

All Fields Report

Program Overview

Program	Distance Education
Does this program have a CTE component?	Yes
Academic Year	2014/2015
Review Period	6 Year
Service Areas	

Program Description and Goals

This section addresses the big picture. Prompts should help you describe your program and goals and the relationship to the institutional mission, vision and goals, and how the program is funded.

1. Describe the program and/or service area under review and how the program supports the mission of Santa Monica College.

The Santa Monica College Distance Education (DE) Program promotes the District's mission in "supporting students in achieving their academic goals" by providing them with an alternative learning modality from our traditional campus-bound classes. We provide a wide range of services to thousands of students who not only live locally but outside the immediate area, out-of-state including residing out of the country.

Online classes helps to meet the needs of busy students by providing them with options for flexible class schedules as they juggle jobs and family obligations while continuing to pursue their educational goals. Given campus classroom constraints due in part to ongoing building construction projects which prompt the closure of classrooms and offices, and schedule creation challenges, the online classes continues to provide the District with a nimble solution to adding additional classes if necessary without having to consider the logistics of classroom availability and room conflict databases. Easing campus and neighborhood congestion and helping to minimize some parking problems has also been an advantage and also supports the District's sustainability initiative.

Our Distance Education Program began in the fall of 1999 at a time when online education and course management systems were in their infancy. Once the skepticism about online education subsided it became more evident that online learning was here to stay, the SMC DE Program began to grow. Teacher interest increased considerably and student demand became a stronger voice thereby having a huge impact in shaping how we build our class schedules. According to the SMC Office of Institutional Research, Online/hybrid classes account for approximately 21.8% of all enrollments as of fall 2013.

The DE program also supports faculty with their technology training needs to better insure that they have the resources necessary not only to make the pedagogical transition from traditional on-campus classes, but to guide them in how to efficiently and comfortably work within the virtual classroom. One goal for this support is to insure faculty are staying current with their technology skills with the ultimate outcome being student success.

All online/hybrid courses are taught by SMC faculty and maintain the same standards and quality as our traditional on-campus face-to-face (FTF) coursework. The Distance Education Program now supports all academic departments and faculty, with the exception of Math and Theater Arts, in building, training and delivering their online coursework.

2. Identify the overarching goal(s) or charge/responsibilities of the program or service area. If appropriate, include ensuring/monitoring compliance with state, federal or other mandates.

To meet the District's mission in insuring we are supporting student success, the DE Department constantly strives to meet

the training needs of faculty so they are better prepared to support our students in reaching their academic goals.

Below are a few examples of how the DE program works to maintain compliance with District, state and federal mandates.

District-Level Responsibilities:

Online Course Quality/Insuring Faculty Readiness - Training & Support Resources

Course quality for online classes continues to be a focus and a high priority for the District and the Distance Education Department with the ultimate goal of serving our students as best as possible to insure their success. The DE Department embraces a multi-pronged approach in training with a focus on preparation and best practices. Given the fact that educational technology is an ever-changing arena, supporting faculty in building and sustaining pedagogically solid and quality online classes is a dynamic and ongoing task.

The Distance Education department provides a number of training support services, or “prongs”, to assist faculty as they develop a new course. These activities include faculty- to-faculty mentoring for new incoming DE instructors with the mentor and mentee stipends provided by the District, training “scholarships” through the eCollege faculty training institute, on-campus trainings and live and archived custom webinars for our campus which are provided by eCollege. All DE faculty have access to the eCollege iSupport specialists. This team to is available to address questions specific to instructional multimedia, course development, instructional design and online pedagogy. There is also access to a self-paced online faculty design tutorial which faculty can take at their leisure. This robust tutorial lives in the eCollege platform and covers pedagogy as well as how to effectively use the tools within the platform and includes a great selection of "how to" videos.

A major challenge and consideration is how to offer current online faculty ongoing enrichment training given that fact that DE supports over 200 busy full-time and part-time online faculty from nearly all of its District’s academic departments. This means the DE program consists of a cross-discipline group of both full-time and adjunct faculty who are never in the same place at the same time. An additional challenge is that the DE department cannot mandate a gathering of DE faculty for “department” meetings which could be used for training opportunities. What has become apparent over the years is there is no ideal day or time to meet as a group to hold real-time on-campus trainings including webinars.

In spite of the busy schedules of instructors, the DE department continues to address training needs to online faculty as they continue to update their online class materials. Areas of focus includes online course architecture, effective and efficient course design to address various student learning styles, current pedagogy issues in online education, best practices and exposure to new and emerging platforms and online classroom technology.

The major source for on-campus trainings and all of our live webinars have come from our course management system (eCollege/Pearson Learning Studios) by way of service credit and part of our contract with eCollege. Since the last program review, the DE department has coordinated and offered 25 webinars to faculty on a multitude of topics. These training opportunities are made available at no cost to the District. They are delivered via live interactive webinars and, in the past, have included several days of intensive on-campus trainings from the eCollege instructional design specialist. These trainings focus on both demonstrations and hands-on sessions specific to the platform capabilities, new tool releases, best practice considerations in online teaching and practical suggestions to build online classes that address students varying learning styles.

In terms of an overarching goal, we have been challenged with how to best insure faculty are “ready for prime time” meaning they are prepared to teach online at the time that they receive their first online teaching assignment. This is to compliment the “faculty readiness” guidelines which were presented to the Department Chairs several years ago and is a tip sheet consisting of skills and capabilities necessary to succeed as online instructors. With this goal, the DE program has been working with the Distance Education Committee to include a formal certification process is put into place.

There have been many stakeholders and many ideas on how to approach the goal of insuring online faculty readiness. The DE Committee discussions have been robust over the past seven+ years. While progress on realizing this project of DE faculty readiness or “certification” has been slow, this past fall the DE Department and DE Committee agreed upon a DE

Faculty Readiness pilot to debut fall 2014. Funded in part by Academic Affairs and The Center for Teaching Excellence, we will follow a model out of Cypress College whereby eligible faculty are provided with tuition-free access to the Chancellor's Office four-week @ONE foundation course (online) titled "How to Learn and Teach Online". To supplement the online class component, there will be four three-hour campus-led faculty led hands-on mentoring sessions where learners can apply their pedagogical experience from the online class using our course management system (eCollege) tools and resources.

Looking back to the last Program Review Executive Summary, specifically item #4 recommendation, it was suggested we increase staffing levels and that we "*expand faculty training, where possible to include on-ground faculty who might benefit from online teaching techniques.*" The DE department has taken this recommendation to heart and addressed this as provided in a few of the examples below. Since the last program review report, the department added one staff member to provide services directly to students (student services specialist)

eCompanion Centralization Project (Extending Services & Support Campus-wide)

As a way to broaden our audience and encourage new users to use our course management system (CMS) eCollege/Pearson Learning Studio in an effort to make the most out of our contract dollars and to centralize all resources and services, the DE staff wanted to find a way to fully support all faculty and all departments campus-wide. Centralization of eCompanion seemed the most efficient approach. Prior to the centralization, support services were truncated. eCompanion support had been provided by the Academic Computing unit of the District and communications between the two units proved challenging.

The goal of the DE staff was to provide faculty with a seamless single point of contact to efficiently address faculty technology and training needs when they wish to supplement their traditional on-campus classes with web-enhanced materials or, as we call it on our campus, "eCompanion". This centralization was done, in part, to better assess then meet the training needs of our faculty users. After a four year spate of no campus-wide trainings, the DE department began to provide a reliable and regular schedule of online and on-campus trainings for faculty. Since the recentralization, we have been able to ramp up this missing piece and have offered numerous on-campus trainings as well as webinars relevant to this population of faculty.

In May 2012, with the blessings of Academic Affairs, the Distance Education department centralized eCompanion under DE . The DE department staff have not only been very dedicated but incredibly focused on insuring that we support faculty in having their training needs addressed. We have done this by offering multiple learning opportunities including on-campus trainings and live webinars. Christine Miller, the DE Multimedia Specialist, provided these sessions and faculty seem to have responded favorably to her teaching style. Our goal was to increase and build our user group, maximize CMS usage to get the most out of our contract dollars and insure we are meeting faculty training needs on an ongoing and regular basis.

Recognizing the benefit to the District to maximize our eCollege contract dollars with heavy use of our course management system, our goal at centralizing support and resources was multi-pronged.

1. Faculty who become more familiar and are at ease with the tools in eCollege will be better prepared to move into teaching online as this is the same suite of tools for both user groups; online and on-ground classrooms
2. Students have becomes much more technology savvy and rely on web-enhanced materials to supplement the traditional classroom experience. This includes the constant feedback from instructor to student which is provided by the eCollege gradebook whereby student's can track and calibrate their progress through the class.
3. While the District prides itself in its move toward paperless meetings, including the use of new technology supporting conference rooms and meetings on campus, there still seems to be a heavy reliance on paper in the classroom and beyond. Our District reprographics unit still prints over 21 million pages annually including the printing of syllabi. Having ready online access to course materials including the syllabus insures the District is in line with our core value of SMC moving towards becoming sustainable. Moving towards a paperless classroom by using the eCollege platform to upload and store important documents for students and providing ready access to those materials will help us to become greener overall, in the conference room and in the classroom.

In terms of faculty embracing the use of eCompanion and to provide just a snapshot of how many users we support, in the spring 2014 term, there were 805 unique faculty who were using the eCollege platform to house content or tool usage including email and gradebook. Unique eCompanion student count was 20,495.

After a four year absence of campus-wide trainings and after the re-centralization of the eCompanion side of the house under DE, the department has offered eight on-campus eCompanion orientation training sessions in less than two years. To compliment these live training sessions, we have also offered six webinars specific to eCompanion users.

In terms of webinars that benefit both eCompanion faculty and online/hybrid faculty, twenty-five webinars have been offered since the summer of 2008. Most webinars were offered live on Friday mornings in the hopes we could draw the largest possible group of attendees.

A full list of recent webinars including details can be found in the appendix of this report but topics have been diverse covering “combating online cheating” to a myriad of 1-hour sessions on how to use the newest eCollege faculty tool which has been added to the faculty suite. It is important to note that all of these webinars were provided as a live presentation with a Q&A session at the end so participants can seek clarification or have questions answered. All sessions have been archived for ongoing use. All were paid for out of our eCollege service credit dollars as built into our contract so this vast library of resources came as no added expense to the District.

These webinars align with one of the two unit outcomes which were created specifically for the Distance Education Program, “*faculty who participate in webinars offered by DE will learn at least one of the new functionality of the eCollege platform*”. To measure if we have met this unit outcome and better understand if we are addressing the needs of our users, with the support of our OIR, we have been surveying faculty at the end of many of our training sessions to cull feedback from participants.

A pressing concern from the DE department is how to encourage the highest possible number of participants so one survey question did query faculty on their desired day/time to make these sessions available. 87.5% of the responses stated Friday’s were the best day for them to attend these sessions and the 11:00-12:00 time slot was their preferred time to participate. Again, reflecting on our UO that faculty who participate in webinars offered by DE will learn at least one new functionality of the eCollege platform, 66.7% of the faculty strongly agreed and 22% agreed that they did learn at least one new functionality.

Course Management Systems: Needs Assessment

One of the charges of the DE Program has been to stay engaged and current in updates connected to our CMS options. This is an ever-changing field and while some CMS’ have been subsumed and then "retired" by larger companies i.e. Blackboard taking over WebCT and Angel, Pearson’s purchase of eCollege and some new and quite promising competitors have recently come on the horizon. Publishers noting how lucrative online education has become have also jumped on the learning management system bandwagon and are offering their own versions of CMS’.

Over the years, the DE Program has worked collaboratively with the Distance Education Committee with ongoing discussions and explorations on what other CMS options, if any, might better suit our District. While we have been with eCollege for many years, we remain informed consumers ever mindful of trends and options which may be looming on the horizon.

In mid-fall of 2008, eCollege began to migrate their clients from the older “legacy” version to a new more robust version of their platform called .NExT. To insure our users, including faculty and students were working on the most current and dynamic version of the platform, SMC began the migration process to the new version. In terms of scalability and disruption, we basically changed CMS’ without changing vendors meaning, all legacy content had to be identified by class and by teacher, converted to the .NExT version, QA’d (quality assured) by faculty then moved into active use between December 1, 2008. The full cut-off to the new version was completed by March 23, 2009.

Planning for the migration began in the fall 2008 and all current course content was migrated, QA'd and in use by late spring 2009. This migration affected approximately 125 online faculty. It included requiring them to all support this change by having them attend webinar information sessions and also having them carefully QA and approve of the migrated content before use. During the migration process faculty were provided with updates on changes in platform and tool performance in preparation for them to use the new version.

The migration from Legacy to .NExT took six full months to prepare faculty and complete the move of all classes over to the new version. While less mission critical, this move included eCompanion as well. Given that this process only involved an upgrade it was, due to the size of the online program, a monumental task and disruptive to program flow and an added weight on all DE staff as well as DE faculty.

In retrospect, the migration was a huge learning experience and quite purposeful in terms of getting a sampling of what a migration to another CMS could possibly be like. With the migration nine months earlier and some of the migration fatigue behind all of the stakeholders, discussions of other CMS options resumed among the members of the Distance Education Committee. This project was prompted mostly by a few very eager online faculty who have had favorable experiences with other CMS' and had the desire to check other CMS options available.

The DE Committee has agendaized the CMS discussion item each year since the fall of 2003. A faculty user survey was created by the committee over a year's time then deployed and results assessed. In the spring of 2009 the Academic Senate charged the DE Committee to launch an intensive campus-wide exploration of CMS' or alternatives or determine if the current platform, eCollege, could be obtained at a lesser cost. In the end, it was determined that while a single CMS would never meet the needs of all. By consensus it was agreed that eCollege is meeting the needs of most so a migration to another CMS was tabled with the caveat we continue to stay on watch on happenings in the CMS world. Another outcome of this exploration was that our vendor did agree to allow us to renegotiate our contract at a substantial savings for the District with no loss in any services including training services and 24/7 helpdesk for the entire campus (i.e. no longer restricted on only online faculty and students).

In January 2010 the DE Committee chair and DE department Associate Dean collaborated to create a report capturing CMS exploration efforts over the seven year period. This report can be found in the appendix of this report. This information was presented at a Board of Trustees meeting. A second presentation was made to the DPAC Budget committee which serendipitously included the visiting accreditation team that day. The presentation was well received thanks to the wonderful talents of Wendy Parise, Distance Education Committee chair.

During the spring of 2014, the Distance Education Committee and DE Dept. wanted to learn more about a new Course Management System called "Canvas". The vendor was invited to campus to give the DE committee and all other interested DE faculty a tour of this new CMS. The session was a very well attended. The platform was demonstrated and a Q&A session following the product demo. To keep the momentum going on the exploration of this CMS, the vendor offered to provide DE committee faculty with a sandbox or private shell to test the platform at their leisure. The vendor had also offered to provide virtual meetings should the committee have further questions and provide an option to discuss ongoing questions about their product. The vendor also extended the invitation to provide interested DE committee faculty with a "sandbox" so they could test-drive the new CMS.

Another activity related to the CMS needs assessment project was the creation of a new Distance Education student survey. After several semesters of discussion among DE committee members, and with the assistance of our Office of Institutional Research group, and using the Chancellor's Office student survey as a guide, a student survey was authored and deployed in the spring of 2014. According to the OIR survey results summary, 570 students responded which represents a 5.3% response rate. The OIR confirmed that this was a solid number of participants reaping reliable information on student's attitudes to online learning and rating the value of the platform tools among other measured variables.

In terms of online student satisfaction levels, 73.3% reported being very satisfied with their course and 42.7% reported being very satisfied. When asked how likely they would be to take another DE course at SMC, 68.5% responded "very likely" with 17.4% responding "likely".

Other interesting survey findings:

- 65% of the student survey respondents were taking one online course during spring 2014
- 23% of the student survey respondents were taking two online courses during spring 2014
- 6% of the student survey respondents were taking three online courses during spring 2014
- 7% of the student survey respondents were taking four+ online courses during spring 2014

Of this pool of respondents, 61% of the respondents identified as having been enrolled in an online class prior to the current term and 39% responded that they had not enrolled in an online course prior to the current term.

After many years absence, the California Community College Chancellor's office (CCCCO) resumed their process of querying all CCCCCO DE faculty via their own survey as of spring 2014. Santa Monica College opted in as participants. The survey was deployed to DE faculty directly from the Chancellor's office late spring so we await the CCC's reports which will be specific to SMC and also provide a state-wide comparison in what should be a comprehensive report on faculty opinions on being an online instructor including their use of technology and include feedback on their institutions course management system and related services.

Statewide, Chancellor's Office & Federal Changes & their Impact on Distance EducationOEI - Open Education Initiative (Statewide)

A new statewide California Community College initiative is on the horizon which could impact CMS decision-making is the recent formation of the OEI "Open Education Initiative". According to their website <http://ccconlineed.org/about> "*The mission of the California Community Colleges Online Education Initiative (OEI) is to dramatically increase the number of California Community Colleges (CCC) students who obtain college associate degrees and transfer to four-year colleges each year by providing online courses and services within a statewide CCC Online Education Ecosystem (OEE). Special attention will be given to ensuring retention and success through basic skills support and other support services, especially for underserved and underrepresented cohort groups.*"

If all goes as planned, participating community colleges should be able to reap many benefits if the current plan is realized. One of many objectives of this project is to identify a single course management system to deliver all coursework through the OEI. There are also discussions about migrating content over to the new CMS, funding for training faculty on how to use their CMS as well as insuring all coursework meets minimum quality standards via a certification process. Also in the plans are tutoring, test proctoring, and impersonation and identity fraud solutions.

While the fall 2014 OEI pilot launch has been delayed, possibly to spring 2015, there are many dangling variables which need to be put into place before this project can ramp up even as a beta project. A few details which need to be addressed is how to include a way to centralize cut scores, finding and agreeing on a common assessment, establishing a way to accept enrollment dates for classes among the participating CCC's. Once all of these unknowns fall into place, the District might find participating in the OEI an effective way to stay in the DE game and hopefully a solution to offset the District's costs of running our program.

Distance Education Student Financial Aid Fraud (Federal)

Challenge: In the fall 2011, the topic of a new type of financial aid fraud was hitting newswire services and educational periodicals specific to online students. Bringing this issue to the forefront was an NPR piece <http://www.npr.org/2011/10/05/141070032/thieves-scam-aid-from-online-education-sites> and a warning from the Department of Education to all educational institutions who receive financial aid funding which provided a spotlight on an emerging problem of "straw students". With the growth of distance learning, so has a new way for "students" to exploit DE in order to reap benefits from financial aid. The issue was specific to students enrolling in online classes to receive financial aid but had no interest in actually participating in their classes and actively completing coursework.

Solution: The DE department messaged all online faculty about this new trend and included a reminder about their obligation and the importance of keeping their rosters clean and dropping no activity and low activity students and insure students are substantively participating.

To address the issue of financial aid fraud tied to online students, the DE department also presented this issue to the DE Committee for their guidance on a solution and also invited both the Dean of Admissions and Dean of Financial Aid to meet with the DE Committee to explore options on how to abate this trend on our campus. The DE Committee worked on crafting a “best practices” recommendation tip sheet to be made available to all online faculty. The committee also crafted an advisory to be included in our online enrollment confirmation email which is sent to all students each time they enroll in an online or hybrid class. The verbiage states “*Online classes require substantive participation. This means that if you do not regularly and thoughtfully participate in the class activities defined in your course syllabus, you risk being dropped.*”

We have also been working closely with all DE faculty reminding them of their obligation to clear rosters and be mindful not to carry online students who are not demonstrating an active presence in their online classes.

State Authorization for Online Students (Federal)

Over the past few years there has been, on a federal level, discussion on residency status and changes in how DE program are allowed to serve out of state students, it might be important to mention that the federal legislation regarding state authorization is moving forward but doing so with much debate. The Department of Education is still expecting that all institutions who deliver their coursework online seek authorization to legally offer distance education classes to students in a state which is it not physically located. While the various stakeholders in this initiative continue to clarify expectations, rulings and deadlines on compliance, the SMC DE department continues to monitor the situation via the CCC Chancellors office and SARA the “state authorization reciprocity agreement” team. This includes WCET-WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) who continues to advocate for educational institutions.

With so many states each with their own individual requirements, authorization can be an onerous and expensive venture. Some institutions have hired full-time state compliance officers who have the sole duty of managing authorization with each state and insure they are current on changes. Prices vary for authorization but can run into thousands of dollars for annual certification. Some local community colleges (i.e. Pasadena City College, Las Positas) have decided that due to the low number of students served outside of California, the lesser of evils is to forgo certification and restrict students from outside their state from taking online classes. In the fall of 2013 there were seventy-five students identified as being “out of state” taking SMC online classes. The District will, at some point, need to decide if serving these students is cost-effective once the state authorization mandate is clarified and becomes law.

3. If applicable, describe how the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Supporting Goals, and/or Strategic Initiatives of the institution are integrated into the goals of the program or service area.

Our unit’s overarching goal is to provide faculty support and technology training to insure they are prepared to build and run quality online classes thereby promoting student success. Faculty readiness contributes to student success. We also support the District’s ability to schedule build without constriction of classroom availability to sustain and/or increase FTES.

4. If your program receives operating funding from any source other than District funds identify the funding source. If applicable, note the start and end dates of the funding (generally a grant), the percentage of the program budget supported by non-District funding, and list any staff positions funded wholly or in part by non-District funds. Do not include awards for non-operational items such as equipment (ex. VTEA) or value added activities (ex Margin of Excellence).

The DE program does not receive funds other than those provided by the District. There are no active grants tied to DE at this time.

Populations Served

In this section you will provide information that describes who your program or service area serves. When comparing data from different periods, use a consistent time frame (ex. Compare one fall term to another fall term)

Saved Information For Populations Served

Area/Discipline Information Pertains To

Distance Education

1. Describe the students your program serves in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, age, residency status, citizenship, educational goal, enrollment status, and full/part-time status. Note any changes in student or enrollment data since the last program review.

The SMC Office of Institutional Research recently provided the DE department with an updated demographics report through fall 2013. This data in the three following table's represents two groups; students taking a fully online schedule and combination of online & on-ground classes. The OIR full report can be found in the appendix but a few points of interest have been included below.

Table 1: Age Range & Schedule Patterns - Fully Online Schedule vs. Mixed/On-Ground & Online Schedule*

Age Range	Fully Online Schedule	Mixed Schedule
19 or Younger	6.1%	22.6%
20-24	28.2%	52.8%
25-29	25%	13.4%
30-39	24.9%	7.1%
40-49	10.1%	2.1%
50 or Older	5.7%	3.0%

The age-range with the highest representation of online and/or mix-schedule is 20-24 year olds. Our OIR website lists 41.7% of all SMC students are within the 20-24 age range so the DE and mixed schedule student mirrors this data. The OIR website indicates that 3.6% of our students are in the age range of 40-49 but for online students in this age-range 10.1% are taking all of their classes online so this difference is noteworthy as it indicates that a higher number of students between the age of 40-49 take online vs. campus-bound classes.

Regarding gender and ethnicity, at a glance, there do not seem a large number of gaps (>10%) between online vs. mixed schedule and college-wide metrics. The exception being under ethnicity for the Hispanic category where the difference between "mixed schedule" and "college-wide" is just over 10% as illustrated below in Table 3.

Table 2: Percentage & Count: Gender & Schedule Patterns Fully Online Schedule vs. Mixed/On-Ground &

Online Schedule

Gender	Fully Online Schedule	Mixed Schedule	College-Wide
Female	61.0% (1,357)	55.8% (4,834)	52.3% (15,694)
Male	39.0% (886)	44.2% (3,828)	47.7% (14,306)

Table 3: Ethnicity & Schedule Patterns Fully Online Schedule vs. Mixed/On-Ground & Online Schedule

Ethnicity	Fully Online Schedule	Mixed Schedule	College-Wide
Asian/Pl	17.1%	19.4%	15.6%
Black	11.3%	7.6%	9.7%
Hispanic	27.0%	25.9%	36.1%
Native Am	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%
White	36.6%	24.6%	28.3%
Multi-Race	4.7%	3.5%	3.7%
Unreported	2.9%	18.9%	7.2%

Table 4: Distance Ed Student Residence Status

Location	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
California	97.2%	97.6%	98.0%	97.8%	82.6% (2122)
Out-of-State	2.3%	2.3%	1.9%	2.0%	6.3% (75)
Foreign	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2% (26)

Serving International F-1 Students

During the fall and spring semesters, F-1 students are allowed one online class within their required 12 units. They must have 9 units on-ground, so if they take Acct 1 online, they need 14 units total. If they have more than 12 units, they can take an additional online class as long as they have 9 units on-ground.

There are no limits on the number of online classes for summer and winter (other than the college unit limits when in place) unless it is their first term. First term (summer/winter) students need to have at least 4 units. They must have an on-ground class and can have only one online class.

Serving Out-Of-State Students

The various state representation ebbs and flows with general District enrollments, is a dynamic situation and changes with each term. The table below is a snapshot sample from the fall 2012 top ten states and breaks down the student enrollments by state. Hawaii holds the number one spot in terms of individual headcount and Oregon holds the 10th position.

FALL 2012 OUT OF STATE STATUS

State	Total Headcount
Hawaii	73
New York	50
Nevada	49
Illinois	36
Florida	33
Georgia	33
Colorado	27
New Jersey	27
Massachusetts	23
Oregon	20

2. Compare your student population with the college demographic. Are the students in your program different from the college population? Reflect on whether your program is serving the targeted student population.

The majority of our online students also take traditional campus-taught coursework so this indicates that we serve the same basic student population with some very minor differences in percentages.

3. Discuss any significant change(s) in the population(s) served since the last full program review and the possible reasons for the change(s).

The last six-year program review report did not include population served information other than success and retention outcome information which was pulled from the CCCC data-mart. Therefore it is not possible to address changes in populations served in terms of student demographics. However, this report does contain this data so moving forward it will be used to compare it against the next cycle of the Program Review (six year and/or one year if applicable)

Program Evaluation

In this section programs/units are to identify how, using what tools, and when program evaluation takes place. Evaluation must include outcomes assessment as well as any other measures used by the program. Please use Section D to address program responses to the findings described in this section.

Programs/units with multiple disciplines or functions may choose to answer the following questions for each area. If this is your preferred method of responding, begin by selecting a discipline/function from the drop down, answer the set of questions and click "Save", your answers will be added to the bottom of page. Do this for each discipline/function. If you would like to answer the questions once, choose "Answer Once" from the drop down.

How would you like to answer these questions?

Saved Information For Program Evaluation

Area/Discipline Information Pertains To

Distance Education

1. List your student or instructional support service SLOs or UOs.

SLOs are specific, measurable statements of what a student should know, be able to do, or value when they complete a program/course or sequence of activities. An SLO focuses on specific knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors that students will demonstrate or possess as a result of instruction or program activity.

UO statements focus on service or operational outcomes such as:

- *Volume of unit activity*
- *Efficiency (responsiveness, timeliness, number of requests processed, etc.)*
- *Effectiveness of service in accomplishing intended outcomes (accuracy, completeness, etc.)*
- *Compliance with external standards/regulations*
- *Client/customer satisfaction with services*

With the guidance of the District's Office of Institutional Research, two unit outcomes were recently revised (spring 2014). One measurable outcome was specific to student support, in this instance, how our DE student inquiry resource was rated and the second outcome measuring if the DE department faculty webinars and trainings were meeting their needs. We will continue to measure these outcomes for the foreseeable future and use this data to assess our achievements and when necessary, recalibrate them to insure we properly measure our outcomes.

Unit Outcome #1 - Students who use the SMC online inquiry form will be satisfied with the timeliness of Distance Education's response.

Unit Outcome #1:

A collaborative effort from the Distance Education Committee, our Office of Institutional Research and using the California Community College Chancellor's Office, an update student satisfaction survey was deployed during the spring of 2014. One of the questions in this survey addressed students using the DE department student services inquiry services.

Who was assessed? The DE student satisfaction survey was deployed to online students during the spring of 2014. According to the report provided by our OIR "of the 10,710 DE students enrolled in at least 1 hybrid or online course, 570 responded to the survey for a 5.3% response rate."

The actual student survey questions specific to our UO #1 were:

1. Have you used the SMC Online Inquiry Form in the past?
2. How did you rate the timeliness of the DE response to the online inquiry?
3. Did you feel the online inquiry staff adequately address your question?

Question #1: 11% replied they did use the form in the past while 89% replied no.

Question #2: Of those who did use the form 44.8% replied that they were "very satisfied" with the response and another 37.9% responded as being "satisfied". In terms of unfavorable ratings of "very unsatisfied" there were 5.2% in this category.

Question #3: When addressing the question specific to the inquiry staff adequately addressing their questions, 41.4% "strongly agreed", 36.2% "agreed" and 5.2% "strongly disagreed" i.e. they did not feel inquiry staff adequately addressed their question.

Unit Outcome #2 - Faculty who participate in webinars offered by DE will learn at least one new functionality of the eCollege platform.

Specific to an on campus eCompanion training, out of over 20 attendees, only 5 faculty participated in the survey. 60.0% survey respondents "strongly agreed" that they learned at least one new functionality as a result of their training and another 40% "agreed"

To maximize attendance on these trainings we are also using our faculty surveys to determine the best time and day to offer training for on-campus and via webinar. What has been incredibly helpful was to have the guidance and support from our OIR unit in surveying our faculty after each training in an effort to capture as much participant information as possible. This includes collecting data on faculty who confirmed they would attend a session for training event but did not attend.

2. Describe when and how the program assesses these SLOs and UOs and uses the results to inform program planning including:

- **how outcomes are assessed and how often**
 - **the assessment tool(s) used**
 - **the sample (who gets assessed)**
 - **how and when the program reviews the results and who is engaged in the process**
-

With respect to how we assess our UO's then use the results to inform program planning, it might be important to note that both UO's were recently revised (spring of 2014) so there was a short time-frame to measure new outcomes but

several surveys were successfully deployed and data gathered.

Three surveys were deployed in the spring 2014 and tied to eCompanion on-campus trainings and webinar training sessions. While we intend to track our progress in assessing and meeting both of our unit outcomes, instituting a formalized assessment began in the spring of 2014 so unfortunately, there is no longitudinal data at this time. We look forward to following up on as many sessions as possible moving forward so we can determine effectiveness and also deploy student survey's as often as the OIR guides us to do so.

3. What other evaluation measures does your student or instructional support service use to inform planning? (For example, surveys, longitudinal data, support service use etc.) Note trends, differences in performance by group (ethnicity, gender, age), and any unusual patterns in student success and retention.

The recent DE student satisfaction survey which deployed in the spring of 2014 took over a year of collaboration among the Distance Education Committee and, included the guidance of our OIR and using the Chancellors office version as a model. Now that we have a survey created, we should be able to query students on a regular basis to measure our services and inform planning.

Student Retention and Success (Online and On Campus Comparisons)

Student Retention and Success

According to the Chancellor's Office data-mart, the disparity between student success and retention rates continues to narrow between the traditional campus-led classroom vs. the online classroom. Details on DE vs. face-to-face success and retention rates are reflected in the table below. This includes data available on statewide DE averages. While student success and retention rates for online classes fluctuate over terms, rates continue improve as noted below with the gap narrowing between online and traditional campus-based classes.

SMC DE vs. Non-DE Retention and Success Rates 2013-2014

Student Outcomes	Statewide DE	SMC DE	SMC Non DE
Retention	80.32%	82.24%	83.46%
Success	60.71%	69.35%	67.90%

In order to provide the committee with a broader, more historical view on how online education has moved closer to reflect on campus class retention and succes rates, below are some tables which show a narrowing dispatiry between the two delivery modalities from the early years to more recent times.

Historical View of Retention Rates by Year for Online and Traditional Campus Classes

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YEAR	STATEWIDE DE	SMC DE	STATEWIDE NON-DE	SMC NON-DE
2009	78.49%	78.61%	85.22%	83.83%
2008	77.46%	74.01%	84.62%	82.45%
2007	75.23%	74.90%	83.62%	81.93%
2006	76.80%	71.41%	84.20%	81.20%
2005	77.04%	70.81%	83.82%	81.02%
2004	77.35%	70.34%	84.07%	80.09%
2003	75.65%	Data unavailable	83.59%	82.45%
2002	74.38%	Data unavailable	83.28%	80.69%
2001	66.62%	Data unavailable	82.93%	78.83%

*Source: CCCCCO Data-Mart

Historical View of Success Rates by Year for Online and Traditional Campus Classes

YEAR	STATEWIDE DE	SMC DE	STATEWIDE NON-DE	SMC NON-DE
2009	57.34%	62.82%	68.52%	67.15%
2008	56.30%	58.52%	67.64%	65.83%
2007	53.94%	57.83%	66.98%	65.02%
2006	55.30%	56.11%	67.42%	65.43%

2005	55.36%	54.33%	67.00%	65.13%
2004	55.56%	54.75%	67.86%	67.74%
2003	55.75%	Data unavailable	68.29%	68.07%
2002	55.05%	Data unavailable	68.50%	66.93%
2001	46.80%	Data unavailable	67.57%	64.86%

*Source: CCCCCO Data-Mart

D1: Past year's Objectives

As part of the planning process, programs are expected to establish annual objectives that support the program's goals. Please document the status of the program/function's previous year's objectives. Add comments if you feel further explanation is needed.

Objectives

No Objectives have been defined

Looking Back

In this section, please document what you did last year as a result of what you described in Section C.

1. Describe any accomplishments, achievements, activities, initiatives undertaken, and any other positives the program wishes to note and document.

Course Management Upgrade Project & Future Migration to New CMS:

Reflecting back on the time period since the last program review, one of the most significant projects for our unit was the migration of all of our online classes (and eCompanion) to a new/improved version of eCollege from their Legacy to .NExT version. This experience provided us with incredibly valuable information on the importance on making decisions of this nature, gave us a hint of a real-life snapshot into how a move to another CMS might be and how disruptive a change of this nature could potentially be to the District if not well mapped out including additional staffing to make this transition. Changing versions of the same CMS was in itself a huge undertaking and involved months and countless hours of effort from staff, faculty as well as the support of our CMS group to insure the transition was as smooth as possible. It is now clear to us that unless we increase staffing in anticipation for a migration to another CMS, a staff of four in the DE department will not nearly begin to meet need especially if we were expected to run parallel programs during the migration and/or make a clean and quick cutoff from one CMS to another.

2. Summarize how the program or service area addressed the recommendations for program strengthening from the executive summary of the previous six-year program review.

Please see above and appendix report titled "SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Project, January 2010"

3. Describe any changes or activities your program or service area has made that are not addressed in the

objectives, identify the factors (e.g., licensure requirements, state or federal requirements, CCCO mandates, regulations, etc.) that triggered the changes, and indicate the expected or anticipated outcomes.

No information.

4. If your program received one time funding of any kind indicate the source, how the funds were spent and the impact on the program (benefits or challenges).

No information.

Moving Forward

Discuss and summarize conclusions drawn from data, assessments (SLO, UO) or other evaluation measures identified in Section C and indicate responses or programmatic changes planned for the coming year(s) including:

- **how the assessment results are informing program goals and objectives, program planning, and decision-making**
- **specific changes planned or made to the program based on the assessment results**

The DE department will continue to offer pedagogical and technology training to faculty, reaching out to both online and eCompanion users. This is in keeping with one of our two UO's. We will also survey participants as necessary to insure we have feedback and guidance

In the spring 2014 the OIR, DE Committee and DE department collaborated on a DE student survey. The results can be found in the addendum of this report.

D2: Coming year's Objectives (Moving Forward)

No Objectives have been entered

Community Engagement

In the prompts that follow, please delineate the partnerships you have with the rest of the SMC community as well as those you have with external organizations.

1. If applicable, describe how your department staff members engage in institutional efforts such as committees and presentations, and departmental activities.

This list reflects DE staff service during the six-year timeframe for this report:

Vice-Chair Distance Education Academic Senate Joint Committee

Curriculum Committee

Sabbaticals Committee

Technology Planning Committee (DPAC)

Benefits Committee

VIP Welcome Day

Faculty and Staff Hiring Committees

Flex Day Presenters

Benefits Committee

Safety Committee

District Diversity Committee

2. If applicable, discuss the engagement of program members with the local community, industry, professional groups, etc.)

California Community College Chancellors Office Distance Education Coordinators Group

SARA-WICHE (Western Cooperative for Educational Technologies” and “Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education”) (List-serve)

3. Discuss the relationship among program faculty and staff, between program faculty, staff and students, and the involvement of program faculty and staff with other programs or areas.

Most of the DE staff share interchangeable responsibilities but remain within the scope of their respective job duties. A department with such a small staff and such a large program necessitates this fluidity.

Christine Miller, our DE Multimedia Specialist works mainly with faculty in insuring their course content meets accessibility compliance standards. She also works closely with faculty in offering training and ongoing support in best practices for online pedagogy.

Marilyn Simons, our Senior Student Services Specialist, works primarily with faculty and supports their needs in insuring their course content is in place. She also mentors our student services specialist in how to support student inquiries. (Update: August 2014 - Ms. Simons resigned from the college. This position is now vacant).

Willis Barton, our student services specialist, serves as our "welcome" person for students. He answers email inquiries from potential students on the topic of how to enroll in an online class, how to reach a teacher and all myriad of topics.

His support is accessible to our entire community, is not restricted access and is available to any student or future student who needs general assistance.

Current Planning and Recommendations

The following items are intended to help programs identify, track, and document unit planning and actions and to assist the institution in broad planning efforts.

1. Identify any issues or needs impacting program effectiveness or efficiency for which institutional support or resources will be requested in the coming year. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request support or resources through established channels and processes].

Ongoing Need: Online Tutoring for Online Students

While the SMC program mirrors most student services by providing an online option, for example cyber-counseling and admissions/registrar, there has been no institutional level solution to our offering tutoring services for our online students. There have been wonderfully creative make-shift workaround for some populations but this is more serendipitous or due to faculty ingenuity than the District providing a resource to meet student tutoring needs. The current online tutoring resources for students is limited to students who are enrolled in Hari Vishwandha’s English class and two of our math classes (not online) and are described in more detail below.

Pearson Learning Studio My Math Labs: When students enroll in any of our on-ground Math 18 and Math 31, they purchase access to online resources. This purchase includes several hours of free tutoring services from “Smart Thinking” and a link directly to their website is included in the My Math Labs class materials. Students needed to click on the “contact a tutor” link to access immediate support. Several years ago we requested a user report from eCollege (a Pearson company) to see if our students were utilizing this resource. It was surprising to find very few students used this free tutoring time. It is possible that this was due to the fact that these were on-campus math classes which included on-campus tutoring support. We are also uncertain if the math faculty are encouraging our students to take advantage of this resource.

This past year we have expanded our use of the eCompanion shells to include tutoring resources by providing access to our Supplemental Instruction leaders who work with their faculty and students enrolled in our science (including STEM), Math, English, Business, Econ, CIS and Modern Language.

Online Writing Lab: From the “thinking outside the box” category in using the eCollege platform in creative ways, Professor Hari Vishwandha found a solution to a need. As a robust user of the eCollege platform and an established online teacher, Professor Vishwandha requested that a tutoring shell be created which our students can use to submit compositions for feedback by an SMC instructor. Professor Vishwandha and his colleague, Kathleen Motoike monitor the shell and provide support to any student who wished to partake of this resource. Academic Affairs creates a non-credit bearing section number each semester which begets a shell in eCollege. Students are then provided with add codes if they want to self-enroll in this shell.

The shell includes weekly discussions on a variety of topics related to composition, college-level research projects, best practices and the art of revision. The shell also provides a way for students to submit their rough drafts for review and revision suggestions. Our volunteer Professor team guarantees returning student papers within 12 hours of submission but often returns them within three or four hours.

Our English faculty publicize this resource to their students and over the years, this had gained interest from our students. There are often approximately 95 students who self-enroll in this shell and take advantage of these “tutoring” resources.

The DE department and DE committee is aware of this missing piece and has had many discussions on how to best address our lack of online tutoring for online students. This item has been on the DE committee agenda for many years and been the subject of robust discussions. While it might be most efficient to follow how other community colleges meet this need by outsourcing services to an online tutoring company, some faculty on the DE committee have had reservations about entrusting “outside” people to perform this service. Faculty have raised questions about vetting these outside tutors and insuring that they meet qualifications and standards has stalled moving forward on a solution.

That said, online tutoring for online students is a serious missing piece in the District insuring we are offering the same student services to online learners as we offer to students who come to campus and take traditional classes. We do know have any data on if our online students who are taking on-campus classes are utilizing on-campus tutoring labs so are unable to predict need. A data report has been requested from our OIR and that report is forthcoming.

It has been discussed among Distance Education committee members that we test a very small controlled pilot using an outside vendor such as Smart Thinking to begin to address this missing piece. Tutoring will again be an agenda item on the fall 2014 agenda. If it is decided to outsource tutoring services, even as a pilot, we will need a funding source which is why this is mentioned in this area of this report.

The OIR did a query on how many students taking online classes have utilized our on-campus tutoring resources. In the fall of 2013, only 59 online students used these resources out of 10,859 students who did use this resource.

2. If applicable, list additional capital resources (facilities, technology, equipment) that are needed to support the program as it currently exists. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

Additional resources, in this case technology, specific to another course management system, would be called into play if it is determined that we migrate to another system.

If the District does determine it is the best interest of the institution to move to another Course Management System, maintaining a 24/7/365 technical support helpdesk will be imperative. With hundreds of faculty and students contacts monthly, this service could not be replicated in-house with current staffing restrictions. Please see a monthly sample of the eCollege helpdesk report. Toggle through all excel screens to get a more in-depth accounting of who is served and the nature of their technology support.

There are also certain software site licenses which could provide faculty with additional resources when improving their classes for example, RESPONDUS testbank import software. A Camtasia license could be used by faculty to add audio to their online classes.

3. If applicable, list additional human resources (staffing, professional development, staff training) needed to support the program as it currently exists. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

With the California Statewide Community College Open Education Initiative (OEI) mentioned earlier in this report, it would benefit the District to implement a formalized way to support online faculty readiness in the form of a full-time trainer/course designer.

Distance Education Faculty Readiness: Outsourcing some of our training to the @ONE group to provide training on their foundation class "How to Learn and Teach Online" could be a viable option but comes with a cost. It might be a resource the District would consider allocating funds towards in the future. As we run the faculty readiness pilot in the fall 2014, we should have valuable information on the success and challenges on this venture.

4. List all current positions assigned to the program.

The Distance Education department staff consists of four people listed below. All participate in some form of committee work and/or Institutional efforts. More details below.

Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean Online Services & Support

Christine Miller, Multimedia Specialist

*Marilyn Simons, Senior Student Services Specialist

Willis Barton, Student Services Specialist

*at the time of writing this report (August 2014) this position is now vacant

Future Planning and Recommendations

The following items are intended to help programs identify, track, and document unit planning and actions and to assist the institution in broad planning efforts.

1. Projecting toward the future, what trends could potentially impact the program? What changes does the program anticipate in 5 years; 10 years? Where does the program want to be? How is the program planning for these changes?

Referencing previous entries, there are many federal and statewide initiatives which could impact the SMC DE program. Partial list below

Federal mandate for state authorization

OEI/Open Education Initiative

CMS & Course Delivery Technology Changes

2. If applicable, list additional capital resources (facilities, technology, equipment) that will be needed to support proposed changes. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

I am unable to make such a projection at this time. If the District opts to migrate to another CMS, there will be costs involved in terms of technology and staffing to support training and readiness of faculty.

3. If applicable, list additional human resources (staffing, professional development, staff training) that will be needed to support proposed changes. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

See item 2.

One long-time missing piece for the DE program is bringing in a DE faculty trainer/course designer. A position had been written into a grant several years ago but unfortunately funding was redirected so this need remains.

4. If applicable, note particular challenges the program faces including those relating to categorical funding, budget, and staffing.

If the District decides to migrate to another CMS, we will need to determine how long we will run parallel systems if there will be no downtime between migrations. If there is no downtime during the migration, the cost of running two CMS' will need to be considered.

If a migration is determined, the District will need to factor in hiring additional staff for the transition. A migration coordinator as well as a trainer for the new platform would be necessary to minimize disruption as much as possible during the transition process.

5. Summarize any conclusions and long term recommendations for the program resulting from the self evaluation process.

Reflecting back on the past six-years, it is amazing how quickly technology has evolved and how important that the District stay as current as possible and do so within budget constraints. The migration from Legacy to .NExT within eCollege was, in retrospect, hugely disruptive so we now know similar changes need to be well thought out and planned. More important is having sufficient staffing to manage a change of this nature.

6. Please use this field to share any information the program feels is not covered under any other questions.

No info other than to reiterate, I feel that the formatting and content changes for program review proved to be an incredible challenge this round.

Now, being very clear on what is expected in terms of data and requirements, will make the next six years more deliberative with clear planning and rationale for tasks and objectives.

Evaluation of Process

Please comment on the effectiveness of the Program Review process in focusing program planning.

This is a vastly different process and experience from all previous program review reports that I have participated in. Six years ago, well in advance of writing the report, it was recommended by the chair of the PR committee, that we keep a folder on my desktop titled "successes and challenges". This rotation it is clear that collecting these anecdotes would in any way guide me in program planning. Clearly a folder of this nature has in no way prepared me to manage this project and I am painfully aware how under-prepared I am as I look back on these six years.

This is the second PR I have been charged with writing and I am clear that the previous report provided me with little to no preparation for the granular and details prompts in this version.

Given the formatting, prompts and data requests that are part of this process now I am clear that moving forward, the information in this cycle will be a wonderful jumping point when writing future reports and provide a very clear roadmap for the next generation of six-year reports

Executive Summary

These fields to be filled out by the Program Review committee. Reports will be sent to the program and will be available on-line to populate relevant fields in the annual report and the next 6 year report.

Narrative

The Distance Education Program has been in existence since 1999 offering on-line and hybrid instructional support to faculty and thousands of students, as well as providing training for faculty. As of Fall 2013, online/hybrid classes accounted for over 21% of all enrollments, a significant percentage of enrollments and a testimony to the strength of the services supported by a small program staff. All online/hybrid courses are taught by SMC faculty and maintain the same quality and standards as on ground classes. Currently, over 200 faculty representing almost all SMC departments offer online instruction.

The District has a contract with eCollege/Pearson Learning Studio to deliver the course management system (CMS) and provide 24 hour help support for online classes. In addition to providing the platform for online courses and faculty training, eCollege provides and supports the eCompanion system accessible to all faculty to supplement on ground courses with web-enhanced materials. Recently, to consolidate support and responsibility, all eCollege services, including eCompanion, have been centralized under the Distance Education department. This has allowed the department to better assess the needs of all users and to provide training in response to that assessment. The goal is to increase and build the user group, maximize our eCollege contract dollars through heavy use of the CMS, and ensure faculty training needs are addressed through ongoing opportunities. As an indication of the level of support provided by Distance Education staff, Spring 2014 figures show 805 unique faculty users and 20,495 unique student users of eCompanion for housing and accessing course content, tool usage, e-mail, and gradebook tracking.

Distance Education staff employ a multi-pronged approach to training with a focus on preparation and best practices. Activities to achieve this include faculty-to-faculty mentoring for new DE instructors supported by District-provided stipends to the mentor and the mentee, training "scholarships" offered through the eCollege faculty training institute, on-campus training sessions, and live and archived custom webinars provided by eCollege. Training specific to eCompanion is included among the extensive training offerings, both in the form of live sessions and also as archived webinars.

The Distance Education department works closely with the Academic Senate Joint Distance Education Committee, which is responsible for making recommendations on policies and planning regarding distance education to the Academic Senate.

The Associate Dean for Distance Education serves as the committee vice-chair. Although this is a review of the Distance Education department and not the Academic Senate Committee, it is important to note that the two bodies function collaboratively and closely. For example, the committee is very engaged in regular discussion and review of CMS options – a burgeoning and competitive field – while the department is responsible for administering and managing the contract. To date, the committee and the department have determined that the current level of service (especially the 24/7 help desk) and the features offered to all faculty do meet the needs of most users, and thus eCollege remains the CMS provider. The experience of migrating to an upgraded, more robust version of the eCollege platform in 2009 was both a monumental task and disruptive enough to provide an indication of what a shift to another vendor might entail and that any decision to move to another vendor altogether should be considered carefully. One positive outcome of the CMS exploration was that eCollege renegotiated a more favorable contract at substantial savings to the District and expanded help desk access to the entire campus, rather than limiting access to online faculty and students.

The new California Community College “Open Education Initiative”, while still in the planning phase, proposes, among other objectives, to identify a single course management system to deliver all coursework for all system colleges. If realized, this will be an enormous undertaking for the Distance Education staff, albeit with the potential to deliver many benefits. The department is actively monitoring statewide discussions and system progress on the initiative.

At the federal level there are also changes that impact the Distance Education department and online offerings. The Department of Education has issued a warning to all educational institutions receiving financial aid funding to ensure students enrolled in online courses are actually participating in classes and actively completing course work, as opposed to using enrollment as a means to fraudulently receive financial aid. In response, the Distance Education department delivers frequent messages to all online faculty about this trend and reminds them of their obligation to keep rosters clean. Additionally, in collaboration with the Distance Education Committee, a “best practices” tip sheet was crafted and made available to all online faculty and an advisory drafted which appears in the online enrollment confirmation sent to all students upon each enrollment in an online or hybrid class stating “*Online classes require substantive participation. This means that if you do not regularly and thoughtfully participate in class activities defined in your course syllabus, you risk being dropped.*”

Another issue the department is monitoring closely is proposed federal legislation regarding state authorization reciprocity agreements, which, if passed, will regulate the offering of online courses to out of state students. The Department of Education expects all institutions to seek authorization to legally offer distance education courses to students in a state in which it is not physically located. Each state has individual requirements, making authorization onerous and expensive with the cost of each authorization varying. In response, some institutions have chosen to restrict online offerings to in state students. Other institutions have hired a full-time compliance officer. Once the state authorization mandate is clarified and becomes law, the District will have to decide which response to pursue.

Program Evaluation

The Distance Education department engages in regular assessment, both internally and in collaboration with the Academic Senate Distance Education Committee. Assessments include setting service goals and whether benchmarks have been met, as well as measuring unit outcomes. Over time, very focused measures have been developed as indicators of outcome achievement. The department is now considering broader measures to strengthen the scope of outcomes assessment. Working with the Office of Institutional Research, the committee and the department developed surveys to measure student attitudes toward online learning, including rating the value of platform tools, and a faculty survey to assess knowledge acquisition and satisfaction with training. The department uses this as a basis for dialogue on program improvement.

The department also evaluates data and administers surveys to better understand the online student experience and determine improvements to services that might improve student success. For example, in a recent survey of student satisfaction with online course(s), 73.3% reporting being satisfied with their course and 68.5 % responded they would be very likely to take another online course. Notably, 36% of the respondents reported they were taking more than one online course at the time of the survey and 61% had previously enrolled in an online course. Much of the faculty training offered by the department is aimed at improving these numbers.

Commendations

The Distance Education Program is commended for:

1. Successfully growing the distance education program to 21% of all SMC enrollments and supporting over 200 faculty in diverse curricula.
2. Successful migration to an upgraded version of the CMS.
3. Continuous exploration and assessment of different CMS options.
4. Development of multiple strategies to increase on-line faculty readiness.
5. Successfully negotiating a more advantageous contract with the CMS provider, including extending eCompanion accessibility to all faculty.
6. Providing a variety of faculty training and archiving much webinar delivered training for continued access.
7. Swift proactive response to national report on financial aid fraud related to online enrollments.

Recommendations for Program Strengthening

The committee acknowledges the tremendous efforts and successes of a small Distance Education department and recommends consideration of the following to further strengthen the program:

1. Expand evaluation efforts to more systematically identify faculty professional development needs and evaluate the effectiveness of faculty training.
2. Review the existing unit outcomes and assess whether they adequately address program goals.
3. Implement and assess the DE Faculty Readiness pilot.

Recommendations for Institutional Support

1. Given the increase in online enrollments and use of CMS systems and tools, review staffing needs to maintain the desired level of service and what additional support will be needed to participate in the Chancellor’s Office Open Education Initiative.
2. Evaluate and plan for a timely District response to state authorization reciprocity agreement legislation, if passed.

Attached File Upload

Attached Files

Appendix Items	
CMS Exploration Final Report	
IR Report on Distance Education	
Online Course Offerings	
Student Survey Findings	