



2009-10 ANNUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT TO THE CLPCCD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Las Positas College

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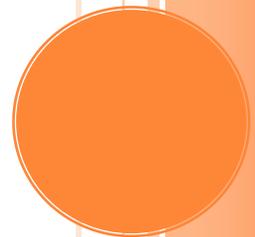


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INTRODUCTION

Validation, planning and preparation were the themes of the LPC Distance Education (DE) program during the 2009-10 academic year. Validation came in the forms of approvals during the college's accreditation process and for the Substantive Change Proposal it submitted to the ACCJC/WASC. Planning took place with participation in the Non-Instructional Program Review pilot that is being incorporated into LPC's new strategic planning process. And preparation was a year-long activity aimed at ensuring that students and faculty were ready for the new version of the Blackboard course management system that was launched in June. Success in these three realms was the result of diligent and collaborative efforts of faculty, staff and administrators. This report details those major accomplishments, summarizes other achievements over the past year, and provides a status report on the Distance Education (DE) program as a whole.

ACCREDITATION

LPC's recent accreditation cycle culminated in a January 2010 evaluation report in which the ACCJC awarded the college's Innovation Center with a special commendation as part of the overall Information Technology commendation. The Innovation Center—now called the Teaching and Learning Center—oversees and coordinates the distance education efforts of the college. Specifically, the Innovation Center “received accolades for the quality of the training it provides faculty and students.”

See the report at

http://www.laspositascollege.edu/accreditation2009/documents/LasPositasCollegeAccreditation_ComprehensiveEvaluationTeamReport-November242009.pdf.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Because LPC's DE program has grown significantly since its last Substantive Change approval in 2007, the ACCJC informed the college on Sept. 21, 2009, that it would have to submit another Substantive Change Proposal. Proposals to the ACCJC's Committee on Substantive Change are necessary whenever academic programs offer at least 50 percent of their courses via DE.

LPC proposed that the following certificate programs be approved: Business: Bookkeeping, Business: Marketing, Business: Retailing, Business: Retail Management, Computer Information Systems: Project Management, Computer Networking Technology (CNT): Network and Wireless Security, and Computer Networking Technology: TCP/IP Network Analysis.

In addition, LPC proposed that the Associate in Arts degree programs in Business Administration and Social Sciences (General) be approved. Furthermore, since several other certificate programs and a degree program were close to reaching the 50 percent threshold and are projected to meet or exceed that mark, the college requested approval for them, too. Those programs are: the CNT Emerging Technologies certificate, the CNT Computer Network Technician certificate, the CNT Computer Forensics Examiner certificate, the Computer Information Systems Web Development certificate, and the AA degree in Psychology (Transfer Prep).

Scott Vigallon, LPC's instructional technology/open learning coordinator, with assistance from former Vice President of Academic Services Laurel Jones, put the proposal together, and it was approved by the ACCJC on April 16, 2010.

The total number of degrees approved for Substantive Change is now 11, and the total certificates approved is 16.

The proposal, appendix, and approval letter can be found on the college's accreditation web site under Substantive Change for Distance Education at <http://www.laspositascollege.edu/accreditation2009>.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

The Distance Education Strategic Plan was adopted in May 2008 with the original purpose of being incorporated into the Las Positas Educational Master Plan. However, the college has since embarked on a different institutional planning process as a result of our accreditation self-study. The outcome is that distance education planning will be included within the new Non-Instructional Program Review process. The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) participated in a year-long pilot of the new process. Goals emanating from the Non-Instructional Program Review—along with goals from Instructional and Student Services program reviews—will be used to guide college-wide strategic planning through 2015. Furthermore, all future funding, including funding for distance education, will be allocated through this process.

The college's DE Committee will remain the primary planning, evaluative and recommendation body for all DE matters. In fact, the goals and objectives included in the TLC's program review were written and approved by the committee. Those goals and objectives are:

1. Increase retention and success rates of DE students
 - a. Implement online tutoring
 - b. Implement proactive online counseling
 - c. Update the public practice course
 - d. Provide 24x7 student technical support
 - e. Hire additional help for help desk
2. Evaluate DE satisfaction
 - a. Implement a new DE survey for students
3. Increase faculty competencies for teaching online
 - a. Offer incentives to faculty for training in the design, development, and teaching of an online course
 - b. Offer incentives to faculty for training in the design, development, and teaching of a hybrid DE course
 - c. Offer incentives to faculty for improving their DE courses
 - d. Develop the criteria to be met in order to earn incentives

BLACKBOARD 9

Toward the end of the 2008-09 academic year, the DE committees at LPC and Chabot agreed to upgrade the district's Blackboard system from version 7.3 to 9. The upgrade—arguably the most important since the colleges began using Blackboard in 2003—would take place prior to the Summer 2010 session. This would give the colleges essentially a year to prepare for the move. Blackboard 9 introduces an enhanced user interface, a completely redesigned Grade Center, and new teaching and learning tools that take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies, among other changes.

LPC offered 18 workshops for faculty who wanted to train on Blackboard 9 in the Teaching and Learning Center. For those who wanted to train online on their own time, 10 training courses were set up and made available. Each of those courses contained newly created video tutorials, along with other information on new tools and features. Face-to-face and online training will continue throughout Summer 2010 and the rest of the new academic year.

Aside from offering training, here is a sampling of other tasks that were accomplished in order to be ready for the upgrade:

- The LPC faculty support staff underwent training in Blackboard 9.

- A multitude of materials (technical and pedagogical) were either created or updated in the online development training course, the web-enhanced training course, and the district-wide support course.
- The model course that accompanies the web-enhanced training course was updated, as was the guest course for potential online students.
- The Online Learning web site was updated.
- A synchronous Online Learning Orientation for students, delivered live over the Internet, was created. The on-campus and asynchronous online orientations were updated.
- Three model templates for class use and accompanying student quizzes were updated.

DISTANCE ED AND BLACKBOARD STATISTICS

For the sixth consecutive year, enrollment in DE courses increased. During 2009-10, enrollments were 7,851 in 242 sections. This compares to 6,795 in 214 sections in 2008-09. In terms of FTES, DE courses generated 853.10 FTES this past year for the college. Of the 242 DE sections, 37 were DE hybrids (51 percent or more online) and 17 were non-DE hybrids (51 percent or more face-to-face).

In what is becoming an annual occurrence, the most dramatic increase came in the number of sections and enrollments in web-enhanced courses (those face-to-face courses using as a supplement). The number of sections jumped from 827 to 930 over the previous year, and the number of enrollments increased from 19,025 to 23,958.

Combining online, hybrid and web-enhanced figures, LPC offered 1,195 sections that used Blackboard with 32,295 enrollments in 2009-10. In addition, 188 instructors used Blackboard during the year, 24 more than the previous year.

Distance Education statistics (1999-00 through 2009-10)

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Total course sections	44	95	110	135	123	134	132	163	171	214	242
Total disciplines	12	13	14	17	15	20	26	25	26	29	30
Enrollment	1,746	2,196	2,571	3,405	3,369	4,366	4,744	4,991	5,669	6,795	7,851
Online course sections	8	65	89	124	123	134	132	163	157	176	205
Hybrid course sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	38	37

Telecourse sections	34	30	21	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Videoconf. sections	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Blackboard usage statistics (2003-04 through 2009-10)**

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Total sections	168	307	383	559	706	1,055	1,195
Enrollment for total sections	4,426	8,618	11,361	16,094	18,958	26,143	32,295
Online course sections	116**	134	132	163	157	176	205
Enrollment for online course sections	3,338	4,366	4,744	4,991	5,338	6,053	7,105
Hybrid course sections (DE)	0	0	0	0	14	38	37
Enrollment for hybrid sections (DE)	0	0	0	0	331	742	746
Hybrid course sections (non-DE)***	0	0	0	8	9	14	17
Enrollment for hybrid sections (non-DE)	0	0	0	158	158	323	486
Web-enhanced sections	52	173	251	388	526	827	930
Enrollment for web-enhanced sections	1,088	4,252	6,617	10,945	13,131	19,025	23,958

*The CLPCCD began using Blackboard in Summer 2003.

**Seven online course sections did not use Blackboard.

***Hybrids that do not meet for 51 percent or more at a distance are not reported as DE classes.

STRATEGIC PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

While the Teaching and Learning Center's Non-Instructional Program Review was being written as part of LPC's new strategic planning process, distance education planning continued to adhere to the DE Strategic Plan, approved in 2008. Several outcomes from that plan were achieved:

- Scott Vigallon delivered a workshop to the administrative staff on the key components of the college's DE program. This overview was designed to help the administrators better understand Blackboard and DE issues.

- A free, online helpdesk software program called HESK was built out and configured to use with students beginning in Summer 2010. HESK provides automated responses to student inquiries, an online knowledge base, and a ticketing system to help track student questions and answers. It will be used to supplement face-to-face, telephone and email support.
- In two separate surveys, students were asked which courses, degrees, and/or certificates they would like to see LPC offer online. Results showed that these students wanted a wide variety of courses, degrees and certificates offered online. To view results, go to <http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/preferences> and <http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/preferences2>.
- An inclusive method for getting faculty input on purchases of major hardware and software tools was established when the DE Committee decided that when opportunities for such purchases exist, they are to be brought to the committee for faculty input. Faculty on the committee can also get feedback on the purchase opportunities from the other faculty in their respective divisions.
- Unfortunately, because of budget issues, an online tutoring pilot with the Writing Center was suspended. This project was set to have faculty member Justin Garoupa tutor English online students in the writing process. Tutoring was to take place using the free web conferencing system CCC Confer. Another victim of budget problems was a DE counseling project in which students would receive counseling support online. Both of these support mechanisms are included in the TLC's Non-Instructional Program Review.

LPC STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

The State Chancellor's Office did not distribute the annual Faculty and Student DE Satisfaction surveys during Spring 2010 because it deemed that the data collected from them is not significant or usable. The state, instead, announced that it will work on creating a survey that combines the satisfaction surveys with its annual Institutional Survey, and the target timeframe for the new survey's release is Spring 2011.

In the meantime, Scott Vigallon created a replacement survey for LPC. This new local survey combines demographic information, satisfaction information and the college's DE outcomes. LPC's DE Committee gave feedback, and after the survey was revised, the committee approved it for distribution to students.

A total of 304 students completed the survey in April. Results showed that the vast majority of DE students are continuing students who enrolled for flexibility or convenience and that most work part-time jobs. The students appear either satisfied or very satisfied with Blackboard (79 percent), the overall quality of their courses (71 percent), and with the DE program as a whole at LPC (70 percent). When asked if they would take another DE course from LPC, 87 percent indicated that they would. Students also indicated (60 percent) that they learned about the same in their DE classes than they would have in an on-campus class.

Interestingly, 22 percent said they learned more in their DE classes, and 18 percent said they learned less.

When students were asked to comment, they did express some frustrations with DE:

1. There is a lack of consistency in the organization of courses.
2. They get frustrated when instructors take what they consider too much time replying to emails and posting grades.
3. There's too much work.
4. Group work can be frustrating when group members wait until the last minute to participate.

The final part of the survey served as a measurement of the Program Outcomes for DE. These outcomes are intended to identify the skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participation in the DE program at LPC. Students were asked to assess their skills in four areas: communication techniques online with instructors and classmates, basic skills within course management system software, basic technology skills, and successful online study strategies. The results showed that once again, students are meeting the program outcomes.

Complete survey results can be found at http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/de_student_survey_results_Spring2010.pdf.

CLOSED CAPTIONING

During 2009-10 academic year, LPC participated in the statewide DE Captioning Grant. The grant, administered by College of the Canyons, allowed LPC to have videos in online courses captioned by a vendor (RapidText) while having the captioning work paid for by the grant. In other words, 111 videos were professionally captioned at no cost to LPC. Scott Vigallon coordinated this effort, while Jeff Sperry, the college's instructional technology support specialist who also works on web accessibility issues, tested the files sent by RapidText before placing the captioned videos in the appropriate online courses. The project involved the innovative tasks of captioning videos created by Camtasia Studio software without reprocessing the videos, along with linking locally hosted captioning files to videos residing on YouTube's servers.

OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Other achievements during the 2009-10 academic year included:

- Thirteen new DE courses were launched: Anthropology 1 (Biological/Physical Anthropology), Business 58 (Small Business Management), Business 61 (Introduction to QuickBooks Accounting), Computer Networking Technology 7701 (VMware, Microsoft & Xen Virtualization), Early Childhood Development 55 (The Professional Care-Giver), Geography 1 (Introduction to Physical Geography), Humanities 10 (The American Style), Mass Communication 31 (Introduction to Media), Political Science 30 (International Relations), Psychology-Counseling 10 (Career and Education Planning), Psychology 2 (Psychological Methodology), Psychology 3 (Social Psychology), and Sociology 4 (Marriage and Family Relations).
- Three faculty members completed the Online Course Development Program, which trains instructors new to online learning how to design, develop, and teach an online course. Three completed the training online, while the others completed it in face-to-face workshops.
- Thirty faculty members completed the Integrating the Internet Into Instruction (Four I's) program, which trains instructors in Blackboard basics and allows them to use Blackboard to enhance their face-to-face courses. Nineteen of those instructors completed their training online.
- The Innovation Center merged with Staff Development to bring all of the college's professional development activities under the Staff Development umbrella. As a result, the Innovation Center was partly remodeled to include a Staff Development lounge, and the Innovation Center name was changed to the Teaching and Learning Center. The name change better reflects the overall function of the center, and it encourages teaching and learning beyond technology.
- In the Fall, the Teaching and Learning Center began offering training and support for EduStream, a digital video repository that includes educational videos and learning objects. Additionally, EduStream allows faculty to upload their own materials and share them with students. The service is offered freely to all California Community Colleges.
- The TLC began preparations for offering live, virtual orientations to students new to Online Learning. These orientations are in addition to the on-campus orientations that have been offered the past few years, and they will be conducted using the CCC Confer web-conferencing system.
- The DE Committee's Grapevine site became publicly available to the world February 8 when the rest of the college's intranet went public. New content was added to the site, including all of the previous annual DE reports to the board.
- Steve Bundy, who retired at the end of the end of the Fall semester, was recognized by the DE Committee for his work and help over the past 10 years. Steve, a former co-chair and a charter member of the committee, has been instrumental in the online program's growth and development from its inception.

- LPC's Instructional Technology Student Support desk fielded 2,936 inquiries from students. Among this total, 1,491 inquiries were telephone calls, 824 were emails, and 621 were walk-ins.

SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES

The success and retention rates among LPC DE students in 2009-10 improved over the previous year. In fact, when averaging the success rates from Summer, Fall and Spring, the average of 62 percent ranks as the highest rate at LPC since tracking these statistics began in 1999. Additionally, the average retention rate of 77 percent sets a high mark at LPC for an academic year.

Still, like most community colleges in California, Las Positas has seen lower success and retention rates in its DE courses compared to its face-to-face courses. Below are the figures for the 2009-10 academic year. For comparison purposes, figures for 2008-09 are below those.

	Summer 2009		Fall 2009		Spring 2010	
	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE
Success	67%	80%	58%	70%	61%	70%
Retention	81%	88%	75%	84%	76%	83%

	Summer 2008		Fall 2008		Spring 2009	
	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE
Success	66%	75%	57%	70%	58%	70%
Retention	76%	88%	75%	85%	75%	84%

DE success and retention rates dating to Fall 1999 can be found at http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/Retention_and_Success_rates.pdf.

FUTURE TASKS

Depending on the college's and district's budget situation, the new academic year will see LPC beginning to work toward the DE goals set out in the Non-Instructional Program Review. Regardless of the budget, the TLC staff will continue supporting, and getting faculty up to speed with, Blackboard 9. This version of Blackboard also allows LPC students and faculty to use mobile devices for teaching and learning. Much time will be spent learning how to best design instruction for mobile devices. Blackboard has launched a new application for use on iPhones, iPads, iPod touches, and certain BlackBerry and Android devices. With the vast majority of students owning mobile devices, "learning on the go" is expected to grow significantly in the future. With that in mind, the TLC will offer workshops on mobile learning, including one on using Twitter for teaching.

LPC is also awaiting the release of the updated Chancellor's Office Distance Education Web Accessibility Guidelines. In Spring 2009, the Web Accessibility Guidelines Task Force, of which Scott Vigallon is a member, began updating these guidelines for students with disabilities, which have been in effect since 1999. The guidelines are currently in the review process, and after any necessary revisions, they will go through a formal approval process, and hopefully, will be released soon.

Thank you for your time.

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