out-of-state. We have only had 1 out-of-state student since this process has been followed – spring 2013. This student, from Pennsylvania, found an engineering class he needed on the CA Virtual College website.

Goal #2: Develop a community of well-trained DE faculty members

Objective 2.1 Continue to provide training and support for faculty interested in teaching via distance education

We offering training and support for all faculty and staff. Most of this training is done by our instructional designer. Over the past 2 years, we have doubled the number of adjunct faculty teaching distance education.

Objective 2.2 Work with and through the district DEAC to coordinate faculty development through STOT training and through @One

It has been difficult to get the district personnel behind encouraging faculty to obtain training through @One.

Objective 2.3 Encourage faculty to attend DE conferences and share their experience with their colleagues

Attendance has been encouraged, but limited faculty have attended.

Objective 2.4 Share the Distance Education Handbook with faculty

Each fall we update the Distance Education Handbook and make it available to all faculty teaching through the distance education format. We have also developed a checklist to use as professional development each semester for faculty accepting distance education courses.

Goal #3: Develop DE assessment

Objective 3.1 Have distance education modifications to courses reviewed by experts in distance learning

We have been able to have courses submitted to the curriculum committee be reviewed by the instructional designer for adherence to the best practices in distance education.

Objective 3.2 Work with the trust committee to help develop specific evaluation tools for distance education courses that target requirements for accreditation of distance education.

The instructional designer has worked with the Performance Evaluation Task Force to contribute ideas for the development of evaluation tools for distance education.

Objective 3.3 Continue to routinely assess and review the performance of students in on-line compared to face-to-face classes.

It remains an on-going task of the research office to track success and retention in online and hybrid courses compared to traditional courses.

Goal #4: Increase student awareness, retention, and success

Objective 4.1 Link a self-assessment of student readiness for distance education to course descriptions in WebSmart

The district IT staff has agreed to add a link to the readiness assessment for each course listed as an online course in WebSchedule.

OCEN 100 - Oceanography at Cañada College for Fall 2013 (CRN : 92153)

This course is offered online and it is recommended you complete a short self-assessment to ensure readiness before taking an online course.

http://www.smccd.edu/degateway/self_assessment.php

Objective 4.2 Determine whether changes to the course descriptions for students might prevent misconceptions about courses and the requirements for on-line learning

We are experimenting with course and section descriptions to see if we can improve student understanding of the requirements for on-line learning.

Objective 4.3 Continue to monitor services to students enrolled in distance education to ensure access to services

We continue to monitor useage of the online orientation, online counseling services, online library services, etc. to ensure access for our students.

Objective 4.4 Develop an “online bill of rights/code of conduct” and a transparent grievance/appeals process for on-line students for the 13-14 catalog

There was district-wide discussion of the development of an “online bill of rights/code of conduct” and a transparent grievance/appeals process for on-line students for the 13-14 catalog, but the status of this is uncertain.

Objective 4.5 Complete a study of the student services offered by other colleges with robust and successful distance education programs and determine what we can add or improve at Cañada College

Kim Lopez investigated the student services offered by other colleges with robust distance education programs and, together with Jane Rice, the distance education website has been updated.

Objective 4.6 Recruit someone knowledgeable about student services and interested in distance learning to help plan the growth of services to our distance learners

Robin Richards and Kim Lopez continue to be engaged in on-going discussions about student services for distance education students.

Goals for Distance Education for the 2013-14 Academic Year

Mission

The mission of the distance education initiative is to increase opportunities for our diverse student population by offering flexible and innovative instruction via technology. In keeping with the mission of the College, the distance education initiative is committed to meeting the changing needs of our community by developing distance learning opportunities that increase student access, support student success, and provide quality instruction in general, transfer, career, and basic skills education, while also fostering relationships between faculty, staff and students.

Goal #1: Broaden distance education course offerings to meet the needs of Cañada students

Objective 1.1 Determine the overarching goals of the College in terms of distance education.

Objective 1.2 Continue to monitor online offerings and enrollment to allow planning for future offerings. Share the reflections with Deans and faculty to ensure planning and scheduling allow growth as indicated by the data review

Objective 1.3 Continue to survey our students to determine which students are looking for on-line education and which courses they would be taking

Goal #2: Develop a community of well-trained DE faculty members

Objective 2.1 Continue to provide training and support for faculty interested in teaching via distance education

Objective 2.2 Work with and through the district DEAC to coordinate faculty development through STOT training and through @One

Objective 2.3 Encourage faculty to attend DE conferences and share their experience with their colleagues

Objective 2.4 Update and share the Distance Education Handbook with faculty

Objective 2.5 Finalize and implement the faculty check-list for distance education assignments

Objective 2.6 Develop a plan to fund distance education training and the instructional designer once Measure G ends.

Goal #3: Increase student awareness, retention, and success

Objective 3.1 Continue to routinely assess and review the performance of students in on-line compared to face-to-face classes.

Objective 3.2 Continue to monitor services to students enrolled in distance education to ensure access to services

Objective 3.3 Recruit and train a cadre of student tutors for online tutoring with an emphasis on writing and math.

Objective 3.4 Assess the usage and effectiveness of online tutoring