



CYPRESS COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance Education Plan

2011 – 2014



Document Review & Approval Dates

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About the Distance Education Plan

Distance Education Plan documents the current state of the program and defines the immediate goals of the Distance Education Program at Cypress College. This plan guides the growth and development of the program over the course of the three years in which it is in effect. The 2011 – 2014 Distance Education Plan was developed and approved during the 2011 – 2012 academic year. It is available to the Cypress College community on the shared campus network drive at J:\Distance Education\Distance Education Plan.

The Distance Education Plan is part of the overall planning and budget process at Cypress College. The planning for the Distance Education Program is directly linked to the Educational Master Plan, the Strategic Plan, and the program is funded through the Annual Planning and Budget Process including the One-time Budget Allocation process.

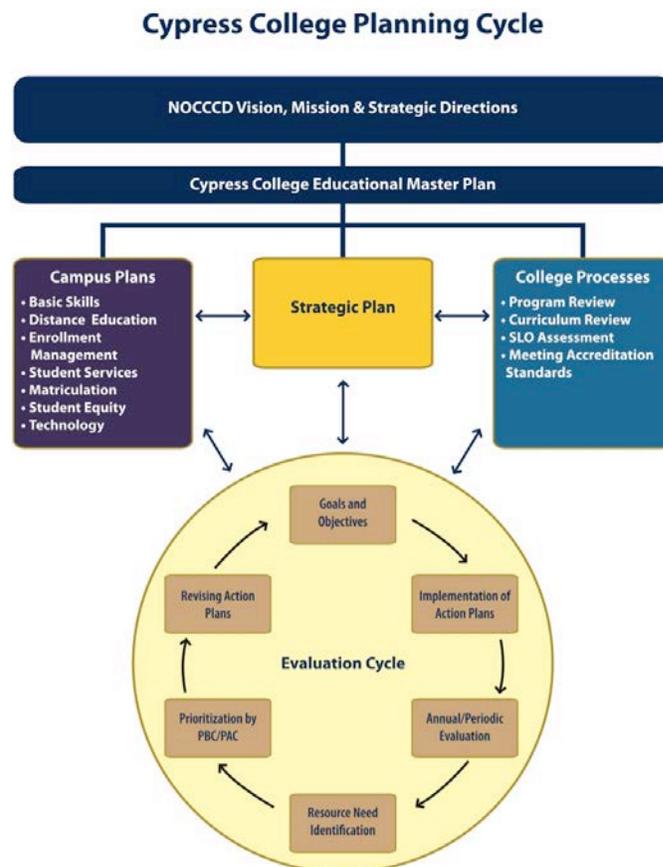


Figure 1: The Cypress College Planning Cycle shows how the Distance Education Plan and evaluation cycle are linked to the Educational Master Plan and other College processes.

The Distance Education Plan Development Process

The triennial process for evaluating the Distance Education Plan requires the participation of Distance Education staff, the Distance Education faculty, the Distance Education Advisory group, the Academic Senate, the Planning and Budget Committee, and the President's Advisory Cabinet.

Evaluating and updating the Distance Education Plan is a four-step process:

1. **Planning:** The current plan is presented at a Distance Education Advisory group meeting where participants determine plan sections to be deleted, updated, or added. Suggestions for changes are noted and guide the writing of the new draft.
2. **Writing:** The Distance Education Coordinator and the Instructional Designer prepare the first draft of the new plan using the guidance provided by the Advisory group. This first comprehensive draft is submitted to the Distance Education Dean for review.
3. **Review:** The revised draft of the plan is made available to all Distance Education stakeholders who are asked to submit comments and feedback via a web based form.
4. **Final Revision & Approval:** The Distance Education Dean, Coordinator, and Instructional Designer prepare the final draft of the plan based on the feedback collected during the review process. The final draft is then submitted for approval to the Academic Senate, the Planning and Budget Committee, and the President's Advisory Cabinet.

Distance Education in California

“People expect to be able to work, learn, and study whenever and wherever they want to. Life in an increasingly busy world where learners must balance demands from home, work, school, and family poses a host of logistical challenges with which today's ever more mobile students must cope.” – *Horizon Report Higher Education Edition, 2012, p. 4*

Enrollment Growth

Distance Education is an important part of California higher education. Of the state's three public higher education systems, the California Community Colleges are the largest provider of distance education offerings (Steenhausen & Boilard, 2010, p.3). From 2005 to 2010 among the California Community Colleges there was an overall

enrollment growth in distance education sessions that exceeded growth in traditional sessions, this in spite of a decrease in enrollment due to budget cuts stemming from the state fiscal crisis in 2009 to 2010 (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p.15).

Growth is fueled by demand. Students with ubiquitous access to web and mobile technologies value and expect the convenience of access to course content anywhere, anytime. This expectation has been met by the adoption of asynchronous communication methods for course delivery, "Online instruction (asynchronous Internet) delivery is by the far the most widely used method of conducting DE because it offers students the greatest flexibility in taking courses" (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p.11).

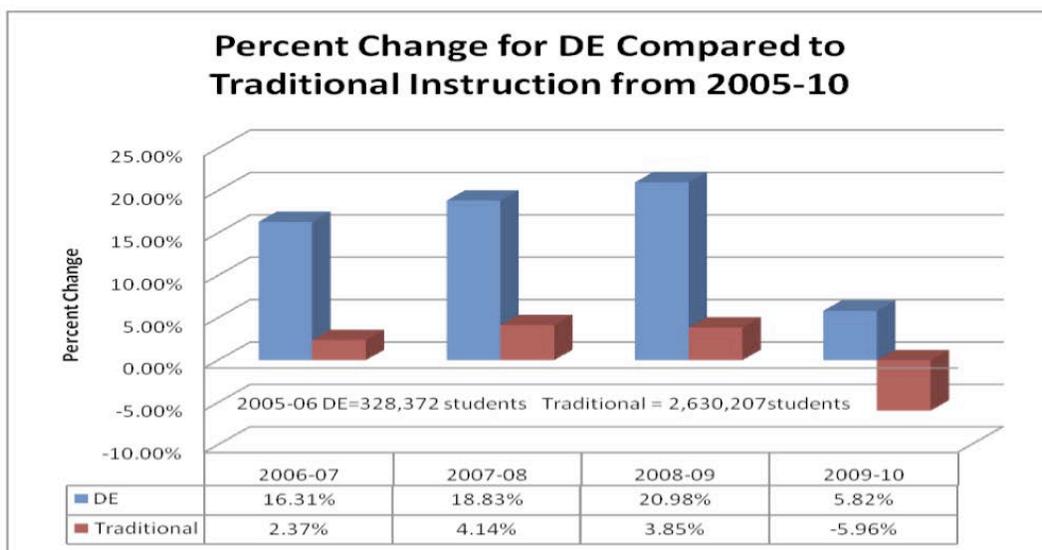


Figure 2: Graph 3 *Percentage change for DE compared to traditional instruction from 2005 to 2010.* "In the five -year period, there was an overall average enrollment growth rate of 1.10 percent in traditional education sessions compared to 15.48 percent in distance education sessions" (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p.15-16).

State survey results show that California higher education students choose distance education because Internet based courses facilitate access to a college education and integrate more easily with other aspects of their lives. Flexible learning schedules permit students to arrange work, family, and other personal obligations to suit their individual needs. According to the 2011 California State Chancellor's report on Distance Education, based on survey data which included the participation of 1,073 Cypress College students (p.77), "The reasons why students take DE courses can be summarized in one word: convenience" (p. 35). Students take distance education courses because they provide a more convenient way to manage both a heavy work schedule and "personal circumstances (family, health, etc.)" (p. 34). Interestingly,

these were also the top two reasons students gave for dropping a distance education course (p. 35).

Challenges to Distance Education

Distance education courses are required to maintain the same academic standards as traditional in-person courses and face many of the same challenges, especially as technology is increasingly infused in traditionally delivered instruction.

Recommendations to the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges found in the State Chancellor's 2011 Distance Education Report, as well as results from the Instructional Technology Council (ITC) survey which looks primarily at public community colleges across the United States (ITC, 2010), and observations noted in the Horizon Report Higher Education Edition from the New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (Johnson et al., 2012), all reiterate common challenges to post-secondary distance education.

Of the issues confronting distance education listed in these reports, the following are the most relevant to the direction of Cypress College Distance Education goals and objectives for 2011 – 2014.

- 508 accessibility compliance
- Academic integrity
- Access to student services
- Distance education and web enhanced course growth
- Mobile course delivery, design, and access for teaching and learning
- Student authentication
- Success and retention rates

Distance Education at Cypress College

Distance Education is quickly becoming an integral part of the college mission. There is progressively less distinction between traditional instruction and distance education as instructional technology is adopted throughout the breadth of the college curriculum. The motivations (Cypress College, 2006; Howell, Williams, & Lindsay, 2003) to adopt and expand distance education offerings are strong across all levels of the college community.

- **Institutional Motivation:** The institutional and administrative motivators for offering Distance Education classes include the efficient use of physical space and the need to offer an alternative delivery method for those who cannot come to campus. Special populations served by distance education include place-bound students, international students, retired students, military students, and students with disabilities.

- **Program Motivation:** Cypress College programs have implemented distance education for a variety of reasons, including: student demand for distance education options, program survival in periods of low enrollment, student recruitment to the in-person program, competition with programs offered by other institutions, and efficient physical space utilization.
- **Student Motivation:** Student reasons for taking Distance Education classes are many and include: an increasing reliance on mobile devices for daily tasks, the need for flexible academic schedule to facilitate meeting work and family responsibilities, 24/7 online access to courses, reduction of commuting time and transportation expenses, and the opportunity for disabled students and working couples and single parents to continue their education.
- **Faculty Motivation:** Faculty members decide to teach Distance Education courses for a variety of reasons, including: flexibility in work hours, opportunity for professional development in technical and pedagogical skills, and enhancement of traditional instructional methods, such as transferring curriculum development and teaching techniques from online to the traditional classroom.

Overview of Distance Education at Cypress College

Distance Education at Cypress College, like other colleges in the state, is conducted predominantly using online asynchronous communication. Distance Education at Cypress College primarily refers to the delivery of online and hybrid courses, although synchronous web based course delivery systems are also employed.

California Community Colleges State Chancellor's Definition

The State Chancellor's Office defines distance education in the California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines.

"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)." (Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges Academic Affairs Division Instructional Programs and Services, 2008)

It is important to note that section 55206 of the Guidelines also include specific curriculum procedures for hybrid as well as online classes:

“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. NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code” (p. 7).

Accrediting Commission Definition

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) defines distance learning for accreditation purposes.

“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” (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2011, p. 5).

Application of State Definition of Distance Education at Cypress College

Cypress College distance education is defined as instruction where students and faculty are separated by distance and interact using a variety of technologies. There are three types of courses supported by the Distance Education Program.

Online Course

- **Cypress College Definition:** An online course at Cypress College is a class offered entirely online or a class that meets both online and in person for orientation and/or exams, but not for in-person instruction.
- **Definition for students in Schedule of Classes:** Online Courses have no in-person classroom instruction. All instruction is online, although some courses have a few on-campus meetings for orientations and/or tests.

Hybrid Course

- **Cypress College Definition:** A hybrid course at Cypress College is a class that offers instruction both online and on-campus. Required in-person class meetings are included in the schedule of classes following a predictable pattern (on the same day(s) of the week and at the same time).
- **Definition for students in Schedule of Classes:** Hybrid Courses are taught both in person and online. While a class may not meet every week, those meetings that are scheduled will occur on the same day and at the same time of the week.

Web Enhanced Course

- **Cypress College Definition:** Web enhanced courses at Cypress College are in-person classes that offer students access to class materials and resources online. Web enhanced courses may offer supplemental activities, home work activities, and facilitate electronic submission of coursework and communication. Web enhanced courses may not use Internet-based resources or activities to replace required on-campus instruction or in-seat contact hours.
- **Current Practice:** Web enhanced courses at Cypress College are in-person courses that use the web to deliver materials, not to replace required in-person instruction or in-seat contact hours. Trained instructors may use Blackboard™ course sites. The District portal, MyGateway, also provides password protected access to course files for all District faculty.

Enrollment Growth of Distance Education at Cypress College

The Cypress College Distance Education Program supports students with online and hybrid courses. As seen in Table 1, the overall enrollment growth for Cypress College Distance Education reflects the growth trend in the state in good economic years and a decrease in years of fiscal challenge. From 2008 to 2011 there was a three year growth rate of 8.7% in distance course FTES at Cypress College.

Table 1: Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES) & Course Sections, 2008 – 2011 (State of California. California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office, 2012)

Academic Year	DE Course Sections	DE FTES	Increase DE FTES Over Prior Year	Total College FTES	DE FTES As Percentage of Total College FTES
2008-2009	565	1,148.81	22.80%	11,230.43	10.20%
2009-2010	597	1,106.01	-3.70%	13,596.67	8.10%
2010-2011	586	1,016.95	-8.05%	12,983.42	7.80%

Growth of Web Enhanced Support

Although support of web enhanced courses is not part of the program mission, when funding allows, the Distance Education Coordinator establishes course sites on the Blackboard™ system for any instructor who requests it and completes the required training. Web enhanced courses are approaching approximately 100 courses each full term semester. In addition to course hosting, web enhanced support includes required instructor CMS training as well as instructor and student technical support. By definition and according to the official designation in the curriculum process, web enhanced courses are considered traditional, not Distance Education courses, and yet represent a growing area of responsibility for the Distance Education Program.

Improved Student Success

Successful student completion of a course is defined as performance with a passing grade or a grade of “C” or better (A, B, C, Credit, or Pass). According to the most recent data for Distance Education method of delivery from 2009 and 2011, Cypress College is exceeding the success rates seen across the state. From 2005 to 2010 in the California Community College system, the success rates for distance education rose from 53% to 57% as compared to the rates in traditional courses, which rose from 64% to 67% over the same time period (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p.23-24).

Figure 3: CCCC Statewide Success Rates. “The number of students in Table 7 is a total student duplicated headcount which means that the students are counted more than once. If they enrolled in two DE courses they were counted two times, etc. The distance education success rate rose slightly in 2009/10, from 53 percent to 57 percent. This success rate compares to an increase from 64 percent in 2005-06 to 67 percent for traditional education students. The gap for the success rate between traditional instruction and DE instruction closed from 11 percent to 10 percent. The success rate for DE courses grew by 2 percentage points in one year from 2008-09 to 2009-10, while the success rate in traditional courses remained the same” (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 23-24).

Table 7

Success Rates for Credit Distance Education and Traditional Education Course Sessions					
(Duplicated Headcount)					
Credit Distance Education Sessions					
Student Outcome	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Completed	319,541	392,145	500,142	649,997	696,088
Not Completed	289,005	346,551	425,762	525,136	524,723
Total	608,546	738,696	925,904	1,175,133	1,220,811
Success Rate	53%	53%	54%	55%	57%
Credit Traditional Education Sessions					
Student Outcome	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Completed	5,390,916	5,469,554	5,725,712	6,208,474	6,264,182
Not Completed	3,024,343	2,963,846	3,023,945	3,105,924	3,024,017
Total	8,415,259	8,433,400	8,749,657	9,314,398	9,288,199
Success Rate	64%	65%	65%	67%	67%

Cypress College success rates are higher than statewide statistics. In Fall 2009, 64% of Cypress College students in hybrid courses and 63% in online courses earned a passing grade or a grade of C or better. These rates of success are 7 to 8 percentage points higher than the state success rate of 57% for 2009 to 2010 (Institutional Planning and Research, 2009, California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 24).

In Fall 2011 the Cypress College Distance Education success rate grew to 72% in hybrid courses, an increase of 8% from 2009. There was a 1% growth to 65% in online courses; together, this represents a difference of 2 percentage points for

hybrid courses and 9% for online courses when compared to the 74% success rate found in traditional lecture courses (Institutional Planning and Research, 2012).

Retention

State retention rates are calculated based on student drops. Students who drop a course with a “W” grade are counted as not having been retained. Between 2005 and 2010 in the California Community College system, there was a difference of 6.96% between the retention of students in distance education and traditional courses and that, “... the rates have generally mirrored each other. When one falls so does the other, and when one raises the other does also.” (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 29) There is no equivalent data specific to Cypress College, however state survey data collected including 1,073 Cypress College students found that the top 2 reasons students gave for taking a distance education course, to accommodate work and personal obligations, were also the top reasons for student withdrawals (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 35).

Program Planning for Retention and Success

While the data shows that student success rates in traditional lecture courses are higher than in distance education courses at Cypress College and across the state, it is important to acknowledge both the improvement made over the recent years and the decrease in the disparity of those statistics, especially in the hybrid delivery format. For planning purposes it is also crucial to target the root causes of this disparity in order to find best practices that will lead to an increase in success and retention.

Most significantly, withdrawal from courses, rather than a lack of success, appears to be one key issue in the disparity of student performance found between traditional lecture and distance education courses: “This seems due to the high level of students who withdraw from their online/hybrid courses, rather than a difficulty in earning an “A” in their online/hybrid class. In fact, a higher proportion of students in online courses earn “A” grades than in the other types of classes” (Institutional Planning and Research, 2012).

There are many reasons that retention remains a challenge for distance education, including student personal and professional issues and lack of access to student services:

“...distance education students may tend to have more personal and professional obligations (a reason why they may have opted to take such classes in the first place), which might cause them to drop the class at higher rates than others. In addition, many campuses cannot yet deliver the same quality of support services to online and offsite students as they do for students on-campus. For instance, while certain activities (such as access to library services) are widely available online, our review found that other

services that promote student success (such as tutoring and a support program for low-income CCC students) are often less readily available to off-campus students.” (Steenhausen, et al., 2010, p. 12-13).

This plan includes program objectives to improve DE student access to student services, increase student participation in the DE course orientation, create a DE student handbook to increase readiness to learn, and disseminate best practices for distance education success and retention.

Dependable Course Management through Managed Hosting

Blackboard™ is the Cypress College official course management system for Distance Education. While a few faculty members may choose to use publisher sites or other commercial and free web services to deliver their Distance Education courses, the program highly recommends that all online and hybrid courses be taught using Blackboard™ to ensure secure and dependable course delivery. Choosing managed hosting for course delivery has proven to be highly reliable and more economical than self-hosting for Cypress College. System maintenance, monitoring, upgrades, technical support, and CMS administration expertise are all part of the managed hosting contract and are more difficult to achieve using self-hosting.

Contracting for managed Blackboard™ hosting provides significant benefits, some of which are apparent to students and faculty members. Most notably, managed hosting has enabled the program to provide consistently reliable uptime, which means Distance Education instructors and students can rely upon uninterrupted course access throughout the semester. For example, between April 2010 and January 2011, the Cypress College Blackboard™ uptime percentage ranged from 99.89% to 100% with only two occurrences of downtime of 8 and 45 minutes each (Blackboard, 2012).

Other benefits of managed hosting occur behind the scenes and may not be evident to a typical user. The DE program Blackboard™ system administrator can depend on the assistance of expert support technicians who are available 24/7 and are always up to date on the newest software implementations. This expertise has proven invaluable for troubleshooting and swift resolution of issues. Managed hosting guarantees against network outages through the use of redundant servers and industry standard safeguards from threats to physical and data security. Remotely hosting the CMS also protects against data loss through natural disasters.

Cypress College Support for Distance Education

The Distance Education Program requires technical stability, personnel, and assurance of yearly funding to remain effective. Distance education delivery infrastructure stability is minimally contingent upon appropriate funding allocation,

assignment of sufficient personnel to manage the program and the technological infrastructure, stable course management system access and server storage space, and continual on-call monitoring of all technical systems related to online program delivery.

Budget

Independent budget unit designation is necessary for the Distance Education Program to guarantee program quality. Full independent budget unit designation will afford the program permanent funding, as opposed to the blend of line item and one-time funding upon which much of the program currently relies.

- **Line Item Designation:** The DE Coordinator position and the campus Instructional Designer position have been given a line item designation in the general fund budget. These positions require only the expenditure of adjunct replacement costs, as faculty members on release time staff both positions.
- **One Time Priority Funding:** The priority one time funding process provides monies for 50% of an Administrative Assistant I, supplies, conference and travel, equipment, and the course management system licensing/hosting and Banner™ integration.

Staffing

Cypress College provides the following staff for Distance Education:

- **Administrative Support:** A Distance Education Dean is assigned to oversee the program.
- **Program Staffing:** A full time Coordinator and a part time (50%) Administrative Assistant staff the Distance Education Program.
- **Staff Development Staffing:** Part time (50%) Instructional Designer support is provided for Distance Education.

Distance Education and Academic Senate

The Education Code recognizes the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards (California Code of Regulations Title 5. Education Division 6. California Community Colleges Chapter 4. Employees Subchapter 2. Certificated Positions Article 2. Academic Senates § 53200. Definitions. 5 CA ADC § 53200, 2009). California Code of Regulations Title 5 further defines these areas to include "...curriculum, ... standards or policies regarding student preparation and success, ... policies for faculty professional development activities, ... (and) processes for program review." This Distance Education Plan recognizes the role of the Academic Senate in these areas, and the DE Program works with the Academic Senate to

ensure that goals, objectives, and final outcomes in these matters receive the Senate's approval.

Distance Education and NOCCCD District Information Services

The NOCCCD Information Services (IS) works with Distance Education at Cypress College on the automatic course management system enrollments (Snapshot). It also provides consultation services and leads a District Distance Education course management system group.

Snapshot™

Snapshot™, a Blackboard™ product, is a process that extracts data from the District Banner system to enable the automatic enrollment of faculty and students for Cypress College Distance Education course sites. A member of the District Information Services staff is responsible for maintaining, revising, and updating the District's production program (PROD), which creates data files using Banner information. Those files are posted on a District FTP server and read by the Snapshot program several times daily. The Distance Education Coordinator works directly with the IS staff member on security procedures and to monitor, diagnose, and troubleshoot Banner integration errors.

Consultation

District Information Services provides advisory support upon request. Information technology research is also available through access to subscription-based information from Educause™.

District CMS Committee

District Information Services sponsors a course management system committee to support the hosting of a Fullerton College course management system. Cypress College Distance Education participates in a resource capacity.

Mission & Program Outcomes

The Cypress College Distance Education Program is committed to working with the Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, the Program Review Committee, Academic Computing, administration, and others to promote student learning and success at a distance, and to serve the distance education needs of our diverse student body by providing high-quality student services and support through a variety of delivery methods.

Program Level Outcomes

The Distance Education program level learning outcomes address student technical competency and academic support awareness:

1. Distance Education students will use the basic features of the Cypress College CMS at a proficiency level sufficient to access course materials and complete course assignments and assessments.
2. Distance Education students will be aware of student academic and support services as a result of direct access to links to those services available on Cypress College CMS course sites or the Distance Education web site.

A Note on Course Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Cypress College instructional programs incorporate student learning outcomes into each course during the curriculum approval process. Distance Education course SLO assessment occurs as part of a Cypress College department's established course level SLO assessment process. The process of instructional assessment is not part of the Distance Education program review or this plan.

Program Review

Measuring the effectiveness of an institution's delivery methods and evaluating student learning is essential to student success. Understanding what is working and why it is working is just as important as understanding what is not working and why it is not working. The Distance Education Program accomplishes this through the Cypress College Program Review process.

Program Review Results 2012

The Cypress College Distance Education Program appears strong and effective based on the results of the independent program review satisfaction surveys conducted for the first Distance Education program review during 2011 – 2012 (Cypress College DE, 2012). These results indicate that the program is succeeding in meeting the needs of Distance Education students and faculty members. Some highlights are:

- **Student Satisfaction with the Online Classroom:** A significant majority of students were satisfied with the course management system. Of those surveyed 85% were satisfied with the quality and 88% were satisfied with the ease of use of the CMS. Almost 85% of students participated in the Cypress College Blackboard Student Orientation with or without instructor customization. A majority, 77.8%, of students agreed that the orientation prepared them to use the basic features of the Blackboard™ course management system (CMS).

- **Faculty Satisfaction with the Program:** Survey results indicate that 84.4 to 90.7 percent of faculty reported Excellent / Good satisfaction with all program core quality measures.
- **Faculty Training:** Faculty respondents reported high levels of satisfaction for the required DE faculty training. Eighty-four percent (83.9%) responded Excellent / Good as the rating for overall quality of training (the majority of respondents completed the retired version of the DE instructor training). Consensus of the deans is that while the quality of training was excellent, periodic renewal and/or advanced training would be welcome.

Program Goals & Objectives

Distance Education goals and objectives direct the program's development and improvement process. The DE Program is committed to offering only those new products and services that can be fully supported and funded with the technical, financial, and staffing resources available.

All program objectives from the 2008-2011 Plan have been achieved, except for the office space and accessibility review objectives, which have been included in this plan. Lack of funding and available facilities continue to make establishing dedicated office space difficult. The complexity of 508 accessibility review, limited DE staffing, and a lack of state or federal review guidelines and best practices make the development of an accessibility review a formidable challenge.

All goals and objectives support District Strategic Direction 1

Goal 1: Student Support & Services

Provide the support and services necessary to students for successful distance learning. This goal includes objectives that ensure student access to existing college services as well as services designed to meet the special needs of distance education students.

1. *Objective:* Increase student awareness of course link to information about Cypress College services from 62% to 70% using the following strategies: Student Services guest speaker at DE Advisory meetings, email reminders from coordinator to all DE faculty at the start of each semester, possible system wide Blackboard™ announcements, greater emphasis in Faculty Basics and the Faculty Handbook.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Distance Education Administrative Assistant, Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: Spring 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Increase student participation in DE course orientation from 62% to 70% by adding a requirement to the Distance Education Plan for participation in a course orientation to be completed by the end of the first week of class.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Distance Education Advisory Group

2.2 Timeframe: Spring 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

3. *Objective:* Work with campus-wide groups including Student Services deans and departments, Academic Computing, and Staff Development to develop practical strategies to improve Distance Education student access to student services.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

3.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2014

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

4. *Objective:* Create a Distance Education student handbook to provide basic information needed to be a successful distance learner.

4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

4.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 2: Faculty Support & Services

Provide the support and services necessary to faculty for successful distance instruction.

1. *Objective:* Improve the clarity of communication of *written* procedures for requesting assistance from 71% to 75% by adding procedures to the Distance Education Plan, the Distance Education Faculty Handbook, Blackboard Distance Education course site for faculty, and Faculty Basics.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: Spring 2013

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Improve the clarity of communication of procedures for requesting assistance from 71% to 75% by *publicizing* procedures and contact information through the Distance Education Advisory Group, the Dean's meeting, and Distance Education program email.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

2.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 3: Faculty Training

Provide access to the training necessary to faculty for successful distance instruction. This goal includes objectives that support the professional development of faculty through the Faculty Basics training program and ongoing training in distance education instructional technology and pedagogy.

1. *Objective:* Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible Microsoft Word documents for Distance Education Faculty.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible PowerPoint documents for Distance Education Faculty.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Instructional Designer

2.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Funding for software needed to test and repair PowerPoint slide presentations (in addition to Microsoft PowerPoint). Funding is needed for one of the following: a) server space and staffing for a functional remote desktop supported by Academic Computing, b) a site license, or c) individual licenses for DE faculty. Additional resources have been identified in the DE budget allocation.

3. *Objective:* Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible PDF documents for Distance Education Faculty.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Instructional Designer

3.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Funding for software needed to test and repair PDF documents (Adobe Acrobat Professional). Funding is needed for one of the following: a) server space and staffing for a functional remote desktop supported by Academic Computing, b) a site license, or c) individual licenses for DE faculty. Additional resources have been identified in the DE budget allocation.

4. *Objective:* Offer annual Distance Education webinars about relevant news and information, the use of new tools, and best practices in distance teaching techniques with presenters drawn from experienced Distance Education Cypress College faculty.

4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer, Distance Education Faculty Volunteers

4.2 Timeframe: 2011 – 2014

4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

5. *Objective:* Communicate best practices for improvement in distance education success and retention through workshops, training, and dissemination of materials.

5.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

5.2 Timeframe: 2011 – 2014

5.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 4: Legal Compliance

Continually monitor and revise program requirements to meet state and federal laws and guidelines that apply to distance education in California higher education.

1. *Objective:* Work with campus-wide groups including Disabled Students Programs, Services (DSPS), Academic Computing, and Staff Development on an accessibility review process.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

1.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Work with the Curriculum Committee to update the regular and substantive contact portion of the course outline requirements to reflect changes in federal regulations.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

2.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

3. *Objective:* Work with the Curriculum Committee to develop a Last Date of Attendance policy with guidelines for instructors.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

3.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

4. *Objective:* Update attendance policy in the College catalog to reflect changes in federal regulations.

4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

4.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2012

4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 5: Program Quality

Maintain a quality program through continual program improvement based on the evaluation of policies, procedures, and practices.

1. *Objective:* Identify dedicated Distance Education office space.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean

1.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Unknown

2. *Objective:* Develop a Distance Education teaching and learning mobile strategy.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean, Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer, Distance Education Faculty

2.2 Timeframe: 2013 - 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Unknown

3. *Objective:* Work with the California Blackboard Users Group to develop statewide connections with public and private higher education distance education programs to create a faculty network, share resources, and consult on new regulations and procedures.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

3.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

4. *Objective:* Identify facilities, staffing, and resources needed to establish a Distance Education proctoring center.
 - 4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean, Distance Education Coordinator
 - 4.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014
 - 4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Unknown
5. *Objective:* Work to increase staffing of Administrative Assistant I position from 50% to a full time position with a change in classification to Distance Learning Assistant (Range 36).
 - 5.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean
 - 5.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014
 - 5.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: 0.5 FTE Range 36

Distance Education Guidelines

This section describes the Federal, California State, NOCCCD policies, and Cypress College guidelines that pertain to the Distance Education Program. The following course guidelines ensure that the qualities of academic rigor that apply to traditional in-person courses also apply to distance education courses.

Accessibility

California community colleges are required by state and federal law to ensure that distance education course management systems, course sites, and course materials are accessible to all users. Cypress College also has a moral commitment to provide access to all instructional and support materials to all users, including users with disabilities.

Therefore, all Cypress College Distance Education delivery systems and content must be accessible to all users in accordance with the California Community Colleges System Office Distance Education Guidelines (Chancellor's Office, 2008) accessibility guidelines and specifically in keeping with the Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines for Students with Disabilities (Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines Task Force, 2011).

Syllabus Requirement for Accessibility: A distance education statement should appear in each course syllabus, which informs students with disabilities of available DSPS and instructor support; for example: "Students who anticipate a need for formal, disability-related accommodations to be successful in this distance

education course should contact the instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation in the course and to plan how best to coordinate any necessary accommodations. Students requesting accommodations should meet with their DSPS counselor as soon as possible to coordinate services with the instructor.”

Copyright

Copyright is a form of intellectual property protection that gives a copyright holder legal rights over the use, sale, reproduction, distribution, display, or creation of derivatives of a given original work. Copyright infringement refers to violation of these rights. Distance Education faculty, staff, and students must abide by United States copyright law and protect against copyright infringement.

In accordance with District policy, Administrative Procedure 3750 (AP 3750) Use of Copyrighted Material, NOCCCD employees and students shall not reproduce copyrighted materials without prior permission of the copyright owner, except as allowed by the “fair use” doctrine (NOCCCD, 2004).

Syllabus Requirement for Copyright: A distance education copyright notice should appear in each course syllabus, which states: “Any copyrighted materials used in this class are used for distance education purposes only and in compliance with United States copyright law. Use of these materials is limited to students enrolled in the course, for the duration of the course. Students must refrain from saving, changing, or distributing any such copyrighted materials.”

Course Guidelines

All Distance Education Program courses must be approved by the Cypress College Curriculum committee and include required distance education information and effective contact strategies among other required information.

Course Approval & Curriculum

Course approval and curriculum is the responsibility of the Cypress College Curriculum Committee. Distance Education courses are specifically reviewed and approved for distance education delivery by the Curriculum Committee with input from the Distance Education Coordinator.

The California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines state that “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 on-campus interaction between instructor and student, the course shall be separately reviewed and approved according to the district’s adopted course approval procedures” (Chancellor’s Office California Community Colleges Academic Affairs Division Instructional Programs and Services, 2008, Section 55206, p. 7).

And, according to NOCCCD Administrative Procedures 4105 articles 2.1 and 2.2, Distance Education courses shall be reviewed and approved following the same curriculum approval procedures as all other courses (NOCCCD, 2011).

Regular and Substantive Contact

Regular effective contact initiated by the instructor is essential for student success in a Distance Education course. Title 5 Education Code states that, “Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students....” (California Education Code Section 55204) and the Association of Community and Junior Colleges specifically defines contact as, “...regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor...” (ACCJC, p. 5). This requirement for regular instructor contact with students is also affirmed in NOCCCD Administrative Procedures 4105 article 3.1.3, which states that, “Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students” (NOCCCD, 2011).

Distance Education is defined by regular and substantive contact. One way distance education differs from correspondence learning is in the type of interaction that takes place in a course. In a correspondence course the primary student interaction is with the course material and the "Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student" (ACCJC, p.6). Correspondence courses are, by definition, not distance education.

Regular substantive interaction between students and the instructor affects distance education student authentication, College accreditation, and student financial aid, and consequently must be demonstrable and documented. According to the ACCJC:

“Effective practice is required at the course level: USDE [US Department of Education] audits can include examination of syllabi, student and faculty interviews, and usage patterns on the Learning Management system by faculty and students.

Courses which largely consist of written work completed and submitted by students and graded by instructors, and/or completion of tests, will fit the definition of correspondence education rather than distance education” (ACCJC, 2012).

For a course to meet ACCJC guidelines for quality distance education, and not be designated as correspondence education, it should include instructor-initiated contact information in the syllabus, regular substantive interaction activities between students and the instructor as part of the final student grade, and demonstrable activity or records of regular interaction between students and the instructor in the course management system.

Instructor Initiated Regular Substantive Contact Practices

In a distance education environment substantive contact refers to communication and interaction with a person, and not to student interaction with course materials or multimedia content. **Regular substantive contact means that an instructor must regularly initiate interaction with a student to determine progress and active engagement in the course.**

Accepted practices for regular and substantive contact between instructors and students include both the type and the frequency of contact.

1. **Type of Contact:** “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 seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities” (California Education Code Section 55204).
2. **Frequency of Contact:** The standards that apply to traditional in-person courses also apply to distance education courses. The frequency of instructor-initiated contact should therefore be equivalent to a traditional non-Distance Education course.

Syllabus Requirement for Instructor Initiated Contact: A distance education instructor initiated contact statement should appear in each course syllabus describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback. The following example should be customized to match the official course outline, individual faculty preferences, and existing syllabus information regarding contact hours specifying expectations for responsiveness and availability.

“During the course of each week I will contact you regularly just to keep in touch, but also to verify your progress, participation, and performance. Our contact will be in the form of a combination of the following or other similar activities:

- Announcements
- Group or individual meetings
- Orientation and review sessions
- Supplemental seminar or study sessions
- Field trips
- Library workshops
- Telephone contact
- Voice mail
- Email
- Feedback on your coursework

- CCC Confer meetings
- Video conferences”

Course Quality Evaluation & Assessment

The same standards of quality, currency, and assessment of student learning outcomes that apply to traditional in-person courses also apply to distance education courses.

The California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines for Course Quality Standards state that, “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 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...” (Section 55202, p. 6).

According to NOCCCD Administrative Procedures 4105 articles 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, “The same standards of course quality are applied to the distance education courses as are applied to traditional classroom courses.” And, “Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education course were made with the full involvement of the academic deans, and curriculum committees” (NOCCCD, 2011).

Currency of Materials and Courses

Individual Distance Education faculty members are responsible for the currency and overall quality of the distance education courses they teach. It is expected that faculty will design, review, and revise course content as needed to ensure that distance education courses remain accurate, up to date, and consistent with accepted discipline standards and distance education instructional strategies.

Last Date of Attendance

The last date of academic attendance, commonly known as the Last Day of Attendance (LDA), is the date the College uses to determine the necessity and/or the amount of financial aid that must be returned to the Department of Education due to student withdrawal. The Department of Education (DOE) specifically requires “...using a last date of attendance at an academically-related activity as a withdrawal date, it is up to the institution to ensure that accurate records are kept for purposes of identifying a student’s last date of academic attendance or last date of attendance at an academically-related activity” (DOE, 2010, 66898).

For Distance Education purposes the last login into a course management system is not accepted as the last day of attendance. Instead, the Department of Education refers to *academic engagement* as the activity-based standard for determining the last date of attendance. There is as yet no consensus within the California

Community Colleges on how to handle attendance verification for financial aid purposes in an online environment, however regulations include the following guidance:

(7)(i) “Academic attendance” and “attendance at an academically-related activity”—

(A) Include, but are not limited to—

(1) Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;

(2) Submitting an academic assignment;

(3) Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;

(4) Attending a study group that is assigned by the institution;

(5) Participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and

(6) Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; (DOE, 2010, 66952)

Activities where students may be present but exhibit no evidence of academic engagement are excluded from determining Last Day of Attendance, for example, “(3) Logging into an online class without active participation; or (4) Participating in academic counseling or advisement” (DOE, 2010, 66952).

Last Day of Attendance Documentation

In case of audit, it is required that faculty members routinely record student withdrawals with some form of documentation of the last date a student was academically engaged in the course. This documentation should be stored with grades and other official course records for the College required five-year length of time (Cypress College Catalog, 2012, Grade Change, p. 16; NOCCCD 2010).

Last Day of Attendance in the Course Syllabus

According to Cypress College policy, attendance based drops are prompted by inactivity in the course and lack of contact:

In the case where a class is taught entirely online, instructors may drop students who have not been in contact with the instructor by the end of the first day of classes for that semester or short-term session.

ABSENCES

Absences are handled as follows:

- After a student accumulates in any class more than a week’s absences (more than the number of times the class meets per

week), consecutive or nonconsecutive, an instructor may drop the student according to the drop deadline dates.

- In the case of hybrid and online classes, an absence may be identified as “a missed assignment,” “a missed assignment series” or ~~“inactivity in the course site as evidenced by Blackboard’s tracking statistics.” It is up to the instructor to decide which system to use.~~ [Strikethrough added] It is also the instructor’s responsibility to specify in the written syllabus what constitutes “a missed assignment,” “a missed assignment series” or “inactivity in the course site.” For example, in a three-unit online class (that would typically meet on campus three hours a week), the fourth “missed assignment” or the fourth “missed assignment series” or eight consecutive days of “inactivity in the course site” could be grounds for dismissal (Cypress College Catalog, 2012, p. 12).

The portion of the policy that refers to login statistics as a method of determining student drops: “...*inactivity in the course site as evidenced by Blackboard’s tracking statistics’.* It is up to the instructor to decide which system to use...”, is inconsistent with recent Department of Education regulation changes which rule out logins to determine the last day of attendance and instead specifies the use of “Academic attendance” and “attendance at an academically-related activity” (DOE, 2010, 66952). While CMS inactivity as evidenced by login statistics may be used in the college context for student drops, these statistics should not be used to document the Last Day of Attendance. To facilitate record keeping, attendance statements in a Distance Education syllabus should be written with this in mind.

Syllabus Requirement for Attendance: A Distance Education attendance statement, in accordance with the College’s attendance policy and Department of Education regulations, should appear in each course syllabus specifying how absences are managed. The following example should be customized to match the course delivery method and the official course outline.

“Absences in this course are accounted for by monitoring academic attendance or attendance at an academically-related activity. You will be considered to be “present” in this course if there is evidence of your weekly participation in an academically-related activity including, but not limited to, physically attending in-person sessions of a hybrid course, submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, substantively participating in a course online discussion, study group, or other synchronous or asynchronous activity, or by initiating contact with me in matters related to this course.

You will be considered “absent” if there is no evidence of your participation in an academically-related activity for this course for more than one week or if you accumulate a consecutive or nonconsecutive lack of academically-related activity of more than a week, that is more than the number of times the class meets per week.

For example, in a three-unit online class that would typically meet on campus three hours a week, one week's worth of missed academically-related assignment(s) or activity(ies) would be grounds for dismissal. If you have not submitted assignments or participated in an academically-related activity for one week, you may be dropped from the course."

Course Orientation

Instructors are responsible for creating and requiring a comprehensive course orientation to prepare students to access their course materials, complete course assignments and assessments, and be successful in the class. The Distance Education Program provides a Blackboard student orientation in support of this requirement. The Blackboard orientation serves as an introduction to basic CMS functionality, which is only one important component of a comprehensive course orientation.

Evaluation of Faculty

Probationary and Tenured Faculty

The same evaluation standards that apply to probationary and tenured faculty teaching traditional in-person courses also apply to faculty teaching distance education courses as part of their load, as negotiated in the Agreement Between the NOCCCD and the United Faculty (2008, Article 17 & Article 18).

Distance Education instructors give the evaluator access to the course site for a specific time period during which the evaluation takes place. The instructor maintains control over access to the course site. This process emulates the steps followed with an in-person class when the evaluator attends a specific class meeting selected by the instructor. Instructions for Distance Education course evaluation procedures are located on the College network at J:\Distance Education\DE Course Evaluation.

Adjunct Faculty

The same evaluation standards that apply to adjunct faculty teaching traditional in-person courses also apply to adjunct faculty teaching distance education courses, as negotiated in the Agreement Between NOCCCD and Adjunct Faculty United (2009, Article 9). The Distance Education course evaluation protocols for probationary and tenured faculty apply to adjunct faculty.

Electronic Mail

Email is an official method of communication for Cypress College Distance Education. Distance Education faculty and staff can expect to receive important program communication via the campus provided email system. Distance Education faculty and staff email is advertised on the campus website to facilitate

communication with students. For these reasons, it is strongly recommended that faculty use a Cypress College email account (@cypresscollege.edu) as the primary account for distance education course communication.

Faculty Home Pages

All Distance Education faculty members are required to create and maintain a Cypress College faculty home page to facilitate prospective student communication and enrollment. To obtain a faculty home page account a faculty member must complete the required training offered through Academic Computing. Academic Computing offers home page account support through the Help Desk.

Distance Education faculty home pages must include:

- **Instructor Information:** Basic information about the instructor.
- **Contact Information:** Instructor contact information.
- **Distance Education Course Information:** Information sufficient to enable a student to determine whether the course is an appropriate fit with the student's semester schedule and academic plan.

Detailed home page requirements for Distance Education are included as part of the training and are available in the home page help files.

Student Authentication & Fraud Prevention

North Orange County Community College District AP 4105 includes a federal student authentication requirement for Distance Education courses. In accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, student authentication in Distance Education courses helps to assure academic integrity and also to prevent financial aid fraud targeted at online education (NOCCCD, 2011).

Student authentication specifically requires that, "...institutions of higher education offering distance education programs have a process by which the institution of higher education establishes that a student registered for a distance education course is the same student that participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course." (110th Congress, 2008, Part H Program Integrity, Section 496) Thus, concerns regarding authentication impact student identification at various times during the semester, including "...verifying the identity of students throughout the cycle of an online course: registration, participation, assessment, academic credit" (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011).

There are currently three accepted approaches to authentication:

- Secure credentialing/login and password
- Proctoring

- Technology authentication systems

Cypress College Distance Education requires the current standard for authentication: all distance education course work must be accomplished through a secure course management system with unique usernames and passwords used each time a student engages in online coursework. Course design and facilitation strategies to assure authentication and accountability are included in the Authentication and Fraud Prevention section of the Cypress College Distance Education Faculty Handbook.

Syllabus Requirement for Authentication: A distance education student authentication statement should appear in each course syllabus, which states for example: “By enrolling in a distance education course you agree that you are the person accessing and completing the work for this course and will not share your CMS username and password with others.”

Syllabus Requirements

A comprehensive syllabus communicates the purpose of the course, course expectations, and opportunities for academic support. An effective syllabus also helps prepare students for a successful semester. Distance Education syllabus requirements (See Appendix) include specific information necessary for a student to be successful in a distance education course as well as information necessary to comply with state and federal guidelines and regulations.

Training

Distance education faculty training provides formal opportunities for basic skills acquisition, advanced professional development, community building, and peer-based support.

Distance Education Faculty Basics

The Faculty Basics course is required of full-time and adjunct faculty to qualify to teach a distance education course for Cypress College. Faculty Basics is designed for faculty members to attain the basic skills necessary to succeed as a distance education instructor. This course is equivalent to a three-unit college class. Equivalent credit on the salary schedule is available through NOCCCD Human Resources (HR), when requested following the established HR procedures.

Recruiting and interacting with two experienced Cypress College Distance Education faculty members (DE Buddies) in addition to the course instructor, instructional designer, and other support personnel is an important part of a participant’s experience in Faculty Basics. Interacting with these DE Buddies is a new trainee’s entry into the Cypress College Distance Education faculty community.

By entering into this mentoring relationship starting with the initial required training, a faculty member learns to become a self-sufficient course facilitator within the context of ongoing program and peer support.

Faculty Basics Learning Outcomes

1. Navigate and use the Blackboard™ course management system to successfully access and complete assignments as a student.
2. Build a course site with functional basic course features and use the CMS at a minimum acceptable proficiency level sufficient to deliver instruction, course materials, course assignments, and assessments following effective online teaching, accessibility and usability, copyright guidelines, and college and district policies.
3. Demonstrate readiness for teaching at a distance by creating a quality course plan, a course site, and a learning unit based on established principles for distance teaching and learning.

Ongoing Professional Development

Faculty members are expected to periodically update distance education technical skills and mastery of learning strategies. Ongoing professional development for experienced Distance Education instructors includes opportunities to expand on basic technical skills, gain information about new developments in distance education, attend workshops on accessible instructional materials creation, collaborate with colleagues through groups such as the California Blackboard User Group (CaliBUG), and engage with peers by participating in Cypress College faculty led webinars. The aim of this ongoing professional development is to build on the Cypress College culture of collegiality by fostering a DE faculty support system while providing opportunities for skill building, communication, and collaboration.

Web Enhanced Training

The Cypress College Web Enhanced Workshop is designed to help a faculty member become familiar with the basic accessibility, copyright, and course management skills necessary to abide by state and federal laws when delivering instructional materials electronically. It is required for instructors who would like to offer web enhanced courses using Blackboard™ and who have not been certified to teach online or hybrid courses at Cypress College.

Technology and Digital Infrastructure

Managed Hosting Provided by Blackboard.com

Course Management System

From the onset of the online education program, Cypress College has provided Blackboard™, hosted by Blackboard, Inc., as the official distance education course management system. The Blackboard™ contract includes:

1. Managed Hosting: on Blackboard.com at <http://cypresscollege.blackboard.com>
2. Administrator Support
 - a. Web-based support for system documentation, installations, maintenance, upgrades, hot fixes, product problems, and technical questions run through a case-based ticket system that also allows for telephone interaction
 - b. Dedicated technical service manager
 - c. Behind the Blackboard™, the 24/7 product web-based support
 - d. Blackboard Wiki™ knowledge base
3. Snapshot System Integration Process
 - a. Automates the process for account and course creation as well as user enrollment, staff assignment and other critical data elements
 - b. Reduces manual system administration ensuring better data quality
4. Integration Customization Maintenance Support (ICM): An annual subscription-based upgrade maintenance program contracted by Cypress College specifically for Snapshot™. ICM provides coverage for data integration, including the use of existing integration tools, scheduled upgrade maintenance events, and troubleshooting in the event of unexpected behaviors.

Infrastructure Hosted by Cypress College Academic Computing

Distance Education Website

The Cypress College website hosts the Distance Education Program web presence (<http://www.cypresscollege.edu/academics/DistanceEducation>). The Spring 2012 version of the Distance Education website includes the following pages:

- **FAQ:** Enrollment & Adding Courses, Blackboard™, Textbooks & Computer Labs, Attendance & General Policies, Hardware & Software Requirements
- **How To Get Help:** Contact information for help for students
- **Policies:** General policies

- **Readiness Quiz:** Questions students should ask themselves before taking an online or hybrid class
- **Requirements:** Hardware and software requirements
- **Tips for Student Success:** Tips For Student Success In Web Based Courses (Adapted from Tech Ed Online)

WebDav, Virtual Desktops, and the Registration System

Cypress College Academic Computing hosts WebDav, a Virtual Desktop Interface (VDI), and a registration system for the Distance Education program.

- **WebDav:** a virtual server where Distance Education instructors can store electronic course materials for student access in Blackboard™.
- **VDI:** a virtual desktop that provides access to Distance Education software used for the creation of accessible instructional materials. VDI is the replacement for the legacy virtual desktop, Citrix.
- **Academic Computing Registration System:** a registration and documentation system used to facilitate and track Distance Education workshop enrollment.

Faculty Support

[DE Faculty Handbook](#)

The Cypress College Distance Education Faculty Handbook contains information and strategies to help faculty members have a successful academic year. The handbook is meant as a useful reference for faculty members who have completed the basic required training and are teaching a Cypress College Distance Education course. The handbook contains detailed information about:

- Distance Education at Cypress College
- Faculty Support
- Blackboard Course Management
- Distance Education Requirements
- Routine Semester Procedures
- Preparing for Course Evaluation
- Distance Education Software

[Faculty Technical & Program Support](#)

Distance Education staff provide instructional design, technical support, and training for instructors using Distance Education supported CMS and software.

- **Distance Education Dean:** The dean oversees the Cypress College Distance Education Program and serves as dean to DE faculty in their capacity as Distance Education instructors.
- **Distance Education Coordinator:** The Coordinator serves as the first contact when a faculty member needs Blackboard technical support, help with student support, or any type of program support.
- **Distance Education Administrative Assistant:** The Administrative Assistant is the secondary contact for Blackboard technical support.
- **Instructional Designer:** The instructional designer is available to help faculty members with Distance Education courses and instructional software, including overall course design and construction, questions about teaching with Blackboard or transforming a course for online delivery.

Distance Education Faculty Support Site

The Distance Education Coordinator maintains an extensive repository of reference materials and resources in a special Blackboard course site. Distance Education faculty members are enrolled in the Distance Education support course site in Blackboard named DISTANCE EDUCATION [CYPC_TEACH]. The site includes:

- Blackboard™ Instructions and Tutorials
- Blackboard Student Orientation Instructions
- Links to Resources and Articles
- Links to Cypress College Distance Education Course Quality Rubric and Faculty Handbook
- Teaching Requirements
- Advisory Group Minutes
- Discussion Boards

Student Support

Instructor Support

Distance education instructors are expected to be the initial contact for all student questions and to respond to student requests for help on a timely basis. The DE Program staff provides problem solving assistance to instructors when needed.

DE Program Support

The Distance Education Administrative Assistant provides email and phone help to students using the Blackboard course management system. Distance Education personnel technical support is not available for courses taught using other course

management systems. Additional CMS support is available via the *How to Get Help* and *FAQ* sections of the Distance Education web pages.

Computer Labs

Cypress College Distance Education students may use a personal computer or computers provided on-campus to complete distance education coursework. The Learning Resource Center is available for distance education coursework.

Student & Academic Services

Access to Cypress College student services is available to distance education students both on campus and on the Cypress College website. To enable easy access to these services from within all Cypress College Distance Education course sites, a menu item titled *CC Student Services* is created in each Blackboard course shell. This course menu item links directly to the Cypress College the *A to Z Services* web page and provides access to information on college support services, including:

- Admission & Records
- Assessments
- Bursars
- Bookstore
- Career Planning Center
- Counseling & Student Development
- Disabled Students Program & Services (DSPS)
- Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS)
- Financial Aid
- Health Center
- Learning Resource Center
- Library
- Transfer Center

Accessibility

Accessibility as it relates to Distance Education refers to the underlying principles and practical techniques that make distance learning accessible to everyone, regardless of disability. Disabilities that challenge users include vision, hearing, motor, cognitive, seizure and age-related disorders. Access to technology-based information therefore relies on technologies like screen readers, zooming displays and other assistive technology as well as on accessible course content design. Accessibility enables full access to distance education for everyone.

Distance Education works to make accessibility an integral part of the program by:

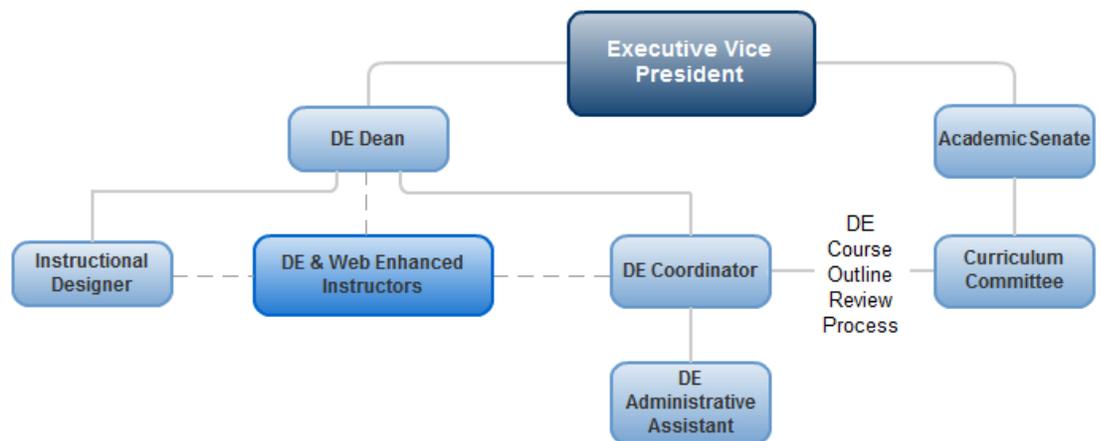
- Complying with federal, state, and district accessibility guidelines;
- Offering faculty appropriate training to ensure the creation of accessible course materials;
- Working closely with individuals or groups responsible for accessibility review of web based instructional materials and faculty web sites on the Cypress College campus;
- Working with Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) to provide information and student access to assistive technology and DSPS services.

Organization and Human Resources

Distance Education Program Organizational Structure

The Distance Education program operates under the supervision of the Executive Vice President (EVP). Reporting to the EVP, the Distance Education Dean oversees the program while the Distance Education Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, and Instructional Designer conduct day-to-day operations, training, and support. Academic Senate and the Curriculum Committee are integral to the planning process of the program. The Coordinator reviews course outlines for DE delivery as part of the Curriculum Committee course approval process.

Figure 4: Distance Education Program Organizational Chart



Distance Education Dean

The Distance Education Dean provides administrative leadership for distance education. The dean promotes distance learning academic excellence working in collaboration with the NOCCCD and Cypress College communities. The dean serves as the immediate supervisor for Distance Education Program staff.

Coordinator Responsibilities

The Distance Education Coordinator is responsible for the development and day-to-day operation of the Distance Education Program under direct supervision of the Distance Education Dean. The coordinator works to promote distance education by informing the campus community of new developments in emerging technology and instructional methodology related to distance learning.

Administrative Assistant Responsibilities

The Distance Education Administrative Assistant provides administrative support for the Distance Education Program. The Administrative Assistant participates in program development and improvement by functioning as an integral member of the team. Duties include general clerical work, project based work, and help desk support for students and faculty.

Instructional Designer

The Instructional Designer position is a project-based job at Cypress College. The Instructional Designer works closely and in collaboration with the Director of Academic Computing, the Staff Development Coordinator, the Distance Education Dean and the Distance Education Coordinator on instructional design and technology projects. Projects change semester to semester as they are completed and new projects are defined. Distance Education projects represent 50% of the duties assigned to the Instructional Designer.

Facilities

The Distance Education Program has no dedicated office space. The Distance Education Coordinator has a temporary office located in the Career Technical Education Division office. The Administrative Assistant utilizes temporary office space located in the Extended Day Office. This arrangement is currently inadequate and finding a space where the Distance Education coordinator, administrative assistant, and support staff can work in close proximity is a future goal (See Goals and Objectives).

DE Plan Implementation Timeline

Program goals and objectives are listed by year(s) to be accomplished.

Objectives for 2011 – 2012

Goal 4: Legal Compliance

4. *Objective:* Update attendance policy in the College catalog to reflect changes in federal regulations.

4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

4.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2012

4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Objectives for 2012 – 2013

Goal 1: Student Support & Services

4. *Objective:* Create a Distance Education student handbook to provide basic information needed to be a successful distance learner.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 2: Faculty Support & Services

1. *Objective:* Improve the clarity of communication of *written* procedures for requesting assistance from 71% to 75% by adding procedures to the Distance Education Plan, the Distance Education Faculty Handbook, Blackboard Distance Education course site for faculty, and Faculty Basics.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: Spring 2013

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Improve the clarity of communication of procedures for requesting assistance from 71% to 75% by *publicizing* procedures and contact information through the Distance Education Advisory Group, the Dean's meeting, and Distance Education program email.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

2.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 4: Legal Compliance

2. *Objective:* Work with the Curriculum Committee to update the regular and substantive contact portion of the course outline requirements to reflect changes in federal regulations.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

2.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

3. *Objective:* Work with the Curriculum Committee to develop a Last Date of Attendance policy with guidelines for instructors.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

3.2 Timeframe: 2012 - 2013

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Objectives for 2013 – 2014

Goal 1: Student Support & Services

1. *Objective:* Increase student awareness of course link to information about Cypress College services from 62% to 70% using the following strategies: Student Services guest speaker at DE Advisory meetings, email reminders from coordinator to DE faculty at the start of each semester, possible system wide Blackboard announcements, greater emphasis in Faculty Basics and the Faculty Handbook.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Distance Education Administrative Assistant, Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: Spring 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Increase student participation in DE course orientation from 62.3% to 70% by adding a requirement to the Distance Education Plan for participation in a course orientation to be completed by the end of the first week of class.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Distance Education Advisory Group

2.2 Timeframe: Spring 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 5: Program Quality

2. *Objective:* Develop a Distance Education teaching and learning mobile strategy.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean, Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer, Distance Education Faculty

2.2 Timeframe: 2013 - 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Unknown

Ongoing Objectives for 2011 – 2014

Goal 3: Faculty Training

1. *Objective:* Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible Microsoft Word documents for Distance Education Faculty.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Instructional Designer

1.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

2. *Objective:* Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible PowerPoint documents for Distance Education Faculty.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Instructional Designer

2.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Funding for software needed to test and repair PowerPoint slide presentations (in addition to Microsoft PowerPoint). Funding is needed for one of the following: a) server space and staffing for a functional remote desktop supported by Academic Computing, b) a site license, or c) individual licenses for DE faculty. Additional resources have been identified in the DE budget allocation.

3. *Objective:* Offer annual workshops on the creation of accessible PDF documents for Distance Education Faculty.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Instructional Designer

3.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Funding for software needed to test and repair PDF documents (Adobe Acrobat Professional). Funding is needed for one of the following: a) server space and staffing for a functional remote desktop supported by Academic Computing, b) a site license, or c) individual licenses for DE faculty. Additional resources have been identified in the DE budget allocation.

4. *Objective:* Offer annual Distance Education webinars about relevant news and information, the use of new tools, and best practices in distance teaching techniques with presenters drawn from experienced Distance Education Cypress College faculty.

4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer, Distance Education Faculty Volunteers

4.2 Timeframe: 2011 – 2014

4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

5. *Objective:* Communicate best practices for improvement in distance education success and retention through workshops, training, and dissemination of materials.

5.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Designer

5.2 Timeframe: 2011 – 2014

5.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 4: Legal Compliance

2. *Objective:* Work with campus-wide groups including Disabled Students Programs, Services (DSPS), Academic Computing, and Staff Development on an accessibility review process.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

2.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

2.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

Goal 5: Program Quality

1. *Objective:* Identify dedicated Distance Education office space.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean

1.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

1.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Unknown

3. *Objective:* Work with the California Blackboard Users Group to develop statewide connections with public and private higher education distance education programs to create a faculty network, share resources, and consult on new regulations and procedures.

3.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Coordinator

3.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

3.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: None

4. *Objective:* Identify facilities, staffing, and resources needed to establish a Distance Education proctoring center.

4.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean, DE Coordinator

4.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

4.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: Unknown

5. *Objective:* Work to increase staffing of Administrative Assistant I position from 50% to a full time contract with a change in classification to Distance Learning Assistant (Range 36).

5.1 Person(s) responsible: Distance Education Dean

5.2 Timeframe: 2011 - 2014

5.3 Additional Fiscal resources needed: 0.5 FTE Range 36

Closing Dates for Objectives with Persons Responsible

Closing Date (X)

Goal 1: Student Support & Services

Objective	Persons Responsible	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14
1	DE Coordinator (DEC), DE Administrative Assistant (DAA), Instructional Designer (ID)						X
2	DEC, Distance Education Advisory Group						X
3	DEC						X
4	DEC, ID				X		

Goal 2: Faculty Support & Services

Objective	Persons Responsible	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14
1	DEC, ID				X		
2	DEC, ID				X		

Goal 3: Faculty Training

Objective	Persons Responsible	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14
1	ID						X
2	ID						X
3	ID						X
4	DEC, ID, DE Faculty Volunteers						X
5	DEC, ID						X

Goal 4: Legal Compliance

Objective	Persons Responsible	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14
1	DEC						X
2	DEC					X	
3	DEC					X	
4	DEC		X				

Goal 5: Program Quality

Objective	Persons Responsible	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14
1	DE Dean						X
2	DE Dean, DEC, ID, DE Faculty						X
3	DEC						X
4	DE Dean, DEC						X
5	DEC						X

Appendix: DE Syllabus Requirements

The following Distance Education course syllabus items are required in addition to the Curriculum Committee Syllabus Guidelines. A checklist that includes all requirements is included in the Distance Education Faculty Handbook.

Course Information

- **DE Course Definition:** A student friendly explanation of the official course outline designation as an online or hybrid course, including a brief explanation of what it means for this specific course to be online or hybrid.
- **Student Friendly Course Description (Recommended):** A student friendly introduction to the course.

Instructor Information

- **Cypress College Email:** The instructor's Cypress College email address.
- **Faculty Home Page Address:** The instructor's Cypress College home page URL.
- **Contact Hours:** A statement defining student expectations for instructor responsiveness and availability specifying when the instructor will and will not be available online to students and expected response times; for example, "Monday through Friday, you can expect me to respond to email within 24 hours; anything posted to me after 4:00 p.m. on a Friday will receive a response on Monday."
- **Instructor Role & Responsibilities (Recommended):** A student friendly description of the instructor's role and responsibilities and/or a teaching philosophy statement.
- **Instructor Initiated Contact:** A distance education instructor initiated contact statement describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback. *The following example should be customized to match the official course outline, individual faculty preferences, and existing syllabus information regarding contact hours specifying expectations for responsiveness and availability.* "During the course of each week I will contact you regularly just to keep in touch, but also to verify your progress, participation, and performance. Our contact will be in the form of the following or other similar activities: group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, email, feedback on your coursework, CCC Confer meetings, video conferences."

Course Requirements

- **Class Meeting Times:** In-person and/or synchronous class meeting dates and times for hybrid courses, and if applicable, for online courses.
- **Physical Class Location:** Building name and physical classroom number for hybrid courses and, if applicable, for online courses.
- **Online Class Location:** Instructions for logging into Blackboard and entering the course site.
- **Required Texts and Materials:** List of required texts and materials with a statement that students may make purchases online and a link to the Cypress College Online Bookstore.

Computer Requirements & On-Campus Labs

- **Computer Skills:** Computer skills necessary to be successful in the course; for example: comfort with web browsing, word processing, sending and receiving email, and saving coursework on a computer.
- **Computer Equipment and Requirements:** List of all hardware, software, and Blackboard requirements necessary to be successful in the course, preferably with a link to the Requirements page on the Distance Education web site; for example, “To access your Blackboard classroom you will need to know your username and password, have Internet access, and a valid email account. Please check the Requirements page on the Distance Education web site for a current list of supported browsers and operating systems. Requirements for the course publisher hosted homework system are provided below.”
- **Availability of On-campus Computers:** A statement that computers for distance education use are available in the Learning Resource Center (LRC), preferably with a link to the LRC page on the College website.

Tips for Online Success

- **Student Role & Responsibilities** (Recommended): A description of student roles and responsibilities pertinent to the class.
- **Success Skills:** List of the specific skills necessary to be successful in the course. Links to online resources with study skills tips for distance education students are also encouraged.

Class Schedules for Topics, Assignments, and Due Dates

- **Assignment Location & Submission in Blackboard:** Directions to assignment locations in the CMS course site including how assignments should be submitted electronically.

- **Announcement Expectations:** Frequency and procedures for course announcements and assignment schedule changes. A regular routine is recommended, such as posting a new announcement once a week on the same day and time each week; for example, “Weekly updates on the progress of the course, schedule changes, and other important information will be posted in the Blackboard Announcements section available directly from the main course menu. New announcements will be posted Mondays by 5:00 p.m. and as needed during the week. Reading these announcements will help you keep up with the course developments.”

Course Policies

- **Grade Location:** The grading policy should include how and when students can access their assignment grades and the final grade.
- **Standards and Procedures for Coursework Evaluation (Recommended):** An explanation of the standards for course work evaluation with examples of student work and rubrics or other evaluation criteria.
- **Attendance and Absence Policy:** A Distance Education attendance statement, in accordance with the College’s attendance policy and Department of Education regulations, should appear in each course syllabus specifying how absences are managed. *The following example should be customized to match the course delivery method and the official course outline.* “Absences in this course are accounted for by monitoring academic attendance or attendance at an academically-related activity. You will be considered to be “present” in this course if there is evidence of your weekly participation in an academically-related activity including, but not limited to, physically attending in-person sessions of a hybrid course, submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, substantively participating in a course online discussion, study group, or other synchronous or asynchronous activity, or by initiating contact with me in matters related to this course. You will be considered “absent” if there is no evidence of your participation in an academically-related activity for this course for more than one week or if you accumulate a consecutive or nonconsecutive lack of academically-related activity of more than a week, that is more than the number of times the class meets per week. For example, in a three-unit online class that would typically meet on campus three hours a week, one week’s worth of missed academically-related assignment(s) or activity(ies) would be grounds for dismissal. If you have not submitted assignments or participated in an academically-related activity for one week, you may be dropped from the course.”
- **Participation Policy:** A participation policy specific to the course delivery method, including course decorum, behavior, and netiquette. The

participation policy should expand upon the attendance policy by more concretely defining what it means to engage in academically- related activities with specific examples from the course.

- **Academic Honesty Policy (with Authentication):** A course policy directing students to the official Cypress College policy and including a student authentication statement; for example: “In its commitment to academic honesty, Cypress College and this course uses Turnitin.com software to prevent and detect plagiarism. Instructions for using Turnitin.com are included with the assignments requiring its use. By enrolling in a distance education course you agree that you are the one accessing and completing the work for this course, and will not share your Blackboard course username or password with others. The full text of the College policy is available in the Catalog on the campus website.”
- **Student Grievances:** Information on the grievance process directing students to the Student Grievances section of the Cypress College Catalog; for example, “I am available discuss and resolve any course related matter with you. However, with as many interpersonal transactions as occur on a college campus, disagreements with instructors may occur. Should that be the case, please consult the student grievances procedures found in the Cypress College Catalog located on the campus website.”
- **Copyright Notice:** A distance education copyright notice informing students how to comply with distance education fair use restrictions on the use of copyrighted materials which states, “Any copyrighted materials used in this class are used for distance education purposes only and in compliance with United States copyright law. Use of these materials is limited to students enrolled in the course, for the duration of the course. Students must refrain from saving, changing, or distributing any such copyrighted materials.”
- **Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS) Notice:** A distance education statement which informs students with disabilities of available DSPS and instructor support; for example: “Students who anticipate a need for formal, disability-related accommodations to be successful in this distance education course should contact the instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation in the course and to plan how best to coordinate any necessary accommodations. Students requesting accommodations should meet with their DSPS counselor as soon as possible to coordinate services with the instructor.”

Student Services

A statement that student services are available to distance education students with a link to the *A to Z Student Services* page on the Cypress College website.

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By Alfredo Eutimio, former Cypress College Librarian: Library & Learning Resource Center inside view of rotunda support structure taken during construction.