El Camino College
Humanities Distance Education Committee
Meeting Minutes Thursday, April 25, 2013

Present: Joy Zhao, chair; Sara Blake; Suzanne Gates , notetaker; Jeff Jung; Lori Medigovich; Laura Welsh

1. <u>DEAC Regular Effective Contract Policy draft</u>. Sara distributed the DEAC Regular Effective Contract Policy draft (attached), and the committee reviewed Title 5, Section 55004, which lists the type of activities through which instructors should establish contact with students. The committee discussed how these activities could be adapted to the online learning environment, and how such activities can promote course student learning outcomes. The committee discussed the need to comply with Title 5 and meet our accreditation standards. The committee also reviewed the following sections of DEAC policy:
   a. Initiated interactions
   b. Frequent and timely interactions
   c. Clear expectations of interactions
2. <u>Online instructor training.</u> Sara announced that ECC is redesigning the required instructor training for those who want to teach online. The committee discussed the new model for course design.
3. <u>Instructional Materials Guidelines.</u> The committee discussed the instructional materials guidelines, with emphasis on the pros and cons of using publisher-prepared programs. The two-year student accessibility guideline was discussed, and the committee agreed that the guideline precludes using some publisher-prepared content, although that content may be of benefit to students.
   a. *Access through Etudes:* The committee discussed the necessity to make Etudes the central course contact, and to have students access outside and publisher-prepared programs through Etudes.
   b. *Electronic texts:* The committee asked for clarification on the last paragraph in the Instructional Materials Guidelines, and additional clarification of page 4. The ECC DE office, and the Chancellor's Office, may be able to clarify.
   c. *Note:* In the subsequent English faculty meeting, McGraw-Hill representative Ashley Longoria announced that student accessibility to their online platform Connect could be extended to two years, to accommodate the ECC two-year requirement.
4. <u>Accountability.</u> The committee asked the following questions, to be discussed at future meetings:
   a. Can online classes be as accountable and as academically rigorous as traditional courses?
   b. How can we authenticate students within our online courses?
   c. How do we mitigate online cheating?

   Sara Blake will distribute the accountability policy at our next DE meeting.

Distance Education – Learning Resources Unit
Document Title: **Regular Effective Contact Policy**
Approved by: DEAC on April 18, 2013
☒ Draft ☐ Final

Title 5, Section 55204

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that:

- Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

- Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

Regular Effective Contact Policy

Establishing and maintaining regular effective contact is not only a Title 5 requirement but also a practice that facilitates student-centered instruction and increases student learning outcomes. All Distance Education courses at El Camino College will implement regular effective contact using methods from each of the three categories below.

A. Initiated Interactions

- Begin class with instructor-guided introductions.
- Design daily or weekly assignments and projects that promote collaboration among students
- Pose questions in the discussion boards which encourage critical thinking skills and promote interaction among all course participants.
- Participate regularly in discussion activities with students. (Providing students with an open-ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor-initiated interaction.)
- Monitor activity meter to ensure that students participate fully and discussions remain on topic.
- Create a specific forum for questions regarding course assignments.
- Ask students for feedback about the course on a regular basis and revise content as needed.
- Include means for varied types of interaction in the course design

B. Frequent & Timely Interactions

- Establish guidelines for frequency of contact that are the same as in the face-to-face classroom; at the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with distance education students
- Declare response time for student questions and assignment feedback (e.g. 24-48 hours)
- Maintain an active presence, particularly during the beginning weeks of a course
- Give frequent and substantive feedback throughout the course

C. Clear Expectations for Interactions

- Specify course policy in the syllabus regarding frequency and timeliness of all contact initiated by the instructor
- Explain course policy regarding student-initiated contact (where to post questions, assignments, etc.) in the syllabus
- Clarify important dates, such as assignment and assessment deadlines, not only in the beginning but also throughout the course

Absences from Interactions

- If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for an unexpected reason (such as illness or a family emergency that takes the instructor offline), notification to students will be made in the announcements area that includes when the students can expect regular effective contact to resume
- If the offline time results in a lengthy absence (i.e., more than three or four days) a substitute instructor should be sought who can assist students while the instructor is unavailable

Tools for Regular Effective Contact

Interaction in the distance education classroom can be instructor-student, student-student, student-content and student-interface. Below are tools that may be used to implement regular effective contact.

- Course Announcements (e.g., videos, weekly summary, weekly review)
- Personalized Feedback
- Discussion Boards (e.g., question and answer forums, VoiceThread)
- Videoconferencing (e.g., Skype, CCC Confer)
- Collaborative Projects (e.g., group blogs, group discussions, wikis)
- Instructor-Created Modules
- Lectures (e.g., recorded, streaming, slides with audio narration)
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- Screencasts
- Virtual Office Hours
- Email
- Private Messaging
- Chat