LAS POSITAS
COLLEGE

2013-14 ANNUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT TO THE CHABOT-LAS POSITAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Las Positas College

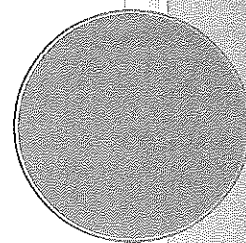Scott Vigallon, Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coord.

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INTRODUCTION

One year after planning, writing, and submitting a lengthy Substantive Change Proposal for accreditation, the Distance Education (DE) program at Las Positas spent much of 2013-14 preparing for future events that can potentially affect the program for years. It began preparing for district-wide discussions about the new Online Education Initiative by monitoring developments, participating in webinars, holding discussions with fellow DE coordinators statewide and with LPC faculty in DE Committee meetings. The program also began preparing for new federal regulations concerning state authorization for enrolling non-California residents in online courses. In addition, preparations began for writing the college's self-study for the upcoming accreditation review.

While those preparations were underway, faculty and staff continued working to provide online students with positive learning experiences, and as usual, they continued to refine and improve the program to meet students' needs.

ONLINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The academic year began with the news that the controversial Senate Bill 520 was being put a one-year hiatus by its sponsor, Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg. SB 520 would have allowed online courses from unaccredited providers to count for credit at the state's colleges and universities. These courses would most likely have been in the format of Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs. The announcement of the hiatus came after the bill was significantly amended and passed by the state Senate. However, there was still much opposition to the bill from various constituencies in all three higher education segments in California that it never got to the Assembly. Steinberg reportedly is waiting to see results of the new online learning efforts by the three segments before trying to advance the measure again.

The California Community Colleges' new effort is called the Online Education Initiative (OEI). This is the project for which the governor earmarked $56.9 million over five years to increase online learning. In the fall, the money was awarded as a grant to a partnership between the Foothill-De Anza and Butte-Glenn community college districts to manage and administer the project on behalf of all colleges. Funding for the first year is $16.9 million, with $10 million to be allocated over each of the next four years. After that, funding is not guaranteed.

Officially beginning December 1, 2013, the OEI has many facets. Among them are the following:

- Via an online course exchange, students at any CCC can take courses at any other CCC.

- There will be a teaching college (the college teaching the course) and a home college (the college where the student is enrolled). The teaching college issues credit and gains FTES, while the home college provides the students.

- Pilot courses are expected in the exchange by Spring 2015.

- The initial focus will be on Associate Degree for Transfer courses. For subsequent phases, the focus will be on other degrees and courses, basic skills courses, and credit by exam.

- The vast majority of courses will be regular online courses. There might or might not be any MOOCs.

- All colleges in the OEI will have reciprocal agreements for enrollment priority, assessment scores, prerequisites, and transcript transparency.

- Other services are supposed to include online tutoring, proctoring, high tech/high touch analytics, and student and faculty support.

- Colleges will have to opt in, and once they do, they will have to follow all of the OEI's rules and procedures.

- A common course management system is supposed to be in place by June 1, 2015.

The CLPCCD will have to consider all facets of the OEI prior to deciding whether or not to commit since the decision will affect many operations at Las Positas, Chabot, and the district. Specifically, if the OEI chooses a course management system other than Blackboard, not only will instruction in online and hybrid courses be affected, but instruction in web-enhanced courses, which makes up the majority of Blackboard usage in the district, will be affected. A district-wide transition plan, obviously, would need to be formulated.

LPC's DE Committee has been discussing the OEI since the OEI was still in its conceptual stage and will be the college's primary group to debate joining it or not. The committee's co-chair, Scott Vigallon, has joined the district's new Technology Coordinating Committee as its co-chair and will serve as a resource on the OEI. The TCC has already agreed to discuss possible inclusion into the OEI.

STATE AUTHORIZATION

This issue, which first surfaced in 2010, continues to affect all institutions of higher learning in the United States. In a nutshell, state authorization regulations at the federal level mandate that colleges be authorized in each state in which their students reside. For example, if an LPC student residing in Texas is enrolled in an online course, the college has to seek, and be granted, authorization from the state of Texas to teach that student. Alternatively, if LPC meets the Texas requirements for an exemption to state authorization, that exemption can be granted.

In 2012, the regulations were actually vacated on a technicality by the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals after a series of lawsuits were filed. The technicality was that the Department of Education did not include a public comment process. Since then, however, the DOE has reissued the regulations and will include the public comment process. As of this

writing, that process has not occurred. Along with reissuing the regulations, the DOE made some proposed changes, such as eliminating the opportunity for states to grant exemptions. If states are not able to offer exemptions, LPC will have to pay considerable amounts of money if it decides to continue allowing non-California residents to enroll in online courses. In some states, it can cost up to $2,500 just to apply for authorization, and there is an annual cost on top of that.

To try to control costs, states have banded together to form State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). Joining a region of SARA would allow colleges to only pay its regional consortium without having to pay individual states for authorization. For LPC to join the Western region of SARA, it would have to pay $4,000 a year to the consortium. Still, California colleges would not be able to join until the state government passes legislation to this effect.

During the 2013-14 academic year, LPC enrolled only one student from outside of California in online classes. Nevertheless, the CCC Chancellor's Office has advised all colleges to seek individual authorizations from each state. LPC has contacted all other 49 states, and thus far, has received 32 authorizations/exemptions without spending any money.

ACCREDITATION PREPARATION

Preparations for LPC's next accreditation began in Fall 2013 with a Pre-Accreditation Review conducted by the DE Committee. Each committee on campus was assigned one or more relevant accreditation standards to discuss what has been done to meet the standard, to evaluate whether or not the college meets the standard, and to determine if any actions need to be taken for improvements. The DE Committee was assigned standard 2A1b, which says: "The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students."

Later in the academic year, the committee was asked to provide a Descriptive Summary that reviews what actions LPC has taken to meet the standard based on its review and analysis of compliance to the standard. The Descriptive Summary was followed by a Self-Evaluation that states the college meets the standard. No improvements toward meeting the standard were identified. Evidence to support the review was collected and posted to the college's online document repository.

The aforementioned Technology Coordinating Committee (TCC) is part of the district's recently created Integrated Planning & Budget Model. The IPBM was created in part to help meet accreditation guidelines for planning. Important DE issues that affect LPC, Chabot, and/or the district will be discussed first at the colleges then in the TCC to ensure they go through the proper planning and budget channels.

DISTANCE ED AND BLACKBOARD STATISTICS

Enrollment, WSCH, and FTES in LPC Distance Education courses were at their highest since the 2009-10 academic year. The courses enrolled 7,288 duplicated students, 208 more than the previous year. WSCH (25,713) and FTES (836.1) were 1,489 and 46 higher, respectively, than the previous year.

The 246 sections of DE courses, the 48 sections of hybrid DE courses (courses delivered 51% or more online), and the 813 enrollments in hybrid DE courses were the highest ever recorded at LPC. One explanation for the record totals is that the college offered 16 sections of the hybrid DE course Psychology-Counseling 25, Transition to College.

Since LPC uses Blackboard for online, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses, statistics are available for total Blackboard usage. During the past academic year, the following records were set: total sections (1,216), enrollments in total sections (34,942), number of web-enhanced sections (939), and enrollments in web-enhanced sections (26,931).

A further breakdown of the numbers show that the 246 DE sections made up 13% of the total number of sections offered at LPC for the year, and the 1,216 sections using Blackboard made up 62% of the total sections.

Distance Education statistics (1999-00 through 2013-14)

	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Total sections	44	95	110	135	123	134	132	163
Total disciplines	12	13	14	17	15	20	26	25
Enrollment	1,746	2,196	2,571	3,405	3,369	4,366	4,744	4,991
WSCH	5,291	5,580	7,236	9,816	10,931	13,288	14,732	16,202
FTES	172.2	182.1	240.9	328.6	362.4	437.4	483.4	532.2
Online sections	8	65	89	124	123	134	132	163
Hybrid sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telecourse sections	34	30	21	12	0	0	0	0
Videoconf. sections	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Total sections	171	214	242	233	219	229	246
Total disciplines	26	29	30	31	30	30	30

Enrollment	5,669	6,795	7,851	7,119	6,914	7,080	7,288
WSCH	18,253	25,539	25,991	23,606	24,309	24,224	25,713
FTES	602.3	840.7	853.1	774.4	795.1	790.1	836.1
Online sections	157	176	205	198	188	188	198
Hybrid sections	14	38	37	35	31	41	48
Telecourse sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Videoconf. sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Blackboard usage statistics (2003-04 through 2013-14)*

	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Total sections	168	307	383	559	706	1,055	1,195	1,115	1,081	1,091	1,216
Enrlmt for total sections	4,426	8,618	11,361	16,094	18,958	26,143	32,295	31,553	31,838	32,225	34,942
Online course sections	116**	134	132	163	157	176	205	198	188	188	198
Enrlmt for online course sections	3,338	4,366	4,744	4,991	5,338	6,053	7,105	6,485	6,233	6,335	6,475
Hybrid course sections (DE)	0	0	0	0	14	38	37	35	31	41	48
Enrlmt for hybrid sections (DE)	0	0	0	0	331	742	746	634	681	745	813
Hybrid course sections (non-DE)***	0	0	0	8	9	14	17	32	25	24	29
Enrlmt for hybrid sections (non-DE)	0	0	0	158	158	323	486	875	680	677	723
Web-enhanced sections	52	173	251	388	526	827	930	853	837	838	939
Enrlmt for web-enhanced sections	1,088	4,252	6,617	10,945	13,131	19,025	23,958	23,559	24,244	24,468	26,931

*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.

LPC SURVEY RESULTS

Student Survey

The annual DE Student Satisfaction Survey was completed in December, and like previous years, results were positive. When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with different components of online learning, the 275 students who completed the survey were mostly satisfied or very satisfied in all areas. This included the DE program as a whole (76%), overall course quality (74%) and overall course satisfaction (74%).

When asked if they would take another DE course from LPC, 89 percent indicated that they would. Students also indicated (63 percent) that they learned about the same in their DE classes than they would have in an on-campus class. Interestingly, 21 percent said they learned more in their DE classes, and 17 percent said they learned less.

A new question was added this year: Which tools/activities help you learn best in a Distance Education course? The top answer was videos (69%). Because students want videos as a learning tool, and because some students later commented that they would like videos in all DE classes, instructors were encouraged to increase usage of videos. They were reminded of the video-related workshops offered by the Teaching and Learning Center: using the new Video Everywhere tool in Blackboard, using Camtasia to create videos from screenshots and PowerPoints, and using the video repositories available to instructors. A new workshop, Enhance Your Classes with Library Streaming Videos, was created and facilitated by librarian Frances Hui. The LPC Library offers three collections of streaming videos: Films on Demand (all subjects), American History in Video, and the recently obtained Kanopy (Social Sciences). Attendees learned how to search, edit clips, and post links in Blackboard.

Students voiced other opinions in the comments section of the survey. Most of the positive comments centered around instructors, particularly how communicative, interactive, and helpful some were, along with how well they organized their courses. Several students appreciated the opportunity to continue their education while pursuing their careers and raising families. Negative comments mostly centered around instructors, too. These included poor communication, interactivity, and helpfulness from some instructors, along with how poorly organized their courses were. Students want their assignments graded faster and their emails answered more quickly. Other comments included dissatisfaction with group work in class, using Zonemail, and the technical help support hours.

Complete DE Student Satisfaction Survey results can be found at
http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/ DE_student_survey_Fall2013_results.pdf.

Institutional Survey

In May, the State Chancellor's Office disseminated its annual DE institutional survey. Since the survey was not launched the previous year, this "annual" survey actually covered the 2012-13 and 2013-14 academic years. It was expanded with additional items in order to get feedback that might help drive decision-making by the Online Education Initiative.

Complete institutional survey results can be found at
http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/2012-14_inst_survey.pdf.

ONLINE TUTORING

The college's online tutoring program for Writing, Ask an English Tutor, was expanded twice during 2013-14. Thanks to the generosity of the ASLPC, which provided additional funding, online tutoring became available every day, including weekends, during the Fall. Then in Spring, adjunct English instructor Debra Stevens began working directly with Computer Networking Technology students thanks a Career Technical Education grant.

Online tutoring for Writing, which is completely asynchronous and conducted by email, was successful. Here are the statistics for Fall 2013:

- 58 total papers reviewed

- 46 total students served

- 43 students in classes served

- 3 students for college applications (1 twice)

- 11 students in classes served multiple times

- 1 student enrolled in 2 courses served

- 42 of 43 students in classes retained

- 40 of 43 students in classes had success

- Grades received: 14 A's, 5 B's, 5 C's, 1 D, 17 P's, 1 NP, 1 I

Synchronous online tutoring for Math via the Tutorial Center was discontinued and replaced by email tutoring beginning in Fall 2013. Nevertheless, Math online tutoring remained underutilized. Only seven students used the service during the year. However, online tutoring offered by Pearson through MyMathLab, which many students use in their Math courses, got more usage. The usage statistics released by Pearson were by topic in minutes. For the 2013-14 academic year, the breakdown was:

- Algebra: 748 minutes used

- Geometry & Trigonometry: 188 minutes

- Statistics: 27 minutes

- Calculus Single Variable: 8 minutes

BLACKBOARD UPDATE

On Jan. 8, LPC and Chabot upgraded to Blackboard version 9.1 Service Pack 13. This upgrade introduced many new features and tools, including a social profiles area, an

enhanced calendar, inline grading for assignments, a Retention Center, the ability to create and upload videos directly into a content area, a badges award system, and additional diagnostic tools for exams. To prepare for the upgrade, 10 training sessions were offered, along with online tutorials and information.

SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES

For the fourth consecutive year, LPC set a milestone in its retention rates for Distance Education students. During the Summer 2013 session, the retention rate of 85% was the best ever for a Summer session dating to Summer 2004, the first time data was collected for a Summer session. Unfortunately, the trend did not continue into Fall 2013. One year after matching an LPC record with a 78% retention rate, that rate fell to 75%. In Spring 2014, the rate fell to 81%, which was one percentage point lower than the previous record of 82% set in Spring 2013.

The Summer 2013 success rate of 68 percent equaled the highest ever for a Summer session. The Fall 2013 success rate of 59% was one percentage point lower than the previous Fall term. However, in Spring 2014, the rate of 65% was the highest rate ever at LPC for a Spring or Fall term. The previous high rate was 63% set in Spring 2012.

Complete rates are below. For comparison purposes, figures for 2012-13 are also provided.

	Summer 2013		Fall 2013		Spring 2014	
	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE
Success	68%	82%	59%	72%	65%	74%
Retention	85%	89%	75%	85%	81%	87%

	Summer 2012		Fall 2012		Spring 2013	
	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE
Success	68%	81%	60%	72%	62%	73%
Retention	82%	89%	78%	86%	82%	88%

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

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES

Since LPC began offering Distance Education courses, the DE Committee has worked diligently to improve the success and retention rates of students. The 2013-14 academic year was no exception. The committee approved the aforementioned January 2014 upgrade to Blackboard version 9.1 Service Pack 13, which introduced the Retention Center in each class. In a nutshell, the Retention Center allows instructors to quickly discover which students are at risk. It uses preconfigured and instructor-created rules to check students' participation and engagement to determine which students might be struggling. From within the Retention Center, the instructor can communicate with those students to offer the necessary assistance.

The committee also did much work on the topic of students adding into DE classes near the beginning of the semester. First, it worked with Chabot's Committee on Online Learning to craft a more clearly worded automated email that students receive when trying to register for classes that have already reached capacity. Next, it developed recommendations, along with answers to frequently asked questions, that are intended to aid instructors— particularly new instructors—in determining how many students to add and when to add those students near the beginning of the semester. The committee's recommendations were based on feedback from a survey on the topic that was completed by 25 DE instructors. The survey results showed that, in general, students added prior to the beginning of the semester are more successful than students added during the first or second weeks. They also showed that students added the first week are more successful than students added the second week. Students added the second week tend not to be successful at all.

The recommendations and FAQs are available at http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/de_adds.htm.

The Class-Web DE acknowledgements page, implemented for the first time for Spring 2014 registration, asks students to acknowledge that they have access to the requisite technology for taking a DE class, that they possess basic technology skills, that they understand that DE classes require as much time as on-campus classes, that they will be completing and turning in their own work, and that they will abide by the district's student conduct and due process policy. Out of 2,824 students who registered for DE classes in Spring 2014, 1,345 students acknowledged the page. Gathering these statistics allows LPC to determine how many students are receiving this important information. This data can also be used as evidence for accreditation.

DE GOALS FOR PROGRAM REVIEW

The non-instructional program review for the Teaching and Learning Center, which contains DE goals, was submitted to Academic Services during the Summer. At its first meeting in August, the DE Committee discussed which goals it wanted to address during the year and decided on the following: a. Promote library resources for DE classes, b. Increase participation in the student survey for course evaluations, and c. Investigate the offering of Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs.

For the goal of promoting library resources, two of the committee members, librarian Frances Hui and Professional Communications instructor Vicky Austin, teamed up to start the process. Frances was inputted into Vicky's online course as a resource to students, mainly answering questions about citing sources in a research paper. The librarians have also assisted DE instructors by creating library guides that combine a variety of class-related resources used by students for research purposes. The DE Committee will continue to promote the librarians' willingness to help.

Enterprise surveys were introduced in the January 2014 Blackboard upgrade. This tool allows surveys to be deployed on a larger scale than just the survey tool in individual classes. It was mentioned as a possible replacement for CLASS-Web when surveying students for course evaluations. The idea was that more students would possibly participate if the survey was in Blackboard as opposed to in CLASS-Web. Therefore, enterprise surveys were researched and tested to see if they would work with all of the parameters surrounding student surveys for course evaluations that are detailed in the faculty contract. After the research and testing phase, it was determined that although the enterprise survey tool met the Faculty Association's concerns, it would be wise to wait until the tool becomes more mature (e.g. certain bugs get fixed) before implementing it in an official manner. Research and testing will resume after the next Blackboard upgrade.

The goal, investigating the offering of MOOCs, did not get much attention since Senate Bill 520 was put on a one-year hiatus. Blackboard announced recently that it has launched Open Education powered by Blackboard, a free, fully supported cloud offering for Blackboard customers who are interested in offering open online courses and MOOCs to the public.

OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Other achievements during the 2013-14 academic year included:

- The LPC DE Committee and Chabot's Committee on Online Learning co-hosted a session at Convocation Day that allowed DE instructors to share, and discuss, successful teaching strategies and innovative methods of enhancing student learning in Blackboard.

- A board policy on Distance Education, along with its accompanying administrative procedures, was adopted by the Board of Trustees. LPC's DE Committee and Chabot's COOL collaborated on the framework and much of the language for these.

- Faculty began completing the latest version of the college's Program Review Update form that included questions on assessments of student learning outcomes in DE courses and a summary of faculty dialog about the results.

- Students can now earn a Psychology AA-T degree solely online. This degree joins the Sociology AA-T as the only degrees that students can complete entirely online. The Computer Network Technology's TCP/IP Network Analysis Career Certificate offers all six of its courses online.

- LPC's DE Mission Statement was slightly revised to reflect the offering of two degrees and one certificate entirely online. The statement now reads: "The mission of the Distance Education program at LPC is to provide high quality course offerings and programs that contribute to the academic success of students who need flexibility in their class schedules and/or prefer to learn in a non-traditional setting."

- During the academic year, 257 instructors used Blackboard to teach either online, hybrid, or web-enhanced courses. Fifty-five instructors taught DE courses.

- Four new DE courses were launched: Computer Information Systems 62 (Project Management), Geology 3L (Historical Geology Laboratory), Psychology 12 (Life-Span Psychology), and Sociology 13 (Research Methods).

- Seven new courses were approved for DE by the Curriculum Committee: Computer Networking Technology 7284 (Information Storage and Management), CNT 7285 (Cloud Infrastructure and Services), Early Childhood Development 54 (Child Health/Safety/Nutrition), ECD 56 (Child Growth and Development), ECD 62 (Child, Family and Community), ECD 83 (Adult Mentoring and Supervision), and Math 47 (Mathematics for Liberal Arts).

- Seven faculty members completed the Online Course Development Program, which trains instructors new to online learning how to design, develop, and teach an online course. Those seven are: Mike Schwarz (Psychology-Counseling), Paul Sapsford (Health), Teri Ann Bengevino (History), Frances Hui (Library Studies), Siah Fried (Health), Angela Amaya (Library Studies), and Paula Schoenecker (Learning Skills).

- Forty-five instructors completed the Integrating the Internet Into Instruction (Four I's) program, which trains them in Blackboard basics and allows them to use Blackboard to enhance their face-to-face courses. Twenty-six of those instructors completed their training online.

- LPC's Instructional Technology Student Support desk fielded 1,657 inquiries from students. Among this total, 914 inquiries were telephone calls, 279 were emails, and 464 were walk-ins.

- Seventy-two students attended synchronous Online Learning Orientations. These orientations are conducted at the beginning of each semester, and students can either participate on campus or online. Of the 18 students who completed an evaluation, 17 indicated that they feel better prepared to successfully complete an online course.

- LPC continued its participation in the statewide DE Captioning Grant. The grant, administered by College of the Canyons, allows participating colleges to have videos in all courses that use a course management system (Blackboard) captioned by a vendor (LPC works with the vendor RapidText). Captioning work is paid for by the grant. In 2013-14, LPC had 38 videos captioned, bringing its 5-year total to 186.

- The LPC Online Learning home page continued to be one of the most viewed pages on the entire LPC web site. During the academic year, the Online Learning home page amassed 208,229 page views. The mobile version of the Online Learning site

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had 1,660 total page views.

FUTURE TASKS

The 2014-15 academic year should be filled with local and district-wide discussions on whether or not to join the new Online Education Initiative. Additionally, when the new federal regulations concerning state authorization are released, they will need to be analyzed and discussed before actions are taken. Throughout the year, work on the DE sections for accreditation will be conducted so LPC will be ready for our self-study and subsequent site visit.

One interesting development planned for the upcoming year will be the creation of a Distance Education Scholarship award. Thanks to funding from the Associated Students of Las Positas College, online students will be nominated for the award, and the DE Committee will choose a winner to be honored at the end-of-year Student Recognition Ceremony. The winner will receive a $250 scholarship. The DE Committee will design the criteria for the award and the process for selection of the winner.

The above will be in addition to the daily tasks of Distance Education administration, faculty technical and pedagogical training and support, Blackboard system administration, etc.

AND FINALLY...

Since delivering Distance Education to thousands of students is a collective effort, special thanks goes to each of the LPC faculty members, Classified employees, administrators, and District ITS workers who make it happen. In particular, Jeff Sperry, LPC's Instructional Technology Support Specialist who works in the Teaching and Learning Center, has been instrumental with his contributions to the success of the program.

Thank you for your time.

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