Distance Learning Steering Committee 2011-12

Co-chairs
Susanne Christopher- Health Faculty; Sciences, Health and PE Chair, SE Center
Lorraine Schmitt- Distance Education Director

Members
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Kendra Cawley             Instructional Support Dean
Cheryl Scott              Division Dean- RC
Dieterich Steinmetz       Division Dean-SY
Alyson Lighthart          Division Dean- CA
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Eric Kirchner             Faculty – Microelectronics /Chair -RC
Ana Sacramento            Faculty –Medical Technology CA
James Hart                Faculty – Chemistry CA/SE
Frank Goulard             Faculty -Math SY
Kris Fink                 Faculty, PT – Writing SE
Jan Abushakrah            Faculty Gerontology and Sociology -SY
Gayathri Iyer             Faculty – Computer Science RC
Heather Lang              Student Services Dean, SY
Greg Kaminski             Distance Learning, Instructional computing facilitator
Andy Freed                Distance Learning, Interim Manager

EAC Charge
At the January 2011 EAC meeting, the Task Force brought forth a recommendation to establish a Steering Committee charged with sorting the many individual recommendations proposed by research teams, and either preparing them for formal EAC recommendation/administrative approval or coordinating and/or supporting further discussion as appropriate.

Completed Work
The Distance Learning Steering Committee met from October 2011-June 2012 to discuss the Task Force Recommendations. All recommendations were discussed, forwarded to EAC for discussion and approval, and also approved by President Pulliams. Some recommendations were updated or consolidated resulting in 57 final recommendations.
Distance Learning Steering Committee Recommendations
Approved by President Pulliams June 2012

Recommendations

1. Hire Distance Learning Advising Specialist

2. Distance Education and DSSL (District Student Services Leaders) revisit [status of advising concerns] after the new DL Advising Specialist has been in place for 6 months.

3. Distance Education, faculty mentors, and SAC Distance Learning teams should increase opportunities for staff development in the area of online assessment appropriate to each discipline so that faculty can adopt assessment strategies that reduce reliance on proctoring.

4. Distance Education department keep an eye on web-based technology solutions for online proctoring for future solutions

5. A workgroup comprised of Distance Education department staff, members of the Distance Learning Faculty Advisory group, Testing Coordinators, the Registrar, and other key stakeholders develop guidelines for proctoring sites, procedures and standards.

6. Develop a clear and simple methodology to ensure that students understand, at the point of registration, any in-person requirements for distance learning courses. Responsible parties include Distance Learning, Web Team, Enrollment Services, Deans of Students and other key stakeholders. Note: Do usability testing with students.

7. Distance Education, DSSL, and DL Faculty Advisory Committee evaluate effectiveness of recent changes in student help desk in one year

8. Disability Services department work with the web team to produce a fully online version of their orientation for students who cannot come to campus

9. Content of the Disability Services web page be modified to explain procedures for accessing services for online students in addition to the existing procedures for on-campus students

10. Deans of Students should convene a work group to evaluate the fairness of student fees charged for online courses that are focused on campus-based clubs, extracurricular activities, and programming. The group should include representation from Distance Education, the EACs Student Development Committee, and students

11. Distance Education department work with groups, such as Career Guidance and College Success (CG) and Learning Center instructors to find ways to adapt their on-campus workshops (study skills, reading comprehension, learning styles, etc.) to the online environment

12. Distance Education continue to work with the Distance Learning Advisory Committee to develop and implement a more comprehensive online orientation course for Distance Education students, addressing concerns of student readiness, technology aptitudes and success strategies

13. Distance Learning Advising Specialist job description should include working with students to direct them to resources and counsel them with student success issues.
Distance Education will establish a work group with representation from faculty, division deans, Technology Solution Services, Deans of Students, Deans of Instruction, and Enrollment Services to research, what other institutions are doing to: 1) authenticate enrollment; 2) Research and assess student academic integrity; and 3) weigh the pros and cons of implementing systematic detection software. The work group will report its findings and make recommendations to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and the Deans of Instruction for any needed improvements.

Continue to reaffirm that Subject Area Committees (SAC) are the best place to discuss which student learning assessment techniques are appropriate for a discipline and its corresponding courses because student learning assessment techniques vary by discipline and by instructor.

District Student Services Leaders develop a quick reference guide for faculty and deans to outline PCC’s system of dealing with cases of suspected cheating. Develop a feedback loop so faculty are informed of process and outcome.

It is the instructor’s primary responsibility to schedule and proctor in-person class exams, when required. In situations where students cannot attend the class proctored exam time, referral to PCC Testing Centers for make-up exam proctoring is appropriate and should be supported by the college with adequate resources.

Testing Centers should establish a uniform policy that applies across the district to make it easier for instructors and students to arrange for make-up testing.

Distance Education department explore online proctoring options and technology solutions supporting academic integrity and provide information to faculty on “tips” that reduce online cheating.

The Distance Education Department will clarify the purpose and current practices using Quality Matters (QM) as a course development, revision, and review guide to primary user groups such as faculty and division deans.

Course development may be better served by clearly dividing the development/revision process into two phases: initial, which has a Query Guide approach and is a more educational than product approach, followed by review which is Quality Matters (QM) or some modification or variant.

Continue to provide Peer Reviews between Faculty Mentors and faculty developing online courses.

Encourage continued integration of Faculty Mentors with Subject Area Committees (SAC) to ease and support development of new online courses and to revise existing courses.

In light of the fact that current practice for SAC approval of new online courses is not well defined or documented, a work group (to include SAC chairs, Administrative Liaisons and the Distance Learning department) should clarify and document current practice. The work group should also make process revision recommendations if needed. Subject Area Committees (SAC) should conduct ongoing review of courses offered in distance modality and summarize in Program Review.

Learning Assessment Council encourage expansion of the college-wide outcomes assessment process to acknowledge the crucial aspects of the educational experience that are not measurable.
26 The Distance Education Department shall create a work group including faculty, Faculty Mentors, Department Chairs, Division Deans, Subject Area Committee Chairs, and Deans of Instruction to develop a document that identifies potential online course development and sharing models, including benefits and limitations, from current PCC course development and sharing strategies.

27 Subject Area Committees should identify the Distance Learning course development and sharing model(s) that work for their discipline and program area.

28 Subject Area Committees (SAC) should identify a team of faculty responsible for guiding SAC distance learning discussion and decisions. In Subject Area Committees (SAC) with large number of faculty, a SAC Distance Education Advisory Team may be developed.

29 The Subject Area Committees(SAC), SAC liaisons, Department Chairs, Division Deans, Deans of Instruction, and the Distance Education Department work collaboratively to coordinate resources, procedures, and practices to support SAC recommendations concerning online course development and sharing.

30 Discussed as part of 2011 negotiations, the compensation and the intellectual property rights sections of the contract should be re-visited and be informed by research and internal expertise.

31 Within the scope of contractual agreements, we recommend PCC continue to support and promote a multi-model course development and revision process for distance learning courses. There should be a shared understanding of the models among key stakeholders including faculty, faculty mentors, Department Chairs, Division Deans, SACs, Deans of Instruction, and the Distance Education Department. The models should identify the relationship between course development and sharing, course offerings, development funding, intellectual property rights, and academic freedom.

32 Distance Education department should provide ready and repeated access to information about retention practices in the online Faculty Resource Center, Online Instructor Orientation (OIO), New Faculty Institute, campus Part-time Faculty In-services

33 Academic and Student Affairs Vice President (ASAVP) should form a work team, with representation from Department Chairs, Division Deans, faculty who teach online, students, and Distance Education department, to create a document that provides models for how to assess online courses that are consistent with current college practices and policies for assessing instruction. The information should also be disseminated at the Fall Faculty Chair Institute, the Division Deans Council, Academic and Student Affairs Council (ASAC), EAC, and elsewhere as appropriate.

34 Institutional Effectiveness should distribute to Subject Area Committees (SAC), Faculty Department Chairs, Deans, and Distance Education, information that compares online and on-campus student retention and success rates by discipline. Where information indicates a significant discrepancy between online and on-campus retention and/or success rates, further investigation should occur.
For distance learning modalities, current class size limits have been discussed in negotiations but are unspecified in the contract. We recommend that the Director of Distance Education facilitate a work group (see below) to develop recommended default limits for DL courses, and that this recommendation be subject to the normal negotiation process. In developing the recommendation, the work group will:

- apply the guiding principles framework developed by the DL Task Force
- review best practices, DL research literature, and costs of DL instruction
- consider existing PCC practices and prior negotiation (2000-1) agreements on DL class size limits

Deviations from the defaults, developed per article 26.24, should be published to allow for consistent implementation district wide.

Suggested workgroup membership:
A work group of six members will meet to develop a recommendation on default DL class sizes, the work group should include:
- Director of Distance Education
- A Dean of Instruction
- A Division Dean with significant DL experience
- 3 faculty each representing a discipline "mature" in DL offerings that have landed at different places on the DL class size spectrum, for example:
  - low (below 20)
  - middle (25)
  - higher (30+)

With consideration of variation in workload issues, establish similar but not necessarily the same class size limits for face-to-face campus classes and CLWEB classes as recommended by individual Subject Area Committees (SAC) and approved by respective Deans.

Faculty compensation for enrolling additional students beyond the SAC-agreed class size limits was briefly discussed and unchanged in the last negotiation. We recommend that the issue be addressed in future negotiations, subject to the normal negotiation process.

The 115% requirement for per student compensation beyond the class size limit was discussed and unchanged in the last negotiation.

The face-to-face overage compensation issue was briefly discussed and unchanged in the last negotiation. We recommend that the overage issue be addressed in future negotiations, subject to the normal negotiation process.

Overage limits are not in the contract. Since the initial DL task force recommendations were completed, practice guidelines for overages have been developed by the Division Deans and Deans of Instruction. We recommend that the overage issue be addressed in future negotiations, subject to the normal negotiation process.

Enrollment Services convene a workgroup including representation from Deans of Instruction, Division Deans, Faculty Department Chairs, Distance Education, and Technology Solution Services (TSS) staff to review and update the existing waitlist structure regarding the availability of seats and how they are filled.

The Division Deans Council should address the consistency and transparency of telecommuting practices and documentation. We recommend that the issue be re-examined in future negotiations, subject to the normal negotiation process.
A) Make sure the support desk operates 7 days a week for both students and faculty.
B) Make a phone number available for faculty to call if the D2L site is down or having a problem

Have an email address for both faculty and students to use to report any problems or outages encountered with the learning management systems

Make sure the student help desk personnel are trained to answer most of the simple questions asked or if they don’t know the answer have a faculty support person to go to, to get the answer in a timely manner

Have a link on the D2L site to report connection problems

Continue the comprehensive training program for new Distance Learning faculty as determined by the Distance Education department

Distance Education, Division Deans, and Faculty Department Chairs determine how to manage situations where exceptions to the formal online instructor training may be requested. This includes last minute teaching assignments and mentorships with experienced DL instructors

Require all faculty new to Distance Learning at PCC to successfully complete PCC online instructor training for how to incorporate and utilize best Distance Learning teaching practices into their classes. Integrate this into the faculty assessment process. It should be noted that “best practices” may be different for individual disciplines. These differences should be identified, recognized and embraced.

Provide on-going opportunities for Distance Learning faculty to attend training related to enhancing and improving their Distance Learning courses. This training should include incentives and should also be integrated within the faculty assessment process. The training should be specific and relevant to the individual disciplines.

Continue to utilize the peer faculty mentoring program for providing group-related and one-on-one technical and best practices training and support

The Distance Education Department will lead a work group to
  • Establish a consistent, shared definition and naming convention for the variety of instructional delivery methods with an online component employed at PCC.
  • Identify a consistent method of labeling Web and CLWEB sections to clearly identify the format of how the section is offered. Writing standards for descriptions of specific class requirements will be created to ensure clarity for students. Class meeting times must be displayed.

The work group of stakeholders should include Distance Learning, CLWEB faculty, Division Deans, Deans of Instruction, Scheduling, Web Team, and an Instructional Administrative Assistant

The Contract Administration Meeting (CAM) group should develop a strategy to compensate Q class, (DL & campus on the same CRN) instructors for the workload involved in such a class. One possible option: A Q-class workload will be 150% of the normal class IFTE workload decimal factor (eg, a four-credit lecture class has a workload of 0.272; a Q-class will be 150% of that, or 0.408). Further, if the Q-class’ combined enrollments of its F2F and online sections reaches 40, then the workload will be treated as two sections or 200%.
In an effort to promote college-wide collaboration, it is recommended that each Subject Area Committee (SAC) offering Distance Learning (DL) courses designate a Distance Education team/representative to provide input on DL related issues such as course development, scheduling, and course quality (this group is not responsible for the actual scheduling). The SAC will inform the Distance Education Department who the SAC liaison is.

1. The Cabinet should direct the Deans of Instruction to form a “College-Wide Discipline Coordination Team” for each discipline that includes representation from each campus at the Faculty Department Chair and/or Division Dean level, charged with scheduling campus and online courses classes in an equitable manner college-wide. Some further exploration of alternate methods related to the collection and disbursement of funds may be needed. Include the Distance Education Director in an advisory role when strategically planning for new course development.

2. In the long term, we recommend the Cabinet form a work group, with members to include both campus and district representation, to further explore the viability of changing the PCC academic organizational structure to better support district wide planning and allocation of resources, including IFTE.

Distance Education department provide clarity to the College community regarding current roles and qualifications of Distance Education staff and Online Faculty Mentors involved in the course development and review process.

Continue to improve upon clear communication with instructors, department chairs, SAC Chairs, and deans regarding the current processes and expectations within the Distance Learning community.