Distance Education Committee – Meeting Minutes

Date	October 28, 2026
Time	2:48 PM – 4:52 PM (Pacific)
Location	Zoom – Jason Hough's Personal Meeting Room
Chair	Jason Hough
Attendees	Jason Hough, Angela Clark, Tina Esparza-Luna, Nancy Wheat, Rhea Mendoza, Mayra Almodovar, Christopher Zepeda, Chris Bassett, Trav Williams, Ana González, Tammy Boates, Jacob Jun, Liz Morales, Trish Triumpho-Sullivan
Guests	Matthew Compton-Clark and Ted Tollefson (Simple Higher Ed)

1. Call to Order, Agenda and Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Jason Hough. The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

2. Browser Compatibility (OWL / Watermark)

Jacob Jun reported that Watermark course evaluations do not work on the Safari browser. Students are advised to use Chrome or visit campus computer labs. The committee agreed that device and browser recommendations should be communicated to students, particularly Mac users, through new-student welcome materials.

3. Accreditation and RSI Update

Jason reported that the ACCJC is not yet satisfied with the college's evidence of Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI). Faculty have felt unclear about compliance expectations and, in some cases, personally targeted by requests for additional evidence. Jason clarified that the request was global rather than aimed at individual courses. A call with the ACCJC next week is expected to clarify what further evidence is required, including a new emphasis on RSI-related syllabus content.

4. Draft Distance Education Plan Update

The committee reviewed the draft DE plan, which recommends hiring an instructional designer with 50% faculty release time, reviving the POCR team, and implementing course review and badging processes, with attention to upcoming short-term 8-week DE courses. Tina and Tammy clarified that badged courses meet four quality components, including course design and student interaction. Jason and Ana agreed to separate (bifurcate) compensation language for

course reviewers versus faculty badging a course, with district payment recommended. The plan also recommends allowing full-time faculty to teach fully online.

5. Vendor Presentation: Simple Syllabus and Simple Prep

Matthew Compton-Clark of Simple Higher Ed demonstrated Simple Syllabus, which builds accessible, template-based "liquid" syllabi within Canvas with pre-populated content, privacy controls, Open Library textbook search, OER tracking, AI-assisted Quick Pick policies, and optional gating until accessibility issues are resolved. Simple Prep automates course readiness validation and task management, including customizable RSI validation plans. Implementation of both tools typically takes 12–16 weeks across discovery, integration and training phases, with pricing based on student FTE. Matthew noted RSI standards are in flux following Department of Education changes. Christopher shared positive feedback from colleagues at other institutions. Jason will follow up after the ACCJC call.

6. Fully Online Teaching Discussion

The committee discussed the VPI office's resistance to 100% online teaching assignments. Ana explained that full-time faculty are more accessible for face-to-face teaching than part-time adjuncts. Tina and Trish expressed concern about online quality standards and training requirements, and about assumptions that adjunct faculty are less engaged than full-time faculty.

7. AI Addendum and Senate Timeline

The committee reviewed a new AI addendum to faculty guidelines. The updated DE plan will be presented at the November 10 Academic Senate meeting, with a second reading on November 24.

8. Newsletter Accessibility

Chris Bassett raised concerns that the newsletter contained text within image files, which is not screen-reader accessible. Trish clarified the intended distribution method. Future newsletters will include both an embedded image and a separate accessible PDF.

Action Items

Owner	Action
Ana González	Email Jason to help bifurcate DE plan language on compensation for reviewers versus faculty badging a course.
Jason Hough	Update the DE plan to differentiate compensation for course reviewers and faculty badging a course.
Jason Hough	Ask Marina to include in new-student welcome materials that Safari is not

	recommended and Chrome is preferred for Hartnell systems.
Jason Hough	Send faculty a message clarifying that the ACCJC RSI evidence request was global, not targeting individual classes.
Jason Hough	Follow up with Matthew and Ted after the ACCJC call to define requirements and request a tailored proposal.
Jason Hough	Work with Trish and Marnie so the November newsletter includes an embedded JPEG and an accessible PDF attachment.
Matthew Compton-Clark	Check whether any institutions have submitted Simple Prep reports to accreditors and report back.
Matthew Compton-Clark	Check whether Canvas Commons integration is on the Simple Syllabus roadmap.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 PM. Next: DE plan presentation at Academic Senate on November 10, 2026.