HARTNELL COLLEGE

Distance Education Plan 2013

Hartnell College Distance Education Mission:
In responding to the learning needs of its expanding communities, the Distance Education Program at Hartnell College supports innovative applications of technology and methodology to create accessible, inspiring, and measurably effective learning opportunities for an increasingly diverse student population.

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Hartnell College Distance Education Plan 2013

Introduction

The Distance Education Advisory Group (DEAG) hereby drafts the Hartnell College Distance Education Plan (DE Plan) at the request of the Vice President of Academic Affairs to organize and guide the delivery and improvement of distance education (DE) instruction and student services. The plan will also coordinate the college’s response to the following recommendation issued by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) on the basis of the 2012 Hartnell College Self Evaluation Report, the March 2013 External Evaluation Team Report, and the July 2013 Letter imposing Probation on Hartnell College:

Recommendation 4:

As previously stated in Recommendation 4 by the 2007 Comprehensive Evaluation Team, to meet Eligibility Requirement 10, and in order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the college fully engage in a broad-based dialogue that leads to the identification of Student Learning Outcomes at the course and program levels, and regular assessment of student progress toward achievement of the outcomes.

The team further recommends that, in order to meet the Standards, the College develop student learning outcomes and assessment that is ongoing, systematic, and used for continuous quality improvement, where student learning improvement in all disciplines is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the College.

The team further recommends that training be provided for all personnel in the development and assessment of learning outcomes at the course, program, institution and service levels.

_The team further recommends that faculty teaching online be evaluated regularly and that assessment of student learning be measured regularly for online students. (Eligibility Requirement 10; Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.a; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f; II.A.2.g; II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i; II.A.3)_

The DE Plan documents planning in five critical areas:

1. DE program leadership;
2. DE course and program evaluation and resource allocation;
3. Institutional support for DE faculty, staff, and students;
4. DE course and program continuous quality improvement;
5. DE faculty readiness and professional development training.

The DEAG has developed the Hartnell College (HC) DE Plan in conjunction with the DE Committee (DEC), the VP of Academic Affairs, the DE Coordinator/Dean of South County Education Services, the Dean of Academic Affairs/Learning Support and Resources, the Academic Senate (AS), and the HC Faculty Association (HCFA). The DEC will review and update the DE Plan annually. The DE Coordinator will also draft an annual report summarizing progress on the DE Plan’s implementation, and forward it to the VP of Academic Affairs and the College Planning Council (the annual report is discussed more fully in sections VI and IX).

I. DE Overview Fall 2013

Program Size: DE course enrollment at HC has steadily increased over the last three years, representing approximately 10% of total district enrollment in spring, 2013. There are DE courses offered in 16 different disciplines. For detailed information about the characteristics and performance of DE students, please see Appendix G.

Platform: *Etudes* is HC’s current course management system (CMS). According to the HCFA contract, all instructors teaching online must either utilize the campus CMS for instruction or link through the campus CMS (HCFA contract, Article 22, B 1, Appendix A).

Leadership: DE is under the purview of the VP of Academic Affairs. The DE Coordinator/Dean of South County Education Services works with the DEC, planning DE faculty and staff development activities and monitoring compliance with state and accrediting commission guidelines. A DE faculty liaison position is also requested to support, enhance, and expand DE course and program offerings. The DE faculty liaison would assist with the following:

- Coordinating faculty CMS training;
- Coordinating faculty DE pedagogical training;
- Coordinating faculty DE curriculum training;
- Working with faculty to develop new online courses and programs;
- Working with DE faculty to assess course-level student learning outcomes;
- Working with DE faculty to assess program-level student learning outcomes;
- Developing online student orientation and training;
- Writing a DE best practices guide for HC.

Technological Support: The VP of Information and Technology Resources (VPITR) supervises an Instructional Technologist (IT) and Help Desk staff, comprised of two technicians, who provide technological support for DE faculty and students. The Help Desk hours are M-F 8 AM-5 PM.
Faculty Professional Development: The Faculty Professional Development Committee (FPDC), FPDC Coordinator, the DE Coordinator, possibly the DE faculty liaison, and the DEC plan and present faculty workshops that are designed to support effective online instruction.

II. Mission

The current college Mission Statement affirms that, “Hartnell College provides the leadership and resources to ensure that all students shall have equal access to a quality education and the opportunity to pursue and achieve their goals. We are responsive to the learning needs of our community and dedicated to a diverse educational and cultural campus environment that prepares our students for productive participation in a changing world.”

The DE Plan addresses the HC Mission Statement by ensuring the effective delivery of DE courses and programs, guaranteeing all students access to a quality education. The DE Plan also recognizes the importance of technology to support students’ productive participation in today’s changing world.

The DE Mission Statement is, “In responding to the learning needs of its expanding communities, the Distance Education Program at Hartnell College supports innovative applications of technology and methodology to create accessible, inspiring, and measurably effective learning opportunities for an increasingly diverse student population.”

III. DE Program Philosophy and Description

HC recognizes that technology can augment educational opportunities available to the district’s growing and diverse student population. HC regards DE as integral to the district’s vision, mission, and goals, and endorses and encourages the development and expansion of DE instructional courses and programs and campus support services.

The DE Plan sets forth DE policies and procedures while allowing for flexibility in DE planning, development, and growth.

Definitions

Distance Education: DE means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. (HCFA contract, Article 22, A1, Appendix A).

DE Course: A DE course is a course in which the required number of instructional hours based on the number of units is conducted online. (HCFA contract, Article 22, A2, Appendix A). A DE course may include discussion boards, digital material such as PowerPoint, online assessments, interactive exercises, chat, video, web pages, and other multimedia technologies.

Hybrid:
A hybrid course is a course in which any of the required number of instructional hours based on the number of units is met face to face as well as online (HCFA contract, Article 22, A3, Appendix A). A hybrid course may include discussion boards, digital material such as PowerPoint, online assessments, interactive exercises, chat, video, web pages, and other multimedia technologies. For the purpose of the DE Plan, all DE considerations shall apply equally to hybrid courses.

Web-Enhanced:
A web-enhanced course is a traditional face-to-face course that utilizes the internet (typically by the use of a CMS) to expand student learning beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Web-enhanced courses may be supplemented by the posting of syllabi and course materials online, discussion boards, digital material such as PowerPoint, online assessments, interactive exercises, chat, video, web pages, online grade books, and other multimedia technologies. In a web-enhanced course, online activities supplement instruction and do not reduce instructor-student contact hours.

Class Size:
The HCFA contract sets DE and hybrid class size (HCFA contract, Article 22, C1, Appendix A). The DEC will research alternative DE and hybrid class sizes to determine the optimal size for enhanced student retention and success. The optimal DE class size data will be incorporated into the DE best practices guide and DE annual report (discussed more fully in sections VI and IX).

Online Office Hours:
In DE courses, virtual office hours may be held in proportion to a faulty member’s DE load, except that all office hours during the add period of each semester will be held face-to-face (HCFA contract, Article 22, D3, Appendix A). Faculty does not have to be on campus to conduct online office hours.

IV. Incorporation of the DE Plan Policies and Standards
In order to maintain and improve the effectiveness of DE instruction, it is essential to accept and consistently implement a set of standards for the management, support, development, delivery, and evaluation of all DE courses, programs, and services. The policies and standards this DE Plan sets forth will be incorporated into HC instructional practices. Collaboration and consensus are essential to facilitate student success in DE courses and programs.

It is further acknowledged that the same standards of course quality and evaluation shall be applied to DE, including any parts of a hybrid course conducted through DE, as are applied to face-to-face courses (HCFA contract, Article 22, A4, Appendix A). The mode of content delivery is the fundamental distinction. All procedures and policies in the DE Plan recognize academic freedom, and adhere to the HCFA collective bargaining agreement.

V. DE Administration and Organizational Structure

VP of Academic Affairs:
The VP of Academic Affairs bears the ultimate responsibility of ensuring the quality and reliability of institutional support for all DE instruction and student services.

**DE Coordinator:**

The DE Coordinator works with faculty and staff to expand and improve the quality and scope of DE courses, programs, and student services. The DE Coordinator also facilitates all faculty professional development activities related to DE instruction. The DE Coordinator acts as a liaison between the State Chancellor’s Office, HC, and DE faculty. In addition, the DE Coordinator is responsible for maintaining accurate records for the Chancellor’s Office, and ensuring that HC’s DE courses, programs, and student support services are in compliance with all relevant ACCJC, American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and California Code of Regulations Title 5 standards. The DE Coordinator consults with the VPITR to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the services the IT and Help Desk staff provide to both DE students and faculty. These services include the development and maintenance of a DE portal which will be easily accessible on the campus homepage (discussed more fully in Action Plans #3 and #4). In addition, the DE Coordinator consults with the D&G on DE planning, works with the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OYPE) to compile and present an annual report on all DE activity to the Board of Trustees, and gathers input for the Chancellor’s Office Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) as needed or requested.

**DE Faculty Liaison:**

As the DE Program expands, the VP of Academic Affairs may appoint a DE faculty member to act as a liaison between faculty, the IT, and administration. The DE faculty liaison could assist the DE Coordinator in expanding and improving the DE program along with planning and implementing DE faculty development activities.

**Technology Development Council:**

The Technology Development Council (TDC) includes representatives from all campus constituencies including the VPITR (permanent chair), a Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the DE Coordinator. The TDC provides planning and direction for the technological support of instructional departments, library, student, and administrative services in implementation of the Technology Master Plan. The TDC also monitors the adequacy of the technology platform to support instruction, and recommends policies and procedures regarding campus technologies to the appropriate administrator and College Council.

**Instructional Technologist:**

Under the VPITR, the Instructional Technologist (IT) works with faculty and administrators on design and development of instructional content used in DE courses. The IT coordinates workshops on new technologies and provides instruction and support to faculty and staff to assist them in improvement of technology skills.

**DE Committee:**
The DEC is an AS shared governance committee. The DEC is comprised of a faculty member Chair, a minimum of six other faculty members preferably from a variety of disciplines, the DE Coordinator, an Instructional Administrator, the IT, a member of the Student Senate, a member of the Classified Senate, and a member of the California School Employees Association (CSEA). The DEC works to increase DE course and program offerings, establish DE policies and procedures, review current DE practices, and provide recommendations to the AS and College Planning Council. Specific DEC responsibilities include the following:

- Establish DE policies and procedures;
- Assist in planning and coordinating DE training for faculty and staff;
- Review current DE practices and make recommendations for improvement to the appropriate administrator and the College Planning Council;
- Monitor progress on implementation of the DE Plan and update the DE Plan annually;
- Consult with the Curriculum Committee (CC) on matters involving DE course and program approval procedures;
- Review and provide input to the DE Coordinator’s annual Title V mandated report of all DE activities to the Board of Trustees.

VI. Institutional Support Standards

The effectiveness of DE at HC is dependent upon consistent and high-quality technological, administrative, and operational support for all DE faculty and students. The standards set forth below are also critical for delivering effective DE courses, programs, and services.

General Support

- HC guarantees sufficient funding for all DE infrastructure, including a CMS that meets instructional and learning needs and a sufficient number of dedicated and appropriately trained staff to manage this system;
- HC provides continual on-call technological monitoring for all systems related to the delivery of DE courses, programs, and services;
- The VPITR is responsible for providing DE students and faculty a minimum of two weeks prior notification for all scheduled service interruptions and immediate 24/7 emergency notification of unscheduled interruptions;
- The DE Coordinator approves the timing of any CMS platform upgrade. Unless critical for system viability, any upgrade will take place outside of the instructional terms;
- HC allocates staff and resources for the creation and maintenance of a DE portal that provides access to all DE and hybrid courses, online student support services, technological and CMS assistance, registration services, faculty resources, technical-issue reporting, and other DE information and services;
- The annual DE budget includes sufficient funds for DE training, equipment, and software;
• The OIPE assists the DE Coordinator in the production of a comprehensive annual report of longitudinal DE data that includes student demographics, courses offered, section counts, optimal DE class size, comparative student retention and success rates, courses approved for DE by the CC, programs that are offered 100% online, and other information regarding the scope and quality of DE at HC.

**Faculty Support**

• The campus CMS adheres to a published procedure and schedule, developed in consultation with the DEC and the AS, for term-to-term course shell facilitation;
• HC and the AS provide faculty with expert DE course development training and support in all areas that involve issues of compliance, including accreditation standards, accessibility requirements, and Title 5 regulations;
• HC provides or funds appropriate technological and pedagogical training for all DE faculty;
• The FPDC, DE Coordinator, DEC, and IT ensure that all qualified new DE faculty receive a DE teaching and learning orientation.

**Student Support**

• HC provides DE students with an array of support resources and services that are comparable in scope and accessibility to those provided for its face-to-face student population. Student support services currently include enrollment, orientation, counseling, and tutoring;
• HC provides a web-based degree audit system that permits DE students to access information about graduation and major requirements for their degree completion goals;
• The webmaster includes the video tutorial explaining and demonstrating the use of *Etudes* functions and tools (login information, grade book, discussion board, assessments, and private messages) within the DE portal. Tutorials will be updated *prior to* each CMS upgrade;
• The DE Coordinator and DEC develops Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that the webmaster posts in the DE portal, and updates the FAQs regularly to inform students about basic features and technological requirements of DE courses;
• The DE Coordinator and DEC will develop an Online Student Readiness Assessment (OSRA) to generate useful data on student preparedness. The OSRA will be linked to resources that provide additional information about DE and assist students in preparing themselves to succeed in DE courses;
• The CMS provides instructions in every DE course for using the CMS’s tools and functions;
• The class schedule in PAWS clearly identifies each DE and hybrid section;
• The Curriculum Committee (CC) works with the DEC to develop and publish a standard for proctored testing in the DE addendum in CurricUNET, and DE courses that require proctored testing are identified in the class schedule and PAWS;
• The FPDC, DEC, DE Coordinator and IT ensure that new DE student orientations are available on an ongoing basis both face-to-face and online;
• Use of the campus email system is required in order to facilitate communication between DE students, instructors, and student support services staff.
VII. DE Course and Program Development and Quality

The Role of the Curriculum Committee:
The CC uses standardized course outlines (at this time, via CurricUNET) that contain DE addendums for hybrid and DE courses:
- A single Course Outline of Record (COR) applies to each face-to-face, hybrid, and DE course HC offers;
- The CC verifies that the DE addendum meets CCR Title 5 requirements for regular and effective contact and accessibility;
- DE class size will conform to the maximum enrollment indicated in the HCFA collective bargaining agreement (HCFA contract, Article 22, Appendix A).

DE Teaching and Learning Standards:
The following quality standards support the development and delivery of DE courses and programs that effectively promote student learning and success. These standards apply across instructional disciplines to all DE courses. Any changes in working conditions, teaching load, and/or additions to the HCFA contract language must be bargained, ratified by faculty, and approved by the HC Board of Trustees.

General Standards

- All DE courses must either link to or be delivered by means of the HC CMS (HCFA contract, Article 22, B1, Appendix A);
- All student learning outcomes will be clearly presented in the syllabus of each DE section and will not differ in content from those presented in the syllabus of a traditional face-to-face section of the same course. The COR will apply to DE, hybrid, and face-to-face courses;
- DE courses will maintain regular and effective interaction between the instructor and students in accordance with the DE regular and effective contact policy (Appendix I);
- DE course materials will encourage students to engage and participate in ways that enhance comprehension, understanding, and knowledge;
- DE courses will have clear, consistent, and easily accessed instructions for successful completion of course requirements, including due dates for assignments;
- Course content should be delivered as the instructor of record determines, just like a traditional face-to-face course. Academic freedom includes the selection of the course textbook and other educational resources, and permits the uncensored/unblocked posting of relevant documents, images and other media used to enhance and facilitate the student learning process (CCR Title 5 Section 51023; Accreditation Standard II.A.7, Appendix H);
- The class schedule and PAWS will clearly describe any special testing or proctoring requirements for DE courses. The DE addendum will define alternatives to on-campus proctored testing. Proctored testing must be available in the students’ locale;
- Diverse instructional methodology is highly recommended to address students’ multiple learning styles;
• Instructor feedback on student questions will be constructive, accessible, and provided in a timely manner, not to exceed 48 hours. Each instructor will publish the anticipated turnaround time in the DE addendum;
• The DEC will establish a policy addressing technological issues. The CC will vet this policy, and incorporate it into an approved addendum for all classes. Instructors will communicate the technological issue policy to students in the class syllabus;
• Faculty may post cheating and plagiarism policies in the online syllabus and may choose to incorporate assessment and evaluation practices designed to support student integrity from the WCET “Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education” (Appendix B).

Course Media and Materials Standards

• Faculty will make every effort to ensure that external links and internal functionality are fully operational when each course begins, with appropriate technological support from HC;
• Any publisher-provided content, if used, will be integrated appropriately with instructor-prepared content. DE instructors are expected to be fully acquainted with any publisher content made available to their students and to guarantee the appropriateness of this content to the course in which it is published;
• Curriculum media and materials standards apply equally to DE, hybrid, and face-to-face sections of a course.

Accessibility Standards

• Use of all web-based media will conform to accessibility standards as outlined in the DE Accessibility Guidelines for Students with Disabilities (Appendix D);
• DE students will be able to access an array of online support resources and services that are comparable to those offered on campus. Services will include enrollment, orientation, counseling, tutoring, and any other support designed to foster DE student success.

Privacy and Protection Standards

• Instructors should protect the integrity of the assessment process in DE courses that do not feature a proctored test environment;
• Each DE student will receive a login with a unique username and password to ensure that the student who is registered for a class is the student who does the work and receives the grade or credit for the course;
• Faculty may create and maintain updated offline copies of grade book content, in case of technological failure.

VIII. DE Faculty Readiness and Professional Development
HC provides faculty members with the opportunity and support to offer DE courses and programs. Every course section HC offers will have a corresponding CMS shell. CMS shells support DE and hybrid courses, and can also be utilized to support a web-enhanced course, or to convert a face-to-face course to DE or hybrid.

**Readiness Criteria for Faculty Teaching in the DE Program**

New faculty teaching DE courses will be required to complete an orientation (HCFA contract, Article 22, B3, Appendix A) which the DEC reviews and approves.

**Professional Development**

The DE Coordinator, in consultation with the DEC, IT, and the FPDC Coordinator, is responsible for developing and organizing an annual schedule of professional development activities for faculty. The following activities will be included in each annual schedule:

- CMS personnel representing the current HC CMS will deliver ongoing custom CMS training workshops;
- Campus email system consultants will deliver ongoing custom workshops (currently Gmail);
- Ongoing faculty workshops will be available showcasing effective instructional practices, utilization of tools, or innovations in DE course and program design;
- Ongoing webinars will be available to highlight new DE technologies or instructional applications.

The FPDC Coordinator will work with the DE Coordinator and the DEC to propose an appropriate percentage of faculty development funds to support participation of DE faculty in DE conferences and other relevant off-campus activities.

**IX. DE Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation**

DE is integrated into institutional planning, evaluation, and resource allocation. The DE Coordinator, DE faculty, and the DEC are jointly responsible for implementing the planning, evaluation, and resource allocation procedures for DE, set forth below.

**DE Plan**

- The DEAG develops the DE Plan in consultation with the DEC and with the assistance of the DE Coordinator;
- The DE Plan incorporates data on DE courses and programs, improvement goals, and action plans;
- The AS approves the DE Plan. It is thereafter presented to the College Planning Council and President’s Cabinet;
- The DEC reviews and annually updates the DE Plan.
Program Review

- Instructional and Student Support program reviews incorporate DE program-level evaluation, planning, and budget development;
- The DE Coordinator is responsible for completing a DE program review for the purpose of planning, evaluation, and resource allocation for DE courses, programs, and student support services.

Annual Report

- The DE Coordinator and OIPE compile an annual report on all district DE activity (described in more detail in section VI) and the DE Coordinator is responsible for submitting this report to the Board of Trustees by August of each year;
- The DE annual report includes data on DE performance and incorporates the most recently updated DE Plan;
- The DE annual report is published on the DE portal and on the OIPE web page.

X. DE Goals and Action Plans

This section of the DE Plan includes several action plans that support the goals listed below. Each action plan targets one of the following areas: DE leadership, planning and resource allocation, online support, course and program quality and development, and faculty professional development and readiness training.

Goals:

1. Establish an effective management structure for the DE program;
2. Develop procedures to integrate DE into the college’s planning, evaluation, and resource allocation cycles;
3. Develop, adopt, and implement minimum standards of online support for DE faculty and students;
4. Develop, adopt, and implement policies for the expansion, maintenance, and quality improvement of DE courses and programs;
5. Provide faculty readiness training and professional development opportunities that address both the pedagogical and technological aspects of DE instruction.

DE Action Plans:

1. DE leadership;
2. Planning, evaluation, and resource allocation;
3. Online support;
4. Course and program maintenance and continuous quality improvement;
5. Faculty training and professional development.