

# SPECIAL REPORT ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

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## A. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- A.1 Each program of study results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.

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## DESCRIPTION

Over the last six years, Citrus College has built a very comprehensive distance education program (Doc. 11.1). Classes offered are equal in their rigor and breadth to classes offered in the classroom. Classes for distance education must be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and reviewed for appropriateness under "Methods of Instruction." The class has to meet the same course requirement standards as traditional classes (Doc. 11.2 and Doc. 11.3).

The class schedule (Doc. 11.4) and the [www.citruscollege.com](http://www.citruscollege.com) site clearly indicate the classes offered, orientation times for the initial class meeting (online or in-person), an open house to meet the instructor and classmates, and a "How Do I Get Started?" page in the class schedule for helpful hints and practical information (Doc. 11.5, Doc. 11.6). On the distance education web site, there is a comprehensive "Beginning of the Semester" page (Doc. 11.7) that discusses procedures and provides tips for success. An orientation class (Communication 090, 1 unit) has been added in order to assist new students on how to navigate the web and use chat rooms successfully.

Blackboard, an operating platform, has been added this semester (Doc. 11.8). It provides instructors with an online grade book, testing tools and increased opportunities to communicate with students. It provides students with access to their grades as well as chat rooms and message boards.

Classes are 18 weeks long during the semester and 10 weeks long during the summer session. Forty-nine (including multiple sessions) distance education classes were offered in the spring 2003 schedule (Doc. 11.4).

Citrus College is approved by the United States Navy and Service Members Opportunity Colleges to offer Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE) courses to Navy personnel (Doc. 11.9). Presently, 11 contract education classes are offered on rolling 12-week terms.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Students are made aware of classes available each semester and how to get started as a new online student. Classes offered are comparable to those offered in a traditional classroom format. Signing up for classes is the same as registering for any other class offered at Citrus College (Doc. 11.10). Orientations and e-mail communications with instructors are available to students who have questions or who are experiencing difficulties (Doc. 11.11). Students do not always get feedback from their instructors as soon as they would like, and there have been times when sites are not up and running or available due to techni-

cal difficulties (Doc. 11.12, Doc. 11.13, Doc. 11.14). Generally, these problems are solved and the courses successfully completed.

Students felt that mandatory on-campus orientations defeated the purpose of taking online courses. Students suggested that all tests be given on the web. Some students take classes from distant cities and getting to the Testing Center was difficult if not totally impractical (Doc. 11.15). One student pointed out that if she were taking a class out of state, it would be difficult to take a test at the Testing Center (a personal account from a student in Antigua, Guatemala, interested in taking distance education classes at Citrus College). However, another student said campus contact was important for him to feel connected with the school (a personal account from student).

## PLANNING AGENDA

1. The distance education staff will ensure that all sites are up and running by the first day of classes. All instructors will have access to a functioning e-mail address.
2. Information about available online degrees will be listed for distance education students on the [www.citruscollege.com](http://www.citruscollege.com) web site.
3. An online catalog will be available to students who want more information about the college.
4. The distance education staff will consider alternatives to the on-campus orientations.

a) Two of the distance education courses, required for full certification, require on-campus attendance: BIOL 105, General Biology, has a required on-campus lab component, and SPCH 101, Public Address, requires an on-campus class presentation.

b) Full certification is the California State University's (CSU) or University of California's (UC) general education requirements for the bachelor's degree.

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A.2 An electronically delivered degree or certificate program is coherent and complete.

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## DESCRIPTION

Presently, there are three degrees available for students taking distance education classes. They are:

- associate in science degree in business (18 units in major, 22 units in general education and 20 units of electives to total 60 units, all available online).
- associate in arts degree in social and behavioral sciences (18 units in major, 22 units in general education and 20 units of electives to total 60 units, all available online).
- associate in arts in liberal arts, the transfer degree. To obtain the liberal arts degree, students must complete 60 transferable units, complete the California State University General Education (CSUGE) or Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) certification<sup>ab</sup> for transfer and meet the minimum required cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Through contract (distance) education classes and Credit by Examination, active military personnel may complete the requirements for an associate in arts in liberal arts or an associate in science degree in administration of justice. Sixty additional courses have been submitted for review and approval by the Navy that will offer NCPACE students the opportunity to complete certificate and/or degree requirements in business administration, computing and information systems, electronics and engineering (Information Technology) (Doc. 11.9, Doc. 11.16).

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## SELF-EVALUATION

A comprehensive range of classes is available to students who wish to take distance education classes at the college (Doc. 11.5). Communications and support systems have been set up for students to use if necessary (Doc. 11.1, Doc. 11.8, Doc. 11.14). A dictionary and thesaurus have been included in the site (Doc. 11.17). However, distance education students are not made aware that four degrees are obtainable through distance education. Distance education students have information regarding accessibility (Doc. 11.18), tutoring (Doc. 11.17) and online resources (Doc. 11.1). Online counseling is not readily available though a link is provided to the Counseling and Advisement Center.

While the online degrees are available, they only serve those who qualify for college-level math and English. Many students who attend Citrus College do not automatically qualify for these college-level courses. Distance education students would benefit by having lower-division major and remedial coursework accessible to them.

## PLANNING AGENDA

5. The vice president of instruction will review the possibility of offering lower-division major and remedial math and English classes online.
6. Pending NCPACE approval, the college will develop courses to allow completion of the Administration of Justice certificate by Navy personnel.
7. The vice president of student services will work with advisers and counselors to implement effective online advisement.

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- A.3 The program provides for either real-time or delayed interaction between faculty and students and among students.
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## DESCRIPTION

Citrus College has recommendations in place for student/professor contact and student/student contact within the distance education program. In spring 2000, the Academic Senate approved guidelines for all courses (Doc. 11.19). The guidelines are not intended to infringe on academic freedom, only to ensure appropriate student/professor contact and student/student contact. The guidelines' models are *Guidelines for Good Practice: Effective Instructor-Student Contact in Distance Learning* and Title II Section 504 from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The web office and Management Information Systems (MIS) Department provide faculty with computers, internet connections, e-mail addresses, message boards and chat rooms. Professors utilize hardware and software provided, and in addition, access hardware and software not provided by either MIS or the distance education office.

Students are given access to computers on campus and access to free e-mail accounts. Student computer labs have staff available to instruct students on basic computer usage. The Learning Center computer lab is designated as the distance education student lab, and all computers have specific software and hardware requested by distance education faculty.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Students are made aware of course requirements by viewing the Citrus College distance education web site as well as individual course web sites. Professors are aware of the guidelines of effective web sites as defined by the Academic Senate. A fall 2002 survey of distance education faculty and students indicates that faculty utilize hardware and software provided by MIS and the distance education office, but also continue to seek other sources themselves. Instructors use different methods at different times (Doc. 11.20).

Students primarily utilize home or work computers instead of campus computers. The fall 2002 survey indicates they are taking advantage of the interaction opportunities provided them by their instructors (Doc. 11.21). In fall 2002, the Evaluation and Tenure Oversight Committee made available a student evaluation form for all distance education instructors (Doc. 11.22). The form is the equivalent of the traditional course student evaluation form used by instructors during their tenure review process and their post-tenure evaluations.

## PLANNING AGENDA

8. The distance education office and MIS will make available basic hardware and software items required for successful student/instructor and student/student contact.
9. The distance education office and MIS will explore alternative approaches to basic technological needs so professors do not have to acquire these on their own.
10. The web office and MIS will hold workshops to train instructors on software and hardware. Professors will provide for and encourage student/instructor contact and student/student contact.

11. Tenure evaluation teams will utilize the distance education student evaluation form to ensure that professors are following the requirements.

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- A.4. Qualified faculty provide appropriate oversight of programs delivered electronically.
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## DESCRIPTION

Citrus College currently has a comprehensive distance education program, which has grown dramatically over the past several years (Doc. 11.23). During this time, various faculty members have been involved in administering and providing oversight to the program (Doc. 11.24). Faculty members serving in this capacity teach their own distance education courses and are familiar with the format required to successfully deliver online education. Reassigned time for these faculty members has ranged from full reassigned time to 40 percent reassigned time over the years. Faculty members receiving reassigned time have worked very closely with academic deans and the vice president of instruction in order to manage the overall program.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Forty percent reassigned time is provided for a distance education coordinator. Currently, two faculty members share these responsibilities and each receives 20 percent release time. Faculty members overseeing the distance education program are qualified in that they, themselves, instruct distance education courses. These faculty members oversee the program by direct commu-

nication with members of management as well as with faculty members instructing distance education courses. While this communication serves to maintain the quality of the program, the authority given to these faculty members may not be sufficient to provide for meaningful oversight of the program (Doc. 11.20). The extent of their authority to make meaningful decisions on the format and organization of the distance education program has not clearly been defined.

## PLANNING AGENDA

12. Faculty coordinators will be evaluated by distance education faculty to assess needed improvements in program coordination and effectiveness.
13. Faculty coordinators will be directly involved in decisions relating to the format and organization of the distance education courses offered by the college.

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### B. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND COMMITMENT

- B.1 The program is consistent with the institution's role and mission.

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## DESCRIPTION

The college demonstrates that its degrees and programs, regardless of delivery method, support the mission and role of the institution. The distance education program offers instructional programs to meet the needs of individuals who intend to earn degrees, intend to transfer to a four-year college, intend to earn a certificate of completion in a vocational program, have an

interest in taking courses for personal enrichment, have an interest in acquiring or updating knowledge for employment in selected occupational fields, and have an interest in reinforcing basic academic and study skills

## SELF-EVALUATION

The dramatic growth of the distance education program reflects the district's response to the needs of the community and to the need for increased access to educational services that this delivery format provides. In fall 1997, the college began to offer distance education courses solely in an online format. By fall 2002, the program consisted of sixty (including multiple sessions) serving an enrollment of nearly 2,800 students.

Distance education courses and courses leading to a certificate are characterized by the same academic rigor and standards as traditional instructional methods. Courses have a coherent design, appropriate length, breadth, depth, information, resources and appropriate learning outcomes. The Curriculum Committee reviews all courses.

In keeping with the shared governance process, there is a Distance Education Committee to review processes and procedures of the distance learning programs.

The Institute for Distance Education and Autonomous Learning provides training opportunities and support staff for faculty related to distance learning methodologies and other instructional technologies.

All distance education courses strive to meet the provisions of Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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- B2. Review and approval processes ensure the appropriateness of electronic delivery to meeting the program's objectives.
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## DESCRIPTION

The Curriculum Committee is the primary filter for reviewing and approving courses for the instructional mode of distance education. Before a class is proposed to the Curriculum Committee, it needs to be clearly defined with an objective and a course outline. Some courses are newly created courses, while others are courses that have already been approved for the traditional mode of instruction, but the distance education delivery method is proposed as being added to the acceptable list of modes of instruction. Instructors, sometimes working alone and other times working with their associate dean, initiate and develop the necessary documentation for these class offerings. When appropriate these instructors work with the articulation officer to identify a California Articulation Number (CAN), University of California/California State University (UC/CSU) transfer eligibility and other matriculation-oriented analysis.

Once the course proposal information has been drafted, it is reviewed and signed by the applicable associate dean and sent to the Curriculum Committee chairperson for review and signature. The next party involved in the review and approval sequence is the instructional dean. Finally, the Curriculum Committee meets and thoroughly analyzes these proposals. Often instructors who are proposing courses are present at the meeting when their proposal is up for review and approval. Copies of all the current proposals are distributed to all members of the Curriculum Committee beforehand, so that the members can study them prior to the next meeting.

In deciding whether a class is approved for the distance education mode of instruction, the members of the Curriculum Committee check the objective and cross-reference to ensure that it is achieved through the proposed course outline. The underlying assumption by the committee is that faculty are the experts in the field and know best if a class is suitable for the distance education mode of instruction. Forms may be found in the supporting documentation from the Curriculum Committee Handbook for new course proposal (Doc. 11.25) or to modify the acceptable modes of instruction to include distance education, and the Curriculum Committee guidelines for writing a successful course outline (Doc. 11.26).

## SELF-EVALUATION

Four replies were received to an informal request (via e-mail) asking all present distance education instructors for their experience with this process. Their experience matched the evaluation of the Curriculum Committee chairperson; that is, the process runs smoothly as is. No complaints have been levied toward the Curriculum Committee concerning this process. Some courses have been approved and have never been offered, due to either lack of funding or faculty interest. The majority of proposed distance education courses are approved and are subsequently adopted.

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B.3 The institution provides faculty support services specifically related to teaching via electronic delivery.

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## DESCRIPTION

Since the program's inception, training has been offered to new distance education faculty members in group sessions and individually. This training consists of strategies for presenting materials electronically as well as technical training in web page design and the use of HTML code. By summer 2003, the distance education department will have adopted Blackboard, a universal software delivery program. Regular training sessions have been and continue to be held to assist faculty in using this software.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Due to the rapid growth of the program and the lack of any single collegewide software format, efforts to train faculty in technical aspects of teaching distance education classes were often scattered and relied on individual instructor initiative. With the change to Blackboard, faculty training in this area has become more consistent and easier to implement. Also, as the number of experienced distance education teachers has grown, the need for fundamental online instruction training has waned.

## PLANNING AGENDA

14. The distance education support staff will provide training in the use of Blackboard through 2003.

15. Support staff will conduct a follow-up survey to the full roster of distance education instructors during fall 2003 to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the new software and address any specific problems arising from its use.

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B.4 The program provides training for faculty who teach via electronic delivery.

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## DESCRIPTION

Faculty training in this area has focused on ensuring that distance education instructors are fully able to utilize the various tools of online class delivery (PowerPoint presentations, chat room functions, instant messaging, etc.). Training has consisted of seminars given both by experienced faculty members and by representatives of other institutions. In 2000, current distance education faculty members wrote a comprehensive manual for teaching online classes and made it available to new instructors online. Additionally, individual disciplines have coordinated department retreats with distance education software and training companies to provide further instruction in how best to make class material available to distance education students.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Efforts to provide training for distance education faculty were greatest when the number of new distance education faculty was at its peak.

Currently, the roster of online faculty consists almost entirely of experienced instructors who have been teaching classes in the format for at

least a full year. With the transfer of all classes to the Blackboard system, implementing the various tools of online delivery should become easier for all faculty members. Current training in this area is sufficient to meet the needs of the institution.

## PLANNING AGENDA

16. Distance education support staff will provide training in the use of Blackboard through 2003.
17. To keep pace with the evolution of online instruction, the distance education department will form a subcommittee to investigate and determine the effectiveness of new or alternative uses of technology in course delivery, as well as the feasibility of adopting advanced delivery methods in the current program.

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B.5 The program ensures that appropriate learning resources are available to students.

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## DESCRIPTION

The library has extensive open hours for on-campus access to library materials in all formats including internet-based subscriptions. Library collections include approximately 50,000 volumes, 2,000 audiovisual recordings, 17,000 slides, 200 periodicals, 26 internet-based subscription databases with more than 8,000 full-text journals and more than 3,000 internet-based electronic books and reference works.

The library has provided for 24 hours per day, seven days per week (24/7) off-campus access to all electronic resources either directly via passwords or via the campus proxy server.

The library's extensive web site includes online access to a librarian via 24/7 reference provided by Metropolitan Cooperative Library System (MCLS), a regional California library support system, and forms to e-mail Citrus librarians with requests of any sort, to request interlibrary loans, to request library orientations and to recommend the purchase of library materials. The library's web site provides guides to specific subject areas, selected links for subject areas, reading lists and links to other libraries.

The library belongs to a regional library group, Inland Empire Academic Libraries Cooperative (IEALC), which provides students with temporary library cards to be used at other IEALC member libraries, such as Cal Poly Pomona, for access to materials which are not held by Citrus. The reference librarian actively promotes library orientations to faculty and travels to such sites as Claremont to provide on-site orientations for remote classes.

The audiovisual center in the library provides audiovisual support throughout the campus, providing viewing/listening stations for students for any materials that teachers may wish to have made available for them.

The library provides access to reserve materials on campus with an extensive collection of textbooks and other support materials for classes.

The Learning Center labs and services provide a variety of instructional support for distance education students and instructors. Online tutoring is provided through tutorial services, and instructional, computer and technological assistance is provided to students via a hotline and hot

e-mail address, as well as in-person support in the open computer lab. Test proctoring for distance education courses occurs in the Testing Center through traditional pencil and paper tests or via an online testing program.

The Learning Center's web site is comprehensive, and distance education instructors are encouraged to link their class sites to the Learning Center web site.

## **SELF-EVALUATION**

Online or on-campus classes and/or tutorials specifically designed to enhance students' information competence are not currently available, although orientations, from basic to extensive, are actively promoted to faculty for their classes.

Internet access to reserve or other locally generated or held materials is not currently available through the library; however, many teachers offer such materials on the distance education web site. The systems librarian participates in the Distance Learning Overview Committee of the Academic Senate to maintain an active tie with the distance education program. The systems librarian also participates on the Distance Education Committee for accreditation.

A survey was sent to distance education students regarding the awareness and use of resources provided by Citrus College. The most frequently used resources, according to a student survey, were the web site message boards, online library databases, library online access to journals and periodicals, and the on-campus computer lab. Students were made aware of the numerous resources during the on-campus orientation for distance education students. The technical support provided by the distance education office was utilized frequently by students who were having difficulty accessing the web site or e-mail. All students thought the support provided by the

distance education staff was extremely helpful. Other resources used by distance education students were the Testing Center, online tutoring, on-campus financial aid and on-campus child care.

Suggestions for improving the resources available to distance education students include more opportunity to meet on campus with instructors and other students, increase use of chat rooms, and an online resource page with library links to journals and articles. In addition, a grading program that allows students to access course grades and keep informed of their progress was needed by a majority of the students surveyed.

Despite the best efforts to advertise the learning center support services to distance education students and instructors, some of the services are not heavily used. This may be due to a variety of factors. One is that distance education students tend to be highly motivated and sophisticated, and therefore may not need much assistance. The other may be that it is difficult to keep faculty informed about referral options for students.

Learning center staff interact with distance education faculty and leadership whenever possible and apprise them of the services available. The learning center coordinator regularly attends distance education meetings, routinely sends e-mail reminders to faculty and frequently distributes fliers advertising support services, as well as listing its services in college publications, such as the class schedule and periodically through the *Weekly Bulletin*.

## **PLANNING AGENDA**

18. The distance education coordinator, in cooperation with the library and Learning Center, will increase promotion of the library web site and Learning Center support services. The library is currently

implementing a state-of-the-art automation system which will include several features that will impact distance learners, including:

- a) Patron log-in via web, which authenticates patrons to use the library's subscription resources or other full-text or multimedia resources which the library may offer.
  - b) Web-based, electronic, full-text/multimedia reserve materials that will be implemented in the coming year.
19. Web-based orientations, tutorials and/or an information competence course will be developed to fill the gaps for distance learners.
20. The learning center coordinator will continue to communicate to distance education faculty and the distance education leadership the support services available.

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- B.6 The program provides students with clear, complete and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, the nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

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## DESCRIPTION

Students are provided links from [www.citruscollege.edu](http://www.citruscollege.edu) and [www.citruscollege.com](http://www.citruscollege.com) as well as information in the class schedule regarding cur-

riculum, course degree requirements, the nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

Students are provided information regarding course and degree requirements. Students are directed from [www.citruscollege.com](http://www.citruscollege.com) to information regarding admissions and enrollment (Doc. 11.27).

Students are provided information regarding the nature of faculty/student interaction from the distance education web site. Additionally, students are urged to contact their instructors (Doc. 11.28).

Students are given questions on the distance education web site regarding technological competence and skill as well as equipment requirements. Students are also given basic skill information in the class schedule (Doc. 11.29).

Students are provided links from the college's home page for information regarding academic support services (Doc. 11.30).

Students are given links from the college home page where they can locate the financial aid resources (Doc. 11.31). Students are also provided with an e-mail address and telephone number to the financial aid office for specific student questions regarding financial aid resources, costs and payment policies.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Students are well aware of curriculum information provided by the links.

The system and procedure of referring students to the Counseling and Advisement Center is appropriate.

The technology provided via e-mail and telephone is adequate for student/faculty interaction.

While the technological information provided to students is adequate, there is no way of assuring successful self-analysis of competence on the part of the individual student.

The referral of students to the Financial Aid Office is appropriate.

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B.7 Enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning and assess their progress.

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## DESCRIPTION

Enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning. Access to their academic progress is available from the [www.citruscollege.edu](http://www.citruscollege.edu) web site and through student services (Doc. 11.32).

The Learning Center computer labs and services provide a variety of instructional support for distance education students and instructors. Online tutoring is provided through tutorial services, and instructional, computer and technological assistance is provided to students via a hotline and hot e-mail address, as well as in-person support in the open computer lab.

Test proctoring for distance education occurs in the Testing Center through traditional pencil and paper tests or via an online testing program. When on-campus testing is required, testing occurs in the center. Instructors who allow students an alternative must resolve this with individual students.

The Learning Center's web site is comprehensive, and distance education instructors are encouraged to link their class sites to the Learning Center's web site. Each student services program has a web site with comprehensive information about services and contact information.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Distance education students who are unable to visit the campus in person are hampered by the fact that Citrus College at this time does not make available online transcripts or registration. Asynchronous educational counseling via e-mail is available. Real-time counseling is planned for the future. The college has plans to implement online registration for summer 2003, and a target goal of access to online transcripts for the spring 2003 grading cycle.

## PLANNING AGENDA

21. The MIS director and the vice president of student services will work together to implement plans for online transcripts and registration by spring 2003.
22. The deans of counseling and admissions will work with the MIS director to implement increased online options for services.

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- B.8 Accepted students have the background, knowledge, and technical skills needed to undertake the program.
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## DESCRIPTION

The distance education program relies primarily on self-selection of students to determine if they have the background, knowledge and technical skills needed for distance education. This self-evaluation is independent of whether the students are prepared for the course material itself. There is no specific screening of students entering the program.

The program does provide information to assist with self-selection. In the class schedule (Doc. 11.4) and on the distance education web page ([www.citruscollege.com](http://www.citruscollege.com)), there is text describing the program and the types of students who can most benefit from it.

Assistance to students who lack some or all of the background and skills needed has generally been given in four ways:

- Prior to taking distance education classes, students are encouraged to go to the Learning Center for training in basic computer skills, such as using e-mail, chat rooms, message boards and the internet.
- While taking classes, the instructors are considered to be the primary source of answers to any student questions about the course and any preparations for it.
- The distance education staff answer technical questions about the software used and access questions.
- Communications 090 has been designed to give students an introduction to basic distance education skills, but the course has not received sufficient enrollment to date.

## SELF-EVALUATION

To determine how effective this program has been, we asked current and past distance education students to fill out a survey describing their experiences with the distance education program. In particular, we asked students about their background, knowledge and technical skills for taking their distance education classes. We received 134 responses to the survey (Doc. 11.33).

It should be noted that there was a significant bias in the survey group. The survey was taken well past the midpoint in the semester. Since most respondents were current distance education students, we were asking the students who were still active at this point in the term. Many faculty indicated that there is a very large early attrition in distance education classes, so the large number of students who drop out early are not represented in the survey group.

Most of the students surveyed felt that they had the background, knowledge and technical skills needed to pursue a distance education course. However, many students were surprised by the degree to which they had to be self-motivated in order to succeed. As a result of the need for self-motivation when asked if distance education was easier or harder than in-person classes, most said it was much harder.

Many commented that the convenience of doing the work on their own schedule was greatly outweighed by the need to force them to actually do the work without having someone to tell them to do it every week. Given the biases in the survey, it seems likely that the lack of strong self-motivation may be one of the most important weaknesses in many students' preparation for distance education.

One instructor (interview, anonymous instructor) pointed out to us that he/she felt discouraged from making the point that distance education

is difficult and requires a great deal of self-motivation from the students. He/She was concerned that this would be seen as too much in conflict with the generally upbeat picture of the program that was being promoted at events like the distance education orientation meeting at the beginning of each semester.

Few students in our survey commented on having difficulties with the technical skills needed for distance education. Those who responded wrote that it was their instructor who "helped them through" the course. These responses are consistent with the instructions given in the introductory material, which emphasizes that the instructor is the first person students should contact if they have any difficulties. This was particularly true for students who were taking a distance education course for the first time.

## **PLANNING AGENDA**

23. The distance education program and publications office will emphasize the need for self-motivation to be a successful student of online delivery on the web site and in the class schedule.
24. As the main point of student contact, the distance education faculty and counselors will emphasize the need for self-motivation on their web pages, orientation materials and conferences.

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- B.9 Advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials clearly and accurately represent the program and the services available.
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## **DESCRIPTION**

The distance education program is advertised in a number of different ways. However, the most important is the class schedule (Doc. 11.4). Distance education courses are listed twice: once in the individual program listings and once in a master list of distance education courses. This master list also has general distance education program information, including recommendations on who should take distance education classes, what steps students need to go through to get started with these courses, and how they can get additional help.

In addition, the distance education web site also has links to general program information as well as individual courses.

## **SELF-EVALUATION**

To determine how effective this program has been, we asked current and past distance education students to fill out a survey describing their experiences with the distance education courses. In particular, we asked students how they heard about the distance education program and if they found the advertising, recruiting and admissions materials to be clear and accurate. We received 134 responses to the survey.

By far the largest number of students surveyed (close to half of the sample) found out about the program through the class schedule and related materials. The next most common source of information (30 percent) was word of mouth

from friends and family members. The only other category that had a substantial number of students (10 percent) was the counselors and registration staff who recommended distance education classes, often because of scheduling conflicts or full classes in the traditional courses.

Very few people mentioned the distance education web site as a place where they heard about the program. While they may have used this site after they had registered, it was not the place they first learned about it.

Most students surveyed found the information to be clear and accurate. However, several commented that they were not prepared for the degree of self-motivation that was required for taking a distance education course.

Given the large number of students who indicated that the schedule of classes was their primary source of information, we chose to focus on the information given in this section. While we found that much of the information was accurate, there were three obvious weaknesses in the layout of the general information:

- While it points out that "students who do well in an online environment are typically self-motivated and well organized," this point is listed near the bottom of the page as only part of a larger description of what students need to do to succeed.
- In the list of steps labeled "How Do I Get Started," the third item listed is that students should preview each class web site. However, when we tried to do this (in mid-December) very few of the links to spring semester course pages were available. Most of the pages that were working led directly to a log-in page for Blackboard, giving no obvious information to the user about the class they might wish to preview. Indeed, the student is required to give a great deal of information about him/herself in order to set up an account just to access any infor-

mation that might be included behind this page. This is hardly conducive to previewing the course information as recommended in the class schedule.

- In the list of steps labeled "How Do I Get Started," there was no mention of contacting the course instructor. Since contacting the instructor is usually the first thing the instructors require of students, it is important that this be pointed out from the start.

## PLANNING AGENDA

25. The distance education coordinators will work with the publications director to improve information provided to students in the class schedule, to emphasize the role of self-motivation and to stress responsibility of students to contact the instructor.
26. The interim dean of the distance education program will encourage instructors to prepare preview pages that can be viewed from outside of Blackboard and have these pages available before students start registering for a given semester.

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- B.10 Policies for faculty evaluation include appropriate consideration of teaching and scholarly activities related to electronically delivered programs.
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## DESCRIPTION

In addition to the standard faculty evaluation form which is given to students in a traditional classroom, there is a distance education student

evaluation form (Doc. 11.22). This document allows students to comment not only on teacher effectiveness in the course but also on their experience with the technical aspects of courses delivered through the distance education method.

## **SELF-EVALUATION**

While the 33 question distance education student evaluation form is an excellent tool in assessing student experience in distance education, there is no policy for administering the survey. Use of the survey on the part of faculty is voluntary. Further, when faculty elects to have courses surveyed for their tenure or post-tenure, review, they may or may not elect to have one of their distance education courses surveyed. As a result, information garnered from the use of the distance education student evaluation form has been sporadic.

## **PLANNING AGENDA**

27. The distance education coordinators will facilitate a consistent use of the distance education student evaluation form. This would not only be helpful in assessing student needs but would also facilitate the evaluation of faculty success within the distance education delivery method.

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- B.11 The institution demonstrates a commitment to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable students to complete a degree or certificate.
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## **DESCRIPTION**

The college has a distance education department with two full-time employees and two part-time employees. In addition, the college funds 40 percent release time for a faculty coordinator who reports to an academic dean, who in turn reports to the vice president of instruction.

In November 2002, the college entered into an agreement with Blackboard, an operating platform for courses delivered online. This agreement allows full use of the Blackboard system by any faculty member. In addition, sufficient server space has been purchased from Blackboard to allow all distance education courses to be maintained there. Additional server space is also provided locally for maintaining the distance education web site, as well as supplemental material to which faculty may link their courses.

## **SELF-EVALUATION**

Citrus College currently offers approximately 49 (including multiple sessions) distance education courses to approximately 3,000 students. With the recent reduction in distance education staff and the purchase of Blackboard, it has become necessary for faculty to be more active creating and maintaining their sites. This was a function often performed by distance education staff in the past. With this shift of responsibility, the college currently provides adequate staff and funding to maintain and expand its program.

Training for faculty in the use of Blackboard, the creation of web pages, HTML, importing previously created material, Dreamweaver, chat rooms, message boards, online exams, online grade books and other programs essential to distance education delivery have been provided and are planned for the future.

## PLANNING AGENDA

28. The vice president of instruction will provide ongoing support staff and training to distance education faculty.

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### C. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

- C.1 The institution evaluates the program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student and faculty satisfaction. Students have access to such program evaluation data.

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## DESCRIPTION

The college tracks and evaluates distance education student learning outcomes and student retention.

Although several instructors assess student satisfaction in their individual distance education classes, currently there is no uniform institutional method of evaluation of student satisfaction being utilized at the college.

The college assesses faculty satisfaction with distance education, however the assessment is informal.

## SELF-EVALUATION

Each year the distance education office prepares and submits to the California Community College Chancellor's Office an annual distance education survey. The most recent survey covers the 2001-2002 school year.

The survey is reviewed annually by the following college personnel: the president, the vice president of instruction, the academic senate president, the distance education coordinator and the MIS director. The survey includes a report, prepared by MIS, listing each distance education class taught at Citrus for the year. For each class, the report shows the number of students who enrolled and the number of students that received grades of A, B, C, D and F. Copies of relevant pages from the survey are attached (Doc. 11.34).

Several student satisfaction surveys have been developed at the college during the past few years, some of which have been utilized. Copies of three such surveys are attached (Doc. 11.35, Doc. 11.28, Doc. 11.36).

Distance education faculty members have many opportunities to express their thoughts, concerns, suggestions, recommendations, and pleasure and displeasure with the program. There are many individuals to whom faculty can express their concerns. Distance education is currently managed by a dean of faculty and by two faculty distance education coordinators. The vice president of instruction is actively involved with distance education; a secretary and a staff of web technicians also work directly with distance education faculty.

Regular distance education faculty meetings are scheduled throughout the academic year. Training sessions, orientation meetings and department meetings also provide opportunities for meaningful expression of faculty concerns. The dean interacts regularly with many of the

distance education faculty. In addition, faculty members utilize e-mail and the telephone to communicate their concerns.

## **PLANNING AGENDA**

29. The distance education coordinator will develop and use a faculty satisfaction survey to be administered either once per year or once per semester as an opportunity to formally assess distance education faculty satisfaction and concerns.
30. The dean of distance education will develop and implement a standard method for assessing students taking online courses.

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- C.2 The institution provides for assessment of student achievement in each course, and at completion of the program.
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## **DESCRIPTION**

Student achievement in each distance education course is measured and assessed.

## **SELF-EVALUATION**

Student achievement in each distance education course is measured and assessed by the professor teaching that course. The college also monitors student achievement in each course. As previously stated in C.1, each year the distance education office prepares and submits to the Chancellor's Office an annual distance education survey. The most recent survey covers the 2001-2002 school year. The survey is reviewed annually by the following college personnel: the president, the vice president of instruction, the academic senate president, the distance education coordinator and the MIS director.

The survey included a report, prepared by MIS, showing every distance education class taught at Citrus for the year. For each class, the report shows the number of students who enrolled and the number who received grades of A, B, C, D and F. Copies of relevant pages from the survey are attached (Doc. 11.34).

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## **SPECIAL REPORT ON DISTANCE EDUCATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- 11.1 Citrus College Online Web Site
- 11.2 Citrus Community College District Credit Course Outline (Approved)
- 11.3 Citrus Community College District Credit Course Outline (Unapproved)
- 11.4 Credit Class Schedule, Spring 2003, Distance Education - Online Classes, pages 85-87
- 11.5 Credit Class Schedule, Distance Education: How Do I Get Started, pages 90-91
- 11.6 <http://www.citruscollege.com> - Program Information: Orientation
- 11.7 <http://www.citruscollege.com> - The Beginning of the Semester
- 11.8 <http://www.citruscollege.com> - Getting a Blackboard Account
- 11.9 <http://mil.citrus.cc.ca.us> - Military Programs and Services at Citrus College
- 11.10 Credit Class Schedule, Fall 2002: Dates to Remember
- 11.11 <http://www.citruscollege.com> - Questions?
- 11.12 E-mail from Student: Trouble with Enrollment
- 11.13 E-mail from Student: Permission to Add Class 1760E
- 11.14 E-mail from Student: Please Reply ASAP
- 11.15 E-mail from Student: Completing My Degree
- 11.16 <http://mil.citrus.cc.ca.us> - Military Programs and Services at Citrus College: Programs
- 11.17 <http://www.citruscollege.com> - Index
- 11.18 <http://www.citruscollege.com> - Accessibility
- 11.19 Citrus College Academic Senate - Approved Guidelines for Distance Education Courses
- 11.20 Fall 2002 Survey - Distance Education Faculty Survey
- 11.21 Fall 2002 Survey - Distance Education Student Survey
- 11.22 Student Evaluation Form
- 11.23 Distance Education - History of Courses
- 11.24 Faculty Coordinator Survey - Results
- 11.25 Credit Course Approval Form
- 11.26 Curriculum Committee Guidelines for Course Outline
- 11.27 Admission and Enrollment Information
- 11.28 Student Evaluation of Distance Education Courses
- 11.29 Distance Education Accreditation Survey Results, December 4, 2002
- 11.30 Distance Education - Program Information
- 11.31 Distance Education - Student Services, Financial Aid
- 11.32 Distance Education - Citrus College Online
- 11.33 Student Survey - 134 Responses
- 11.34 California Community College Chancellor's Office 2001-02 Annual Distance Education Institutional Survey
- 11.35 Distance Education Course Evaluation
- 11.36 Distance Education Survey Results