• Electronic information packets detailing the District's Section 508 policies and resources should be included with any new faculty orientation packet, and should be made available online.

• Create a self-paced, modulated, online Section 508 FLEX class.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Background:

The mission of the Distance Learning Department is: To develop and deliver universally accessible, academically sound, and technologically advanced instruction at a distance, while supporting student success, responding to community needs, and promoting faculty innovation.

The Distance Learning (DL) program began in the Fall of 1987 with the introduction of College by Television (CTV) courses. The first online courses were offered in the spring of 1999. Prior to 2000, the use of virtual classrooms and online teaching at College of the Canyons was limited to a few early adopters. These individuals experienced little or no institutional training opportunities in the use of online teaching tools and in online teaching pedagogy. In 2000 College of the Canyons had 14 approved online courses and had 249 students enrolled in online courses. The District did not offer any student technical support.

Current Environment:

The number of online sections offered increased from 20 to 169 from Fall 2001 to Fall 2008. During that same time, the unduplicated student headcount for these sections increased from 348 to 3,806. Subsequently, as a part of the college's enrollment management strategy in response to reduced state funding, the number of sections declined from 169 to 105 from Fall 2008 to Fall 2010. The unduplicated student headcount for these sections decreased from 3,806 to 2,330.

In Summer 2006, the district created the administrative position of Dean, Distance Learning Programs and Training. This position supervises a number of instructional delivery methods, beyond distance learning. This position's title is currently Dean, Educational Technology, Learning Resources, and Distance Learning.

In Fall 2007, two scheduling formats were introduced as the result of a LEAP project. The formats provide accelerated learning opportunities. The GO format offers 5-week online classes, primarily general education courses. The PAL format offers 8-week, cohort-based pairings of developmental English and math classes.

In December 2007, the classified position of Instructional Design Coordinator was filled. This position supports the successful integration of technology into teaching and learning. The coordinator designs and delivers training for faculty on distance learning applications and teaching strategies; provides technical and pedagogical assistance to faculty in the development and implementation of distance learning and web-enhanced courses; and identifies, develops, and maintains tools necessary to support teaching and learning as technology evolves.

In Summer 2010, this position was reclassified as an administrator, with the title Director of Distance and Accelerated Learning. The focus on training faculty remains, with additional managerial tasks over grants and accelerated learning formats (PACE, PAL).

The Educational Technology Committee was re-founded in Fall 2001. The Educational Technology Committee has proven an important venue for the development of distance learning in the District. Membership is open to all members of the campus community and is currently comprised of faculty, classified staff, and administrators. The Educational Technology Committee is a sub-committee of the Technology Committee, focused on excellence in teaching and learning. The Educational Technology Committee’s mission is to introduce, evaluate, and integrate educational technologies in support of excellence in teaching and learning in all delivery formats.

Beginning in Spring 2006, the TLC has provided learning support to students enrolled in distance learning. For students enrolled in online classes, technical support is available via telephone during the normal operating hours of the TLC; email inquiries may be submitted at any time with staff
Technology and Distance Education asked volunteers to participate in the LMS Review Strike Force: 28 volunteers came forward, including 19 faculty.

The LMS Review Strike Force:
1. Developed a rubric of elements in an LMS that support excellence in teaching and learning
2. Reviewed LMS documentation and demonstrations provided by invited vendors
3. Evaluated sample class shells provided by invited vendors
4. Built courses in sandbox shells provided by invited vendors
5. Accepted input from DSPS Accessibility Coordinator on Section 508 compliance
6. Completed a ranking of LMS choices utilizing a weighted rubric
7. Recommended finalists to the Technology Committee
8. Throughout the process, provided updates on the review process to the Academic Senate, the Educational Technology Committee, the Technology Committee, and the Division Deans.

A final recommendation was made to the Technology Committee at its September 2011 meeting to continue with Blackboard.

Recommendations from the 2006-11 plan:
- Branding and marketing DL *(implemented)*
- DL presence on COC homepage *(implemented)*
- Increase faculty training options/Instructional Designer position *(implemented)*
- Online instructor qualifications *(implemented)*
- Processes and procedures for faculty and students available online *(implemented)*
- Counseling and student support services online *(implemented, then cut)*
- 24/7 student technology / Blackboard support *(awaits funding)*

**Recommendations:**
- **Continue to include reference to the online format in college promotional materials.** Online education continues to be the fastest growing sector of US higher education. The college needs to remain competitive in order to avoid entering a cycle of decline from which it will be difficult to recover. Faculty need to keep their technology and teaching skills sharp, the public needs to know we are active in the market, our course design needs to remain current, and our student services need to remain accessible to online students, in order to avoid having to re-build in a few years when growth returns. In order to do all this, the college should continue to include reference to the online format in promotional materials.

- **Promote the effective use of the Learning Management System.** A current departmental goal is to promote quality instruction and effective student learning in online and hybrid formats. To do so, the department aims to offer workshops and discussions around best practices in online teaching and learning.

- **Develop 24/7 technical assistance for students.** Providing complete student support should include 24/7 student technical assistance. This objective depends on the availability of funding.

- **Employ classified position of Alternate Media Production Specialist.** The District should consider how to encourage and support faculty to integrate the evolving array of multimedia...
delivery options into their courses, ranging from high-quality graphics to webcasting and podcasting. Through the department’s FIPSE OER grant, funding has been available to support a part-time production staff member. This funding will expire in September 2011. The department will seek continued sources of funding. As the production and adoption of media increases, so too will the need for a full-time classified position of Alternate Media Production Specialist.

- License a web conferencing solution that provides long-term archiving. To promote student learning via interaction in online classes, the department will promote increased use of the web conferencing tool CCC Confer. This free application provides a rich array of live interactive tools. However, the limited archive time of 45 days means that instructors need to re-create their presentations each time they offer them. We should consider licensing a web conferencing solution that would provide the college the ability to archive instructional materials for a longer term.

- Develop a strategy for teaching and learning via mobile devices. The rapid growth of mobile technologies is likely to continue. The college needs to develop a strategy for making teaching and learning opportunities available via mobile devices. This should include, but not be limited to, MyCanyons, the College website, and distance learning tools such as our LMS. In addition, we should have the resources in place to cultivate the development of mobile learning applications and/or simulations for students. The functionality built into most smartphones (i.e. camera, video, augmented reality tools, etc.) could expand the level of interaction between the student and his or her learning on the device.

- Continue to Expand and Support the use of online resources in traditional classes to supplement learning. Several faculty utilize online resources in their traditional classes to supplement their regular course materials. A support structure should be put in place to support and encourage further development of those resources in order to supplement the student’s learning experience.

- Reintroduce online counseling. In order to ensure that the college fulfills its mission to provide access to all students, the college should offer online students counseling and student services support similar to that which its on ground students receive. This is also a requirement for accreditation. In the past, online counseling was available. Due to budget constraints, this service has been eliminated. We encourage this service to be reintroduced.

- Explore gaming formats as a means of instructional delivery. The department aims to develop the opportunity for faculty to explore gaming formats as a means to deliver instruction. A growing body of research suggests that game-based learning promotes collaborative learning, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Further, the Horizon Report of 2011 identifies game-based learning as one of the top trends that will emerge in higher education by 2014. What is it?
  - Alternative online delivery method that offers students an opportunity to learn curriculum through role-playing video games
  - Students are introduced to a more open learning format giving them the opportunity to learn at their own pace as they interact with the content in a game simulated environment

What is needed?
- Funding will be sought to support game developers and faculty pilot projects.

**ONLINE SERVICES**

*Background and Current Environment:*

Online Services is the broad description of services offered to the college community in an online format. These services are typically in lieu of or in addition to a traditional face-to-face or paper-based service. In recent years, departments from all disciplines have been making strides in providing online services to all facets of the college community. Providing online services allows end users flexibility and convenience that could not otherwise be achieved through traditional service models. For example, a student can register for classes in the comfort of their own home rather than stand in line at the Admissions and Records office.

Additionally, online services are facilitated through automated programming methods that do not require the same staffing as traditional service models. For example, the online registration services require only a handful of programmers to develop and maintain while registering the same number of students using traditional service models would require many more Admissions and Records staff members.