Citrus College Online Education Best Practices

The following best practices are designed to assist faculty in meeting requirements reviewed and approved by the dean overseeing Online Education and the Academic Senate, as well as Administrative Policy 4105, Title 5 of the California Education Code, and accessibility compliance standards.

Online Faculty Responsibilities include:

1) Timely, appropriate and regular interaction (Regular and Substantive Interaction) among students and faculty and between students. This may be achieved through interactivity such as:
   a) Announcements
   b) Individual and /or group email or messaging
   c) Message board discussions
   d) Web conferences
   e) Real time and archived chat
   f) Online/in-person office hours.
2) Using the campus LMS for online instruction (as indicated in AP 4105). Creating a functional and easy course layout that also meets with:
   a) Web Accessibility Initiative [WAI] guidelines
   b) Universal Design Principles
   c) ADA guidelines
   d) Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
   e) Alternate media for persons with disabilities [CA Ed Code Section 67302], e.g. e-books.
   f) An accessibility statement consistent with DSPS guidelines
3) Academic rigor that is comparable to a traditional course.
4) In order to promote and commit to student engagement and be compliant with regular and effective contact regulations, course cartridges should only be used as supplemental material for hybrid or online courses in the Citrus College Online Education Program.
5) Weekly download of grades to ensure that accurate records are available for each student.
6) Regularly archiving or exporting course materials. Archive/export should be done at the end of each semester to ensure that transfer of course materials is available.
7) A course level SLO assessment should be completed each academic year as part of the department's SLO assessment process.
8) Attendance at OE Committee Meetings, unless otherwise scheduled in a face-to-face class or faculty leadership commitments, is encouraged.
9) Compliance with FERPA is required. Faculty who use course cartridges or third-party publisher websites need to verify that the materials comply with FERPA guidelines. Faculty using publisher materials/websites should check with the Tech Specialist for compliance. Social Media is generally not FERPA compliant. Faculty who wish to use social media should keep the following in mind:

a) When using Twitter, Facebook, or other social platforms, never reveal information about students that might indicate their grades, course enrollments, class schedules, and so on. Doing so could be noted as a FERPA violation if called out by the student.

b) We must realize what is and is not subject to "inspect and review" regarding our actions with others and students. Any document or communication (digital or not) that is considered an educational record for purposes of FERPA is subject to the "inspect and review" privilege by the student.

All Online Education courses offered at Citrus College should include the following elements:

1) Instructor contact information that includes a campus phone number – if available, Citrus College email address and virtual and /or traditional office hours posted should be included in the syllabus and/or on a page in the course site.

2) Course essentials such as detailed schedule, policies, assignment information, and grading policies that are easily found on the course site/syllabus. It is recommended that this information be available prior to the start of the course. Include information regarding whether the course is fully online, partially online, or online with flexible interactions, if it meets 16, 8, or 6 weeks with session dates and when on-campus meetings are scheduled, if required. Providing pertinent information, such as drop dates, refund dates, deadlines is suggested.

3) An announcement link or home page or some other method of providing current and up-to-date information for students. At least one announcement per week helps to keep students on track with due dates and assignment details.

4) Information on technical help and instructional support with links to these services are recommended. (DSPS, Counseling, EOPS, Testing Center, Tutoring)

5) A clear statement of Academic Honesty and policies regarding plagiarism is strongly recommended. It is suggested that a link to the Student Handbook be available.

6) Policies for attendance and active participation should be clearly stated in the syllabus or on a page in the course website. Student analytics can be used to document student activity and participation in the course.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

(1)   From day one, tell students exactly how you will be using social media in the classroom.
(2)   Offer options such as using an alias for students concerned about privacy (this might be difficult if you are teaching a Social Media and Communications class).
(3)   Be careful not to reveal personal data about students or openly correct them or make them feel awkward on social platforms.
(4)   Have students send any "friend" or contact requests.
(5)   Never initiate a one-on-one social conversation.
(6)   If a student begins a social dialogue with you, it really cannot be classified as an educational record, but you still must be careful about how you respond.

Please note that these best practices are in no way intended to infringe upon academic freedom, course content and pedagogy which are strictly the responsibility of the individual instructor. Please contact the following individuals should you have questions or need assistance in meeting these best practices.

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