Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs

AP 4105   Distance Learning

References:
> Title 5 Section 55200 55204 et seq.; ACCJC Guide to Distance Education; Distance Education Guidelines, 2008 Omnibus Version (CCCCO)

Definition:

A distance learning (DL) course is a course that has regularly scheduled replacement of seat time and is published accordingly in the Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) Schedule. Distance learning courses include online courses, which have no required on-campus meetings and hybrid courses, which have one or more required on-campus meetings. Traditional courses have no seat time replaced with online tasks.

Course Approval:

Distance learning courses shall contain the same content, rigor, and course quality as traditional courses. Each proposed or existing course offered through distance learning shall be reviewed and approved separately by the Distance Learning Committee (DLC). Separate approval is mandatory, according to Title 5, if any portion of the instruction in a course or a course section is designed to be replaced through distance learning.

Each course that is delivered through distance learning will include regular and effective contact between professor and students. Regular and effective contact is validated through both the choice of delivery methods and the frequency of using the delivery methods. Any portion of a course conducted through distance learning includes regular effective contact between instructor and students. Examples include announcements, audio and video components, course orientation, discussion forums, group work, homework, online notes, textbook readings, exams, and tutorials.

Each course that is delivered through distance learning must comply with accessibility requirements. All course content delivered via distance learning must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

The review and approval of new and existing distance learning courses shall follow curriculum approval procedures including the completion and approval of the Distance Learning Course Amendment Form. Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance learning course are made with the full involvement of the department that controls the course, division, the Distance Learning Committee, and the Educational Design Committee approval procedures.

Each course that is delivered through distance learning will include methods of delivery that are appropriate for a DL course. The Delivery Methods Table in the Distance Learning Amendment Form includes both a description of the process and the pedagogy behind each delivery method.

Duration of Approval:

All distance learning courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless there are substantial changes of the course outline of record. If delivery methods change substantially, then a revised DL Course Amendment Form will need to be re-submitted for approval.

Distance Learning Faculty Certification:

Faculty must be certified to teach distance learning courses by satisfactorily completing the Skills and Pedagogy for Online Teaching (SPOT) process, as approved by Academic Senate and established by the College, prior to being scheduled to teach a distance learning course. SPOT is designed to provide needed information for professors teaching in distance learning. Areas to be covered include:

- Professor Contact: Each section of the course that is delivered through distance learning will include regular effective contact between the professor and students.

- Accessibility: Faculty undergoing the Skills and Pedagogy for Online Teaching (SPOT) certification process must review and follow the methods described in the appropriate DL Course Amendment Form.

- Regulations: Faculty undergoing the SPOT certification process are informed of both federal and state regulations relating to DL. Faculty are provided with and create examples of materials that comply with regulations. Faculty are also tested on their knowledge of DL regulations.

Scheduling of Distance Learning Courses:

Distance learning courses shall be listed in the Mt. SAC Schedule of Classes in the same manner as traditional courses, with any required on-campus meetings and other required components prominently displayed to students. Once scheduled, faculty should have access to course development areas in the learning management system as soon as the next term schedule is finalized to allow for faculty preparation of the online course materials.

Enrollment and Attendance in Distance Learning Courses:

Students will register and enroll in distance learning courses in the same manner as traditional courses, but attendance will be determined through contact with professors in the first week of the term. Professors determine the method and timing of the first contact with students to verify enrollment rosters in each course. Students may be dropped from distance learning courses for lack of active participation equal to 20% of the course duration. Active participation may include e-mailing the professor, writing in discussion forums, submitting assignments, taking quizzes and/or exams, or other interactive class activities. Logging into the learning management system does not constitute active participation.

Authentication of Students in Distance Learning Courses:

Distance learning course participation will be conducted through Mt. SAC server-authenticated methods. Accepted practices for authentication include user ID and password authentication to access the student portal or learning management system or by use of Mt. SAC e-mail address.

Evaluation of Distance Learning Faculty:

Student evaluations and classroom visitation evaluations of distance learning faculty should be conducted per the Faculty Agreement. Prior to conducting a distance learning classroom visitation, evaluators should review that course's Distance Learning Course Amendment Form and Course Outline of Record to ensure that the faculty member is teaching to the Course Outline of Record.

Support for Distance Learning Students:

To ensure support for DL students comparable to traditional students, services should be available in an on-line mode. Services include, but are not limited to, counseling, library resources and library reference services, tutoring, textbook purchase or rental, fee payment, and placement processes.

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