

SMCCCD Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC)

Minutes of the Meeting February 22, 2008

District Office – Board Room

Attendees:

District: Jing Luan; Kathy Blackwood; Eric Raznick, Jasmine Witham; Jim Petromilli

Cañada College

Marilyn McBride
Patty Dilko

College of San Mateo

Susan Estes
Martha Tilmann
Eileen O'Brien
Madeleine Murphy
Marilyn Lawrence
Betty Fleming

Skyline College

Judith LaRiviere
Felix Perez

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chancellor Luan at 1:35pm

The minutes of the meeting held 11/16/07 were approved (m/s Lawrence/O'Brien) with two abstentions. The minutes of the meeting held 1/25/08 were approved (m/s Lawrence/O'Brien) with one abstention.

DE Gateway : Jasmine Witham demonstrated the new Distance Education Gateway, with all DE classes in the district listed, and direct links to the class webpage where available. Some classes do not have links, because the instructors have not responded to requests for information. The Gateway may be accessed through WebSMART. A few classes do not have a website, but use CCC Confer as a communication link between instructor and students, and some listings refer students to the instructors' district web site. While Jasmine Witham gathered all the information for the first iteration of the DE Gateway, in future terms faculty will have to populate courses with the information themselves. A wide variety of websites is used for online classes, and some instructors apparently do not use district email; a few do not use email at all.

Discussion: Do we want or need to limit or suggest reducing the platforms used for online classes from the many currently used to the two Course Management Systems (CMS) supported by the district, in order to achieve consistency in "look and feel" of the course websites and consistency in navigation? It was suggested that DEAC recommend or require that online faculty have a webpage with information, however brief, about each of their classes. Information should be provided to faculty members, perhaps as a template, on how to build a syllabus for an online class. A committee is evaluating student email solutions and the Gateway as a conduit for DE students. Suggestions made during discussion include employing the Quality Matters rubric for peer review of online courses, and a student survey regarding the ease and usefulness of technology as well as

commentary on course content.

Madeleine Murphy expressed a desire for course management systems to have an intermediary stage which could include information and/or functions common to several courses, such as an instructor's office hours, departmental policies, etc., so that information would not have to be replicated on each course site. Availability of a student chat feature, perhaps with student profiles, could help build a sense of community among online students. A 'Student Lounge' in WebACCESS could be used to display general information, and allows un-moderated interaction between students. WebACCESS has a 'meta course' function which can umbrella over several distinct classes. eCollege has a "Student Union" feature which includes threaded discussions, live chat and a ride board. There is the capability for the SMCCCD site in eCollege to be organized in subsets as well.

Kathy Blackwood stated that to make our online presence most effective, we must use a single platform; Moodle Rooms (WebACCESS) allows all students in the district access to the Student Lounge which provides the opportunity for students to communicate with one another. Eric Raznik noted that a student email group is considering email solutions, which may include a portal; a portal may have many elements, not exclusive to DE. Each college seems to be developing Distance Education resources separately. They should be considering and planning jointly or in concert, and Distance Education should be specifically included.

Dr. Luan noted considerations for DEAC: to follow up on building an entry point for DE students; to suggest or insist upon consistency in DE faculty use of email and web pages, considering a phased approach; and to consider how sites and features will be maintained. Susan Estes offered the Checklist for Deans from the CSM Faculty Handbook as a resource in developing policies. The role of the colleges' curriculum committees to ensure compliance should be considered, as well. Dr. Luan appointed Madeleine Murphy, Eileen O'Brien, Marilyn Lawrence, Dani Castillo and Judy LaRiviere (Carolyn Fior, alt) to work with Jasmine Witham, et al, on a consistent format for online classes and communication.

SMCCCD Distance Education Plan Draft: Comments and discussion of the DE Plan Draft, which had been posted on the DEAC SharePoint site, were offered by the group.

It was suggested that the plan be separated from supporting data by moving the data charts to the end.

That it be organized as responses to the questions:

What are you going to do?

Why? (the case for increasing DE offerings)

Who will do what (colleges/district):

How will you do it?

How will you pay for it?

Re: what colleges will be responsible for – The plan isn't designed to be prescriptive, so the Colleges have flexibility in developing their own plans to meet the district-wide goals.

Cost considerations should include what is already being done.

Quality concerns and priorities should also be considered:
Should a course be previewed (by deans) with each new iteration?
Policy should ensure that sufficient process is in place to ensure quality of delivery.

Marilyn McBride noted that we need to consider two populations – faculty and students.
What do students need to receive DE classes and services efficiently and effectively?
What do we need to do for faculty to encourage, train and support them in the delivery of online courses.

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It was suggested that DEAC make a statement of what platform(s) we will use, and discourage the use of others. Dr. Luan responded that we should maintain the choice already adopted – that faculty who are developing new online courses will be directed to eCollege; those who intend to use web resources in a more limited manner will be directed to WebACCESS . We should thank those who have developed classes on other platforms, and give a deadline for migration to WebACCESS or eCollege.

The responsibility to review and enforce policies belongs to the Committees on Instruction or subcommittees. (OR) Deans should review modified courses before they are offered (deans may need training).

Budgetary support for DE growth is needed, either through greater allocations or it will come from trade offs between on-campus classes and DE classes.

The District will support common services and tech support issues. The district needs to maintain oversight to prevent duplication of efforts and to foster development of curriculum in areas not covered.

Dr. Luan appointed Kathy Blackwood, and Patty Dilko to assist Dani and him in revising the DE Plan before the next DEAC meeting.

Training for Online Teaching: Two possible schedules for a spring TOT program were presented, using the CCCOne training, Development of an Online Class, in an online format and an onsite intensive format. The group agreed that time would be too short in either case for appropriate notice to and responses from faculty who want to participate. Betty Fleming will develop a summer schedule for the next training program.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35pm.

Submitted by Betty Fleming