

Gavilan College Distance Education Best Practices

2019



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Introduction

In the fall of 2001, Gavilan College distance educators gathered and discussed goals and objectives for the new distance education program. The current Distance Education Committee, formed in the fall 2008, is tasked with, among other things, preparing written recommendations for guidelines and best practices for the College's Distance Education Program, including planning for the anticipated growth and maintaining quality of the program. The DE committee was restructured to report as a subcommittee to Academic Senate. Although now a sub-committee of the Senate, the structure of the committee still includes representation from the faculty, MIS and student support services.

This committee has concluded that the following topics will be included in this document, Gavilan College Distance Education Best Practices:

- Institutional responsibilities
- Faculty responsibilities
- Student support services
- Evaluation

The purpose of this document will be to guide and support the direction of Distance Education through the best practices recommended within and in accordance with the Education, Technology and Distance Education Master Plan documents and Strategic Planning Goals. This document will be forwarded through the shared governance process to have input and support from the campus community. Through this process, the College will implement the recommendations after consultation and agreement with appropriate governing bodies, i.e., academic senate, administration, etc.

Background

Distance education has been used as a method to deliver curriculum for many years at Gavilan College. Gavilan faculty have been developing and teaching online courses since 1998. These pioneers were innovative in their quest to find and utilize technology tools to deliver education online. Their grass roots efforts helped to create the successful and in demand distance education program we have today.

According to the Distance Education Report 2017 from the CCCC's office, distance education total student headcount in all distance education and traditional education course sessions (unduplicated headcount) has increased from 11% in 05-06 to 28% in 16-17. The College has followed this growth trend and in the last few years has seen a demand for all instructors to have an online presence and to make course materials and resources available online. This demand has led to the creation of a shell for every course section offered through Gavilan, either through the

college's LMS, ilearn.gavilan.edu, or creation of a web presence. Instructors are offered training and instruction to incorporate this online component into their courses.

In 2018 The College was accepted in to the Online Education Initiative (OEI) Consortium as a cohort school. This has offered the College the opportunity to participate in statewide pilot programs, such as an enrollment exchange and professional development programs. Another outcome of Gavilan's participation is to create a quality standard for delivering online education to our students for equity, access and success. The College has adopted the Course Design Rubric developed by the OEI, see Appendix A. For more information, please see the website, cvc.edu.

Infrastructure

The Distance Education Program operates under the umbrella of the Library Department. The program is responsible for the technology, guidance, training, and support needed for the instructional program to deliver curriculum, asynchronously or synchronously, in an online environment, video/web conferencing environment or other distance learning format, for Gavilan Community College.

This support includes technical needs of distance learners and instructors at all four off-site campuses (Gilroy, Hollister, Morgan Hill and Coyote Valley) as well as any other geographical location that our students and faculty may be accessing our online environment from. It also includes training for integrating engaging educational technologies into the classroom and orientations to online tools for students.

The Distance Education Program maintains excellent working partnerships with other instructional and student service departments on campus and is currently staffed with one full time Distance Education Coordinator and one part-time Distance Education Trainer. The staffing level has not changed since 2008.

Gavilan's participation in the OEI consortium adds new duties and responsibilities for the program, D.E. staff, instructors, support services, and IT.

Program Review and Improvement

The DE program undergoes regular review and evaluation via the institution's formal Program Integration Planning and Review Committee and other college planning activities. It also submits and evaluates annual Program Level Outcomes and uses the data gathered to inform decisions about the direction and priorities of the program.

The DE Program also conducts annual surveys of both students and faculty. The data gathered helps to find trouble points, technology problems, and other issues that affect students and/or

staff. These annual surveys do not attempt to evaluate individual faculty members, nor do they solicit feedback about specific courses. They attempt to provide feedback on the program as a whole, and the ways in which it can improve.

Results from these surveys, and other data gathered, are shared with staff, faculty, and administration as they become available.

Institutional Responsibilities

To successfully implement an effective distance education program at Gavilan College, there must be a continued commitment to the infrastructure needs, (including staffing,) hardware upgrades, network capabilities, software upgrades, training, and support for faculty and students. Distance education requires ongoing support for faculty and students as well as technical support. The administration has demonstrated a commitment to distance education by funding an online course management system and initial personnel support by creating and hiring a Distance Education Coordinator in 2008.

As the program has grown, so has the need for additional staffing. The trend at community colleges in a similar situation to Gavilan's has been to hire and Instructional Technologist or Instructional Designer (a classified or faculty position, respectively). Developing a budget to support new technologies and software that assist in equity and engagement in the distance classroom should also be a priority. These are the recommendation for the next steps in the supporting the Distance Education Program.

Class Assignment, Load, and Course Caps

Issues of load, class size, technical and teaching assistance, teaching schedules, academic calendar and compensation are negotiable items, which are outside of the scope of this document. However, the following regulation is provided to inform the decision-making process around these issues.

According to Title V §55208(a): Faculty Selection and Workload, "*Instructors of course sections delivered via distance education technology shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments.*"

It is important to note that Distance Education courses and instructors are subject to the standard practices, procedures and criteria which have been established for traditional face to face courses at Gavilan College including but not limited to, faculty involvement in course development and approval, instructor compensation, selection of online instructors, and oversight of online courses to ensure conformity with existing institutional practices and procedures. Faculty who teach online are required to meet the same subject area qualifications as face-to-face faculty.

Departments should continue to select appropriate faculty to teach online, in accordance with Title V §55208(a).

Curriculum Approval Process

In accordance with Title 5 §55202, *“The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a class conducted through distance education as are applied to in-person classes, in regard to the course quality judgment made pursuant to the requirements of section 55002, and in regard to any local course quality determination or review process.”* and §55206 (Separate Local Approval) *“If any portion of the instruction in a new or existing course is to be provided through distance education, an addendum to the official course outline of record shall be required.”*

Any DE class offered at Gavilan College requires approval through the curriculum committee which includes a separate approval process, even if its on-site counterpart already exists. The separate approval process for a DE course includes an additional area in College's curriculum software that identifies how the instructor will ensure that equivalent instruction and regular effective contact will take place in the online environment.

Facilities and Finances

It is recommended that Gavilan College possess the equipment and technical expertise required for distance education. Planning, via the Integrated Planning and Review Committee, and through program plans, budgeting, and policy processes, should reflect the facility, staffing, and equipment (maintenance and upgrades) needs as well as other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education program.

Instructor Support & Training

Gavilan College will provide resources to allow faculty to develop proficiency in creating and developing DE courses, such as:

- Staff development workshops
- Teaching and Learning Center (training & technical support)
- Peer Online Course Review process
- CVC-OEI Course Design Academy

Learning Management Software Standards

- It is recommended that the Distance Education Committee review the effectiveness of the learning management software every 3-5 years and forward findings to the District Technology Committee.

- It is recommended that Gavilan College adopt and support learning management software to ensure consistency among distance education courses and to provide a controlled student authentication environment.
- Learning Management software products must be in compliance with Section 508 (ADA) regulations and will be reviewed as necessary by the Distance Education and District Technology Committee and may be changed after consultation and agreement with appropriate governing bodies, i.e., Academic Senate.
- Training and support for the institutions LMS will be provided by Gavilan College.

Student Authentication

Gavilan uses industry-standard authentication programs that are used by students accessing Web course and other secure Internet information including e-mail. For students in our course management system, we use password based authentication over an encrypted channel. In addition, all students agree to an acceptable use policy that prohibits sharing logon and password information. (BP3720) Penalties for academic dishonesty are clear and widely disseminated in syllabi and the Student Handbook. For more details, see Appendix C.

Student Readiness

After registering for a course, and throughout the semester, DE students will have the option to complete one or all of the following:

- An online readiness and a technical readiness assessment.
- An introduction to online learning (on-site orientation or self-paced, online class).

Faculty Responsibilities

A quality distance education program is driven by solid course content and objectives, trained faculty, and institutional support for all involved constituents (students, staff, and faculty). While formal faculty responsibilities are governed by academic and negotiated policies and procedures, faculty can attempt to ensure that all DE classes they facilitate contribute to a quality learning experience by following the best practices suggested in this section and by consulting the DE Faculty Handbook.

Account Security

If you are teaching or working within Gavilan College, using ilearn.gavilan.edu and MyGav, please keep in mind that your login credentials are the "keys" to all your employee accounts at Gavilan College. To share your password, or to leave a public computer logged in, means that you are exposing:

- Your official email account, messages sent and received, and the ability to send new messages.
- Your posted grades.
- Your direct deposit, withholding, and other financial details.
- iLearn access, including grades, student assignments, and messages.
- And much more.

Maintaining the security of your account is an important defense against academic dishonesty as well as a variety of privacy violations.

Copyright Laws

All relevant copyright laws need to be understood and adhered to by online instructors.

Course Content

The content and objectives of the online course need to be identical to the content and objectives of the same course taught in the on-site environment; it is the method of delivery that will differ. The curriculum approval process includes a section identifying how the instructor will ensure that equivalent instruction and regular effective contact will take place in the online environment.

Course Review and Feedback

A variety of mechanisms, both formal and informal, serve to help instructors evaluate their course material and approach. Aside from the formal evaluations of full and part-time faculty, we recommend that instructors consider:

- Participating in the local Peer Online Course Review (POCR) process in the development phase of the online course
- Conducting informal, anonymous surveys near the end of a semester, asking for feedback from students regarding the pedagogy/methodology, quality of instruction, communication, accessibility and effective use of technology.
- Participating in their department's discussions and review of the Student Learning Outcomes, retention rates, completion rates, persistence, satisfaction and other statistical data reported through the Research Office.
- Carefully review the annual survey results provided by the Research Office and the DE Program, especially the latter, which focus on student satisfaction and the most common complaints and trouble spots.

While these practices are largely similar to what an on-site class should do, we feel strongly that these efforts towards feedback and improvement are crucial to continually developing a strong program.

Course Management

- Course materials may be developed by the instructor or provided by the publisher, or some combination thereof.
- Courses should have a consistent appearance without violating the instructor's academic freedom.
- Online courses should use the learning management software (ilearn.gavilan.edu) to provide a consistent experience to students.
- Learning management details (dates, log-on information, materials, etc.) need to be coordinated with the distance education contact person (Distance Education Coordinator).
- A back-up plan for technology failures, identifying who to contact as well as method (phone, email address of contact) needs to be provided.
- Courses are to be "ready for business" by 8am on the first day of the semester. This includes lectures and supplemental material, publisher content, and instructor presence.

Instructor Readiness & Development

Because we believe that an instructor trained in distance learning methodologies is important to delivering quality education, the following is required of any instructor, prior to teaching a fully-online or hybrid class:

- Required: GOTT 1: Boot Camp / Intro to Teaching Online

Additionally, all instructors are strongly encouraged to continue developing their skills in the online learning environment. Recommended pathways are:

- GOTT 1A-H: Topics in Canvas, online course design, accessibility, and software
- Online Teaching Pedagogy; Online, facilitated courses offered through Gavilan
- Participating as a student in online classes
- Certificate program in online teaching, such as those offered by @One
- Participation in the OEI course exchange, including a course review (local POER)

Training and development courses can be found at @One, CSU East Bay Online Teaching programs, and many other institutions. In addition, it is recommended that faculty who have not used the current LMS at Gavilan College request an orientation to the current course

management software as well as information regarding universal design for learning that adheres to Section 508 (ADA) compliance.

Instructor Communication Policy

Because of the inherent nature of isolation that the online environment produces, DE instructors need to inform students of their response time, which should not exceed 48 hours. Faculty should consider a synchronous office hour during which they can be reached.

When communicating with students, we recommend that faculty:

- Use the LMS messaging system, especially for topics relating to coursework. This creates a manageable paper trail, should there be any dispute regarding the class.
- Use the students' gavilan-supplied email address: *studentname@my.gavilan.edu*. As part of their orientation, students acknowledge that this email account is the channel for any official college communications.

Instructor Contact

Instructors should be familiar with Title 5 regulation 55204, Instructor Contact. Excerpt below:

“Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.” ---See Appendix D for full regulation

Universal Design and Accessibility

All distance education faculty members should be made aware of the principles of universal design and ensure their online teaching materials and web pages meet the Level 1 web accessibility guidelines. See gavilan.edu/student/aec/508.php for more information.

Under Section 508 (ADA) all online courses and materials must be accessible for students with disabilities.

When a course is proposed for online delivery, part of the curriculum approval process includes a Course Accessibility Agreement guide and checklist for instructors to complete. (Accessibility form in CurriQunet must be downloaded, completed and then uploaded to the course modification proposal.) See Appendix B for examples of these forms.

Student Services Responsibilities

A goal of Gavilan College is to provide deliver and maintain equivalent student support services for students participating in distance learning at Gavilan College. The DE program will work closely with Student Services, IT Department, and the web site committee in order to ensure that student services are available to online students to the fullest degree possible. The student services departments relevant to Distance Education include (but aren't limited to):

- Accessible Education Center
- Admissions and Records
- Bookstore
- CalWORKs
- Campus Activities
- Campus Security
- Campus Tours
- Career and Transfer Center
- Counseling and Guidance
- Distance Education
- EOPS /CARE Program
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Foster Youth
- Fresh Success
- Library
- MESA
- Orientation / Welcome Center
- Student Government (ASGC)
- TRIO
- Tutoring Center
- Veterans Resource Center
- Writing Center/Learning Commons

Informational Resources

Distance learners need to have access to the same information provided to on-site students. Online student services information should include at a minimum: web page with contact information, and what the specific services are in the following areas, as well as any forms or documents that can be electronically utilized.

Where applicable, and where technology permits, student services programs can arrange to use video-conferencing, whiteboard software, and other tools to serve the online student population.

Accessible Education Center (AEC)

Instructors will create web pages and course materials that are accessible to users with disabilities. The AEC will be a resource to assist instructors. The Gavilan College web standards support the principle of “Universal Design” which promotes a high degree of usability for people with visual, hearing, physical, language and cognitive disabilities. Gavilan College follows the 508 web standards.

Computer labs on campus should have available appropriate hardware, software and network configurations to enable students with disabilities to access distance education materials.

Financial Aid

Provide financial aid and scholarship information, applications and assistance in an online environment. It is essential to provide the same opportunities for recognition and support to distance learners as are offered to on-campus students.

Library

Provide students with the necessary information to facilitate remote access to research resources. This includes access to digital library resources, full text databases and reference services.

Tutoring

As a participant in the OEI, the College has access to NetTutor, an online tutoring platform available to online students and on-campus students. It is recommended that the institution support a comprehensive online tutoring program in order to support student success.

Student Government (ASGC)

Work with ASGC to connect with activities and resources for distance learners. A comprehensive virtual campus includes not only courses and student services but also student communities and extra-curricular activities. This could include membership in the Associated Student Body and involve online activities.

Appendices

Appendix A: OEI Course Rubric

Gavilan College recommends the [OEI Course Design Rubric](#) as the standard for exemplary online course design. While recognizing that every course and every teacher is different and may bring unique opportunities and challenges, the Gavilan faculty adopt the four sections of the OEI Course Design Rubric as the best practices to which our online classes are aligned. The four sections of the rubric focus on content presentation, interaction, assessment, and accessibility.

The full, October 2018 version of the rubric can be found online at:

<http://gavilan.edu/staff/tlc/docs/OEI-Course-Design-Rubric-2018-10.pdf>

Section A: Content Presentation

The 14 elements for quality course design in this section address how content is organized and accessed in the course management system. Key elements include course navigation, learning objectives, and access to student support information.

Section B: Interaction

The six elements in this section address instructor-initiated and student-initiated communication. Key elements of quality course design covered in this section include regular effective contact, both between and among instructors and students.

Section C: Assessment

The eight elements in this section address the variety and effectiveness of assessments within the course. Key elements include the alignment of objectives and assessments, the clarity of instructions for completing activities, and evidence of timely and regular feedback.

Following a review by a team of trained faculty peer reviewers, each element in Sections A-C will be marked in one of three ways:

- *Incomplete*: The element is missing or present to a degree that does not adequately support student success in online learning.
- *Aligned*: The element is present and effectively designed to support student success in online learning.
- *Additional Exemplary Elements*: This designation recognizes design choices that are aligned and go even further to enhance the student experience in the online learning environment.

Section D: Accessibility

The 16 elements in this section are reviewed to determine if a student using assistive technologies will be able to access the instructor's course content as required by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (also known as "508 Compliance"). The accessibility elements in Section D focus on instructor-generated content that is primarily under the control of faculty when developing a course. Since Section D addresses elements that are required to be present, the elements in this section, when applicable, are only marked as Incomplete or Aligned.

Appendix B: Curriculum approval process for DE courses

Curricunet DE Course Proposal / Approval Screens

I. Distance Education Tab

New Course: AJ 40 - Fundamentals of Law

Status: In Review [View Proposal History](#)

Course Description	8/8	Distance Education
Units/Hours/Status	10/10	Last updated by Roberto LaCarra on 9/1/2018 at 1:54 PM
Requisites		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is Distance Ed
C-ID/Basic Skills/Cross-Listed		PROGRAM CHANGE: Will the addition of this course increase the programs course offerings via distance education delivery to over 50%? *
Methods of Instruction	1/1	No
Distance Education	8/8	Need/Justification *
Distance Education Delivery	0/1	This course is needed to provide students with the insight and knowledge needed for success in law school.
Distance Education Contact	1/1	Assessment *
Student Learning Outcomes	1/1	Students will be assessed on their curriculum retention via tests and discussion boards.
Methods of Evaluation	1/1	Methods of Instruction *
Course Content	1/1	Online via text, PowerPoints, and video reflections.
Out of Class Assignments	1/1	Instructional Materials and Resources *
Textbooks	1/1	What Every Law Student Really Needs to Know, An Instruction to the Study of Law 2nd Edition Tracey E. George and Suzanna Sherry ISBN 978-1-4548-4152-4
General Education Learning Outcomes		Video reflections will be retrieved from various sources online.
Similar Courses		How will students be provided access to library materials and what support will students be provided to help them locate and use these materials?
General Education Pattern		Library and Other Learning Resources *
		Students will be provided a link to the school library and can purchase the text at the school book store or online stores.
		Accommodations for Students with Disabilities *
		Students will be accommodated as needed.
		What method/s will be used for office hour contact in this Distance Education course?
		Office Hours *
		Office hours will be available on an appointment basis and a phone number will be provided so that students can contact their instructor.
		Distance Learning Course Accessibility Agreement
		Download the Distance Learning Course Accessibility Agreement
		Press Select to browse for files. To attach selected files to this record, press Upload files.
		Select...
		Attachments
		There are no attachments to display. Press Select to browse for files to attach to this record.

II. Delivery Tab

New Course: AJ 40 - Fundamentals of Law



Status: In Review

[View Proposal History](#)

Course Description	8/8	Distance Education Delivery
Units/Hours/Status	10/10	Last updated by James Ghorzi on 3/20/2019 at 11:27 AM <i>If no fields, go to "Distance Education" tab and check "Is Distance Ed".</i>
Requisites		Distance Education Delivery
C-ID/Basic Skills/Cross-Listed		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Methods of Instruction	1/1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid
Distance Education	8/8	<input type="checkbox"/> Two-way interactive video
Distance Education Delivery	0/1	If this course is Hybrid, what percent is online? * <input type="text"/>
Distance Education Contact	1/1	
Student Learning Outcomes	1/1	
Methods of Evaluation	1/1	
Course Content	1/1	
Out of Class Assignments	1/1	

III. Contact Tab - All Contact Options

Course Description	8/8	Distance Education Contact
Units/Hours/Status	10/10	Last updated by Roberto LaCarra on 9/8/2018 at 5:37 PM <i>If no fields, go to "Distance Education" tab and check "Is Distance Ed".</i>
Requisites		Distance Education Contact
C-ID/Basic Skills/Cross-Listed		Contact Type *
Methods of Instruction	1/1	<input type="text"/>
Distance Education	8/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EmailChatFAQsForumsMultimediaWeb ConferencingTelephoneIn Person MeetingsOther
Distance Education Delivery	0/1	
Distance Education Contact	1/1	
Student Learning Outcomes	1/1	
Methods of Evaluation	1/1	
Course Content	1/1	

IV. Example Contact Type

Email

Contact Types Percent: 100.00

Description:
This course will be 100% online, however, instructor is available to meet in person, over the phone, or via email for students who may have questions or need guidance.

Form D: Distance Learning Course Outline Addendum

The questions below concern the accessibility of your distance-learning course for students with disabilities. The instructor who is teaching this course will ensure accessibility of the instructional materials by agreeing to abide by the following criteria when creating content for online courses such as: graphics, animations, videos, audio, PDF and/or Word documents.

Yes	No	Requirement and <i>Purpose</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1. Using campus LMS software?</p> <p>The current course management software we use has been certified section 508 compliant. This means when using this system the delivery of your content is guaranteed accessible. However, as the instructor or course creator you must make sure that the content you provide within the LMS is accessible by using the following methods in the boxes below.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>2. Using images or animation?</p> <p>A text equivalent is provided for every non-text element, including both images and animated objects. <i>This will enable a screen reader to read the text equivalent to a blind student.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>3. Using multimedia?</p> <p>Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation are synchronized with the presentation. Videos and live audio must have captions and/or a transcript. With archived audio, a transcription may be sufficient.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>4. Using documents?</p> <p>Ensure accessibility content, including PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, PowerPoint presentations. PDF documents and other content must be as accessible as possible. If you cannot make it accessible, consider using HTML instead or, at the very least, provide an accessible alternative. PDF documents should also include a series of tags to make it more accessible. <i>A tagged PDF file looks the same, but it is almost always more accessible to a person using a screen reader.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>5. Using forms?</p> <p>When electronic forms are designed to be completed online, the form allows students using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>6. Using web pages?</p> <p>-Ensure links make sense out of context. Every link should make sense if the link text is read by itself. <i>Screen reader users may choose to read only the links on a web page. Certain phrases like "click here" and "more" must be avoided.</i></p> <p>-Ensure that webpages meet 508 standards by testing through Cynthia Says (http://www.cynthiasays.com/) or through the AccVerify/AccRepair programs (available in the TLC). For step by step instructions, follow the guidelines on the Accessibility Guidelines website: . http://www.gavilan.edu/student/aec/web_guidelines.php When creating html content, you can use a 508 compliant program that Gavilan supports such as: Cascade or Dreamweaver (available in the TLC).</p>

You can visit Gavilan's Section 508 Standards for Electronic & Information Technology at <http://www.gavilan.edu/student/aec/508.php> For more information on accessibility, see The Access Board provisions at ([http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(a\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(a))) and the WebAIM Section 508 Checklist at (<http://www.webaim.org/standards/508/checklist>).

Appendix C: User Authentication

Gavilan uses industry-standard authentication programs that are used by students accessing Web course and other secure Internet information including e-mail. In addition, all students agree to an acceptable use policy that prohibits sharing logon and password information. (BP3720) Penalties for academic dishonesty are clear and widely disseminated in syllabi and the Student Handbook.

For students in our course management system, we use password based authentication over an encrypted channel - first, because our current system works well and is consistent with best practice, and second, because the alternatives have serious drawbacks. For example, many states consider proctoring as physical presence. Also, technologies such as biometrics and webcam monitoring are prohibitively expensive and could be considered overkill for this kind of application.

If you are teaching or working within Gavilan College, using ilearn.gavilan.edu and MyGav, please keep in mind that your secure login credentials are an important defense against academic dishonesty.

For more information on "acceptable use" policies for students, faculty and staff that address areas such as network use consistent with institutional mission, copyright compliance, misuse of computing resources (e.g, sharing institutional account passwords) and consequences of possible loss of network privileges and/or disciplinary action, please consult one or more of the following documents listed below:

- Distance Education Best Practices
- Student Handbook
- Board Policy 3720
- Administrative Policy 3720

Appendix D: Title 5 Regulations for Distance Education

Regulations:

Title 5 and the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges state:

§ 55200. Definition and Application.

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by time and/or distance and interact through the assistance of 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 of 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).

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code; title 29 United States Code section 794d; and title 42 United States Code sections 12100, 12101, 12102, 12103, 12131, 12132, 12133 and 12134.

§ 55202. Course Quality Standards.

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a class conducted through distance education as are applied to in-person classes, in regard to the course quality judgment made pursuant to the requirements of section 55002, and 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 in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 2 (commencing with section 53200) of chapter 2.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Section 70901, Education Code.

Guideline for Section 55202

This section emphasizes the extent to which course quality depends upon the full involvement of faculty in the design and application of DE courses. It discusses course quality standards for distance education and combines language formerly found in sections 55207 and 55209 which it replaces. Language is added to clarify that normal course quality standards apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

§ 55204. Instructor Contact.

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that:

(a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

(b) Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

Guideline for Section 55204

This section defines what contact must be maintained between instructor and student. It is virtually identical to section 55211 which it replaces, except that language has been added to clarify that rules related to conduct of distance education and effective instructor contact apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

Subdivision (a) stresses the responsibility of the instructor in a DE course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status and to promote interaction among students. The use of the term “regular effective contact” in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record.

The last published Distance Education Guidelines, March 2004, issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors, as referenced in subdivision (b), establishes the principle that for DE courses there are a number of acceptable interactions between instructor and student, not all of which may require in-person contact. Thus, districts and/or colleges will need to define “effective contact” including how often, and in what manner instructor-student interaction is achieved. It is important to document

regular effective contact and how it is achieved. Since regular effective contact was declared an academic and professional matter, this documentation must include demonstration of collegial consultation with the academic senate, for example through its delegation to the local curriculum committee. A natural place for this to occur is during the separate course approval process (see section 55206) as well as during faculty evaluations, student surveys, and program review. Documentation should consist of the inclusion of information in applicable outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session. Local policies should establish and monitor minimum standards of regular effective contact.

Background:

In hybrid or fully online courses, ensuring Regular Effective Instructor/Student Contact guarantees that the student receives the benefit of the instructor's presence in the learning environment both as a provider of instructional information and as a facilitator of student learning. In a face-to-face course the instructor is present at each class meeting and interacts via all class announcements, lectures, activities and discussions that take a variety of forms. For example, discussions can be held as part of a lecture format, group work scenarios, or content review sessions. The instructor also serves as a content advisor when he or she answers questions both as they come up in class and as they arise in individual situations. These types of questions are dealt with via the telephone, email, or face-to-face office visits.

Title 5 regulations do not make a distinction between regular and distance education courses beyond the need to have a separate curriculum approval process and the need to ensure regular effective contact. The guidelines do say that quality assurances within the regulations apply to all DE courses, which include hybrid courses. Therefore, it is assumed that those qualities of regular effective contact described above for the face-to-face environment, should also be applied to the distance education situation. The DE Guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding regular effective contact that addresses "the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session".

Gavilan College Policy:

Prior to delivery, all courses delivered in a distance format, hybrid or in full, will obtain approval through the Curriculum Committee by completing the DE Addendum in CurrIQunet, which includes filling out the "Accessibility Agreement" of the course approval process, regardless if course has been previously approved as delivered in F2F format.

All DE courses at Gavilan College, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact as described below and as indicated via CurrIQunet in the curriculum approval process:

Initiated interaction: Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. Providing students with an open-ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor initiated interaction.

Frequency: DE Courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” to face-to-face courses. Therefore, the frequency of the contact will be at least the same as would be established in a regular, face-to-face course. At the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the DE format (based on the Carnegie unit). Given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course.

Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence: An instructor and/or department established policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for an unexpected reason (such as illness or a family emergency that takes the instructor offline), notification to students will be made in the announcements area of the course that includes when the students can expect regular effective contact to resume. If the offline time results in a lengthy absence (i.e. more than three or four days) a substitute instructor should be sought who can assist students while the instructor is unavailable.

Type of Contact: Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all Gavilan College DE courses, instructors will, at a minimum, use the following resources to initiate contact with students:

- Threaded discussion forums within the course management system, with appropriate instructor participation. (“Questions for the instructor” forums are good but should be used in conjunction with other forums.)
- Instructor prepared e-lectures or introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face class.
- Weekly announcements in the Course Management System
- Timely feedback for student work.
- General email
- Virtual Office hours

Appendix E: Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity

This list of best practice strategies is based on “Institutional Policies/Practices and Course Design Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education,” produced by WCET in June 2009. Version 2.0, June 2009

- Establish a campus-wide policy on academic integrity that articulates faculty and student responsibilities.
- Demonstrate an institutional commitment to enforcing the policy and in supporting faculty and staff in the handling of academic integrity matters.
- Make information on academic integrity easy to find on the campus Web site, library Web site, department Web site, and course, within the syllabus and within specific assignments.
- Include ethics instruction within the core curriculum and/or area-specific within degree plans.
- Address academic integrity at student orientation programs and events.
- Encourage faculty to report every suspected violation and act upon it.
- Secure student logins and password to access online courses and related resources, discussions, assignments and assessments.

Curriculum and Instruction

1. State the academic integrity/academic honesty policy within the online learning environment and discuss it early in the course.
2. Require student engagement with the academic integrity policy. For example:
3. Ask students for their input on how to create a community of integrity at the start of the course. This establishes the students as stakeholders in the community and the process of its formation.
4. Require students to read and sign an agreement to the campus academic integrity policy.
5. Write a letter to students about integrity and post it in the course.
6. Ask students to restate the academic integrity policy (this can also be used as a writing sample to use when grading and reviewing student work).
7. Ask students to reflect on the academic integrity policy in the discussion board.
8. Include a lesson on avoiding plagiarism.
9. Have assignments and activities in which appropriate sharing and collaboration is essential to successful completion. Foster a community of integrity by choosing authentic learning tasks that require group cohesiveness and effort. For example, focus assignments on distinctive, individual, and non-duplicative tasks or on what individual students self-identify as their personal learning needs.

10. Provide students with a course or course lesson on research and/or study skills. Work with library staff to design assignments and prepare materials on plagiarism and research techniques.
11. Include a statement that the instructor reserves the right to require alternative forms and/or locations of assessments (e.g., proctoring).
12. Ask students follow-up questions to assignments such as, “expand upon this statement you made,” “tell me why you chose this phrase, description or reference,” and “expand upon the ideas behind this reference.”
13. Select one or two difficult concepts from the paper and ask the student to restate/rewrite the information.
14. Require students to share key learning from references for a paper or self-reflection on an assignment in the discussion board.
15. Include an ethical decision-making case study within the course.

Faculty Support

1. Incorporate academic integrity strategies into professional development and faculty training offerings.
2. Publish academic integrity strategies and policies in faculty handbook and Web-based faculty resources.
3. Publish guidelines for handling/reporting individual student infractions.
4. Assign a department academic integrity liaison to support faculty.
5. Use a plagiarism detection service.
6. Use Google to search for a unique text string or unique phrase from the paper.
7. Keep student papers filed in the department by topic for reference.

Student Support

- A. Define academic integrity and cheating and clearly explain what is considered dishonest and unacceptable behavior.
- B. Provide information and examples to help students understand the difference between collaboration on assignments and cheating, and identify plagiarism. Teach the proper use of citations.
- C. State how much collaboration is permissible on each assignment.
- D. State what the instructor’s expectations are for the students and explain what they should expect from the instructor. For example:
 - a. honest work.
 - b. Repeat the campus academic integrity statement and provide a link to campus policies.
 - c. Describe academic dishonesty.
 - d. Describe the repercussions for academic dishonesty.

- e. Describe permissible and impermissible e. collaboration.
- f. Include outside links to information on plagiarism, self-tests and examples.
- g. Include information on acceptable sources..
- h. Include information about the college’s writing center, library or other support.
- i. Provide a writing style sheet or handbook with information on plagiarism and campus policies.
- j. Indicate assessments may require follow-up documentation, questions or assignments.
- k. State expectations for the time needed to complete coursework.
- l. State whether the instructor/college will use a plagiarism detection service.

Assessment and Evaluation

1. Provide rubrics, or detailed grading criteria, for every assignment at the beginning of the course so students understand how they will be graded.
2. Train faculty on ways to use the settings on the college’s learning management system to reduce cheating:
3. Use a test bank with more questions than will be used on any particular test and have the learning management system pull a smaller number of questions from the test bank
4. Randomize the order of answers for multiple test questions so for example, the correct answer for a particular question might be “a” for one student and “b” for another.
5. Require forced completion on exams so students cannot re-enter a test.
6. Set a short window for testing completion, i.e. one or two days to take an exam rather than a whole week. Setting a completion time reduces a student’s ability to access the test, look up the answer, and re-enter the test. Most test-taking software applications keep track of time on the server, not on the student’s computer.
7. Password protect exams.
8. Show questions one at a time (makes more difficult for students to copy and paste the test in order to give it to someone else).
9. Check the computer “properties” for the “creation date” and “author” for essay or term paper submissions if students are suspected of submitting work created by someone else.
10. Change test items and assignment topics each semester.
11. Emphasize assignments that require written work and problem solving (e.g., essays, papers, online discussions).
12. Use a variety of assessment strategies (quizzes, short and long papers, test questions that require the application of a theory or concept).
13. Adopt the following practices to encourage authentic written work:
14. Require students to turn in copies of reference articles with cited text highlighted.
15. Require annotated bibliographies.
16. Do not allow last minute changes in assignment topics.

17. Require specific references be used (this might be the course text).
18. Require an abstract.
19. Give narrow assignment topics (tied into class experience) and require thesis statements prior to topic approval.
20. Require students to turn in a draft, and their bibliography or references prior to the paper's due date.
21. Require students to write a concept paper and project plan prior to completing an assignment.
22. Evaluate the research process and the product.
23. After an assignment is due, have students post in the discussion board, describing the assignment and the research method used, a summary of conclusions and an abstract (a meta-learning essay).
24. When evaluating student written work, consider following these practices:
25. Be wary of student writing that reads like an encyclopedia, newspaper article or expert in the field.
26. Look for whether a paper reflects the assignment, has changes in tense, includes odd sentences within a well-written paper, is based on references older than three years, refers to past events as current, or uses jargon.
27. Compare student writing on the discussion board with that on assignments and papers. A writing sample collected at the start of the semester can be helpful.
28. Compare the writing at the beginning and end of the paper with that in the middle of the paper -- language, sentence length and reading level.
29. Check references; compare quotations with cited sources; look for the same author in multiple references.
30. Read all papers on the same topic together.
31. Make assignments cumulative (students turn in parts of a project or paper throughout the semester).
32. Give open book exams.
33. Other than grades, do not provide students feedback on tests until all of the students in the class have completed them.
34. Use proctored test sites where appropriate.
35. Faculty should use a robust username and password to protect their computer-based grade book and keep a printed copy in a secure place in case students are able to hack into the computer system.

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