Distance Education Plan
2015-2020

September 2015

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Introduction

Purpose of the DE Plan
The Los Angeles City College Distance Education Plan 2015-2020 (DE Plan) addresses the important need for thoughtful college wide distance education (DE) planning and promotes the mission, vision, and strategic direction of the College. The DE Plan aligns with the Educational and Strategic Master Plan 2014-2020 and guides the allocation and use of the College's DE resources.

College Mission Statement
Los Angeles City College empowers students from the diverse communities it serves to achieve their educational and career goals by providing learner-centered pathways to success through transfer, career and technical education, and foundational skills programs.

Distance Education Mission Statement
Distance Education at LACC empowers its students from the diverse community it serves to achieve their educational and career goals by providing learner-centered pathways to success through transfer, career and technical education, and foundational skills programs. Distance Education strives to meet the needs of all its students while maintaining support for instructors using web-based or web-enhanced classes.

Relationship to College Mission

The College's DE mission statement parallels the College mission statement and states that the DE program "strives to meet the needs of all its students while maintaining support for instructors using web-based or web-enhanced classes." Although the mission statement does not specifically mention DE, the College offers online instruction as part of its commitment to offering broad educational opportunities to its students. Each of the educational components of the LACC mission— transfer, career and technical education, and foundational skills —is enhanced through the availability and opportunities provided by online courses. The purposes of offering DE courses are to satisfy student demand and provide additional opportunities for current students to complete their educational goals.

The Educational and Strategic Master Plan drives the campus-wide planning and resource allocation process and implements the College's mission. In support of the four main goals of the ESMP, DE provides increased learning opportunities (access) for students with demanding schedules, hindered by time and place restrictions, or who prefer the online mode of instruction. Absent the combination of online course delivery and online student support services, many students might not otherwise be able to complete their educational objectives (success); additionally, online courses allow the College to maximize resources by providing educational opportunities for large numbers of students.

Distance Education Vision Statement
Distance Education offers students preparation for success in the modern world of technology and global accessibility. It serves as an expression of the college's commitment to embracing student diversity while providing students with the best in educational and technological advancements to help them succeed.

Definition of Distance Education Modes
The college supports the following distance education modes: online, hybrid, and web-enhanced. The college does not support correspondence education.
- *Online course*: An online course is a course that is offered over the Internet. Typically, content is presented through web pages and class discussions using a combination of email, mailing lists, bulletin boards, chat rooms, or newsgroups. All class meetings, assignments, lectures and assessments are online (with the exception of orientation meetings or other face-to-face examinations as determined by the professor).
- *Hybrid course*: A hybrid course is a course that is taught online using similar web-based tools and activities as an online class. Some portion of the course meeting time is conducted online, and the remaining percentage of the class is conducted in a traditional classroom manner.
- *Web-Enhanced course*: The class is taught face-to-face for 100% of the course meeting time, but classroom assignments and materials are supplemented with web-based activities. Examples are: online projects, handouts and materials, online discussion, or online testing.

Distance Education Strategic Planning

Distance Education Planning as Part of Integrated Planning

LACC's integrated planning process outlines a continuous cycle of improvement, grounded in the analysis of data, in which there are well-defined operational relationships linking the college's mission to supporting plans. The Distance Education Plan helps the college achieve the objectives in its Educational and Strategic Master Plan (ESMP).
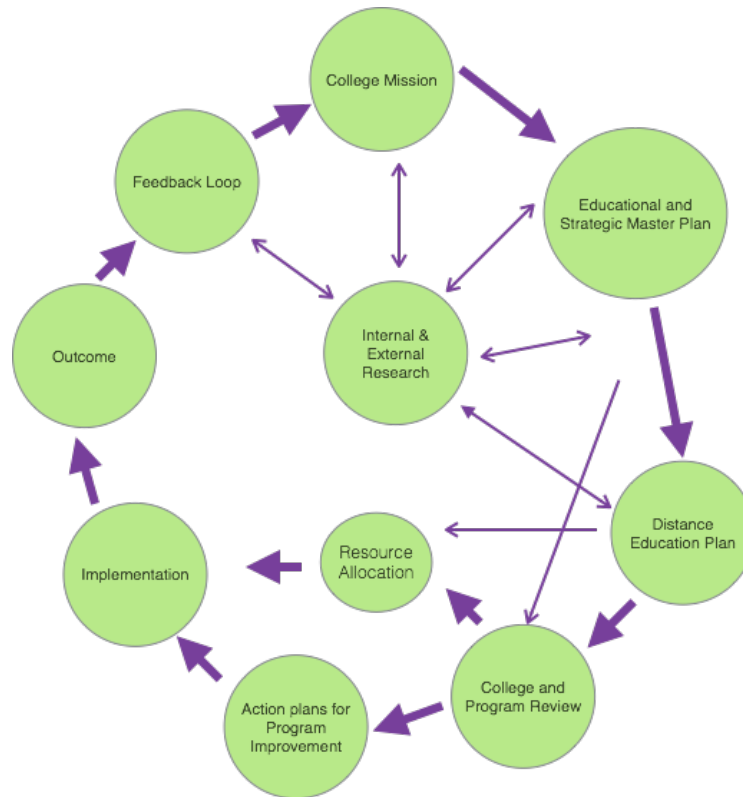
Distance Education Plan Development Process

History. The Distance Learning Taskforce was established in 1998. In spring 1999 LACC offered its first online class. At the direction of the College president, in January 2008 LACC established a permanent Distance Education Committee as a subcommittee of the Educational Planning Committee, under the auspices of the Academic Senate. Since then the DE Committee has assumed responsibility for providing oversight and development of instructor certification, working with the Curriculum Committee to develop course approval policies and processes, working with the Technology Steering Committee to evaluate new educational technologies such as online course management systems (CMS), and reviewing administrative procedures related to distance learning. The committee forwards recommendations regarding DE to the EPC for review and approval by the Academic Senate.

Following a planning objective in the 2008-2013 Strategic Master Plan, LACC began offering online courses in Fall 2009 and over the next few years there was limited growth in online offerings. The adoption of the Etudes course management system in Fall 2009, the availability of training to teach online, and the recruitment of new faculty interested in teaching online resulted in a rapid increase in online offerings.

Rationale for Expanding DE. LACC operates under the belief that Distance Education increases access and success by satisfying student demand, giving students more options

to receive college credits, and improving the likelihood of degree and certificate completion. As with its traditional courses, LACC's DE courses are transferrable to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) as well as private four-year colleges and universities. Increasing enrollment in online courses suggests unmet demand (See Appendix A). Most LACC online students reside within its service area and concurrently enroll in on- campus classes to increase the number of units they can take each semester to complete their degree and transfer requirements (source: College Profile). Distance Education student satisfaction surveys (2004, 2011) indicated that two of the top three reasons for their enrolling in an online class were "to fulfill requirements for transfer" and "to fulfill requirements for associate degree." Additionally, students surveyed cited "unable to come to campus" and "convenience" as important or very important reasons for taking a DE course.

Distance Education Outcomes from the 2008-2013 Strategic Master Plan

Objective B.5 Create a distance education program that offers online certificates, degrees, and transfer requirements.	
Strategy	**2015 Update**
B.5.1 By June 30, 2010, offer full academic, technical, and student support services on line.	**Complete.** Online support services include tutoring and Etudes technical support. The DE website has links that provide DE students all support services provided to traditional students.
B.5.2 By December 31, 2009, provide improved training programs for faculty who are preparing to teach online.	**Complete.** All faculty teaching DE are required to complete Etudes training and a pedagogy class.
B.5.3 By June 30, 2010, implement a system to monitor distance education policy and procedures.	**Complete.** Since 2008, the DE committee has overseen all DE policies and procedures.
B.5.4 By June 30, 2010, secure ACCJC approval for at least one distance education degree, at least two certificate programs, and at least one transfer program.	**In progress.** ACCJC was notified that students have the opportunity to complete 50% or more of required courses toward 29 degrees and 12 certificates. Strategies to meet the DE objectives in the 2014-2020 ESMP include getting DE approval for additional courses needed to establish a 100% online AA degree, with a focus on a Liberal Arts AA and Business ADT; and working with vocational programs to offer 100% online certificates.
B.5.5 By June 30, 2010, expand online class offerings by 30% to increase opportunities to complete courses, certificates, and degrees online.	**Complete.** Between 2008 and 2015 the number of DE courses increased almost 200%. Between 2008 and 2012 enrollments in DE courses increased by over 100%.
B.5.6 By June 30, 2010, establish at least	**In progress.** In order to establish an online

one online degree, certificate, or transfer programs.	AA degree, the College will need to get DE approval for math, general science, science lab, and kinesiology courses. Strategies to meet the DE objectives in the 2014-2020 ESMP include getting DE approval for additional courses needed to establish a 100% online AA degree, with a focus on a Liberal Arts AA and Business ADT; and working with vocational programs to offer 100% online certificates.
Totals:	4 Complete 2 In progress (part DE objectives towards the 2014-2020 ESMP)

How Are Courses Selected for Distance Education Delivery?
As a result of ongoing planning efforts and increased awareness of external mandates, departments and divisions are thinking more strategically about how to increase their distance offerings. The LACC DE Committee has a stringent approval process for requests to teach courses by distance methods. Although decisions about which courses to take forward to the Curriculum Committee for approval are made by departments and divisions based on their own criteria and procedures, the DE committee expects DE courses to support college priorities. In Summer 2015, for example, 20 courses were developed utilizing Title 5 funds to ensure that a degree would be available through DE. Courses were selected based on whether they were UC/CSU transferable and if they would support an online degree.

As part of the curriculum approval process, the DE Addendum includes a justification for DE courses. The expectation is that an online course will make participation possible for students who experience geographic and time barriers in gaining access to higher education. The course must draw on individual learning styles to help students become more versatile learners, and must be appropriate for a collaborative learning environment.

What is the Structure for Leadership/Management of Distance Education?
The DE Committee reports to the Academic Senate on academic and professional matters. The committee includes administrators who are responsible for implementation of operational matters. DE Committee membership ensures that faculty members, student services, professional development, technology support services, and students are represented.

What support services are currently available to DE students and faculty?
Distance Education students can access information on academic freedom, student financial aid, and available learning resources in the online version of the Catalog. Additional information is provided at the DE website, including links to the online library catalog, electronic book catalog, access to databases, 24/7 online reference assistance, online bookstore, and online counseling and academic advisement. A webpage specific for DE students provides links and information on additional student resources. Financial

Aid services including the FAFSA application can be completed online. If a student is unable to come in person to the Financial Aid office to verify their income or provide proof of residency, the student is contacted to provide such documentation by mail, email, or fax. The current catalog describes the instructional delivery applied in DE courses and the interaction between faculty and students and the accessibility of faculty and staff to students.

The Teaching Learning Center provides support for faculty for online course development. The college has an additional agreement with its LMS provider to offer online support for faculty in maintaining their course shells.

How are faculty members currently trained to teach online, hybrid or web-enhanced courses?
In agreement with the LACCD-AFT Contract, the DE Committee has the responsibility of determining LMS proficiency and ensuring that faculty seeking to teach DE courses demonstrate proficiency by fulfilling at least one of the following: (1) training/certification or direct demonstration of skills with the college's LMS or (2) evidence of prior online teaching/experience using the college's LMS. The DE Committee requires that instructors complete an online pedagogy course and an LMS proficiency course offered at the Instructional Technology Center or an equivalent program of preparation before teaching a fully online course. The DE Committee reviews course design to ensure all course shells meet minimum standards as articulated in the DE Handbook.

Strategies to Meet the DE Objectives in the 2014-2020 ESMP

The four Distance Education strategies support the four goals of the Educational and Strategic Master Plan 2014-2020: Access, Student Success, Organizational Effectiveness, and Resources.

ESMP Goal 1: Access

DE supports the college's efforts to efficiently manage enrollment by satisfying student demand, giving students more options to receive college credits, and improving the likelihood of degree and certificate completion. These efforts help the college to efficiently manage enrollment in order to maximize student access to educational programs (ESMP Objective 1.1).

Distance Education objectives in support of ESMP Goal 1:
- Review data each semester with the Enrollment Management Team to ensure that DE courses projected to be offered in the following semester support the college's efforts to (a) meet all annual state/district-defined FTES targets to maximize growth, (b) maximize course fill rates, and (c) maximize course average section size

- Review the enrollment management impact of increasing the percentage of sections online, towards an aspirational target of offering up to 25% of sections as DE
- Get DE approval for additional courses needed to establish a 100% online AA degree, with a focus on a Liberal Arts AA and Business ADT
- Work with vocational programs to offer 100% online certificates
- Expand publicity about DE offerings to increase awareness
- Provide incentives to faculty to develop online courses

ESMP Goal 2: Success

DE at LACC supports the college's efforts to increase the number of students who successfully achieve their academic and career goals (ESMP objective 2.1).

Distance Education objectives in support of ESMP Goal 2:
- Ensure that support services are sufficient to support the increase in number of DE students
- Maintain one college wide learning management system
- Provide DE students online tutorials in taking online classes and using the LMS
- Require units offering DE courses to assess quality through program review:
  - Assure the quality of DE offerings by analyzing DE student achievement data in terms of enrollment and course completion. The standards for these measures should be the same as for the College as a whole.
  - Review disaggregated DE student achievement data to review disproportionate impact in DE courses based on (a) age, (b) gender, (c) ethnicity, (d) socio-economic status, (e) cohort group, if applicable Institution-set standards: The standards for the above measures should be the same as for the College as a whole.
  - Assess whether DE students are offered all the student support services provided to traditional students
  - Use the results of student online suitability self-assessments
  - Develop DE skills self-evaluation for faculty
  - Review learning outcomes assessment data results for DE students as a cohort, by discipline
  - Review DE courses to ensure they are in areas of high demand and are needed to complete degrees, certificates, or transfer programs

ESMP Goal 3: Organizational Effectiveness

DE supports the college's efforts to enhance employee development opportunities so that they are frequent, accessible and effective (ESMP Objective 3.2).

Distance Education objectives in support of ESMP Goal 3:
- Provide DE faculty the following professional development opportunities:
  - Online pedagogy
  - Course design

- o LMS training
- o Compliance with ADA requirements
- o Verification of student identity
- o DE best practices
- o Training for faculty mentors on using course approval rubrics
- Provide DE administrators and staff professional development opportunities:
  - o Workshops in assessing the quality of online courses
  - o Review operational issues with District DE committee
- Consider requiring faculty to recertify periodically on the CMS
- Ensure that appropriate DE codes are applied to DE courses at the time the schedule is developed each semester, including a system for coding hybrid classes
- Create a DE Implementation Team as a subcommittee of the DE Committee to develop specific action items to support the objectives described in this plan, including devising specific action steps, recording the actions in the online ESMP Progress Report interface, and tracking improvement based on established measures
- Create appropriate administrative and faculty coordinator positions to provide consistent leadership

ESMP Goal 4: Resources

DE supports the college's efforts to ensure that campus facilities and technology support the college's priorities of student learning and success (ESMP Objective 4.2) and to ensure that the college budget is balanced and achieves maximum efficiency supporting college strategic priorities (ESMP Objective 4.3).

- Enhance Facilities and Technology
  - o Provide regular technical support to faculty for the implementation, customization, and enhancement of the LMS
  - o Consider utilizing the work order system to track DE technology issues
  - o Provide appropriate, current, and sustainable technology that supports faculty and students in the online working environment
  - o Use survey results to determine resource needs of current and prospective student needs
- Help to Balance the Budget
  - o Consider the viability of utilizing the Canvas LMS, including growth, network, hardware, software, and training needs. Consider a pilot program and how to transition materials from the current LMS to Canvas.
  - o Secure additional resources to support and encourage growth and development in DE

Approval of the Distance Education Plan

The Distance Education Plan 2015-2020 was developed by the Distance Education Committee and the Academic Senate and vetted through the participatory governance structure. Major steps in the approval of the DE Plan:

- May 2013: DE Substantive Change approved by the ACCJC
- December 2014: DE Handbook approved by College Council and Academic Senate
- September 15, 2015: DE Plan approved at DE Committee
- October 1, 2015: Approved at Academic Senate
- October 14, 2015: Approved by Strategic Planning Committee
- November 2, 2015: Approved by College Council

The DE Plan is assessed based on a review of performance measures in alignment with the ESMP. At the beginning of fall semester, the Distance Education Committee will receive measure updates for all objectives, and review and analyze the data sets to identify possible college actions that could lead to improvement in the measure. Such review and analysis may include:

- Making recommendations for revising DE Plan goals and/or measures
- Identifying areas of concern that warrant immediate attention for the college
- Making recommendations through the college governance structure for actions to improve measures

Recommendations and action plans are documented and tracked as "ESMP Progress Report - Committee Updates" on the SPC SharePoint website.

At the end of spring semester, the committee will provide a status report on the status of recommendations and outcomes of action plans as part of the annual committee assessment.

Appendix A: Enrollment Trends and Additional Data

Academic Year	DE Sections	Total Section	DE Ratio
2009-10	106	3602	2.9%
2010-11	168	3919	4.3%
2011-12	224	3931	5.7%
2012-13	205	3458	5.9%
2013-14	197	3546	5.6%
2014-15	233	3330	7.0%

Academic Year	DE Enrollment	Total Enrollment	DE Ratio
2009-10	3,860	94,335	4.1%
2010-11	5,487	97,262	5.6%
2011-12	7,319	98,636	7.4%
2012-13	7,578	99,009	7.7%
2013-14	6,582	100,701	6.5%
2014-15	7,991	92,820	8.6%

Additional data on distance education courses and students is available online at the program review and institutional effectiveness websites, including (a) quantitative data on access and success rates in DE and non-DE courses by department and discipline, and (b) qualitative data on online learning from District student and campus climate employee surveys.