

**Substantive Change Proposal**

**Approval of Programs and Certificates  
that can be Completed 50 Percent or  
More through Distance Education**

---

**College of the Canyons  
26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd.  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355**

Submitted:

February 4, 2014

Prepared by:

Dr. Jerry Buckley  
Assistant Superintendent/Vice President, Instruction

*Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

## Participant List

The following individuals from College of the Canyons participated in the development of this proposal:

- Jerry Buckley  
*Assistant Superintendent / Vice President, Instruction*
- Ebony Coburn  
*Distance Learning Coordinator*
- James Glapa-Grossklag  
*Dean, Educational Technology, Learning Resources, and Distance Learning*
- Audrey Green  
*Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs*
- John Makevich  
*Director, Distance and Accelerated Learning*
- Denee Pescarmona  
*Dean, Instruction and Support Programs*
- Ryan Theule  
*Dean, Canyon Country Campus*

## Table of Contents

<b>A. Description of and Justification for Proposed Change</b> .....	4
1. Concise Description .....	4
2. Justification and Relationship to Institutional Mission.....	7
3. Rationale for Change .....	8
<b>B. Description of Changes in Delivery Mode for Educational Programs</b> .....	8
<b>C. Description of Planning Process Leading to the Change Request</b> .....	9
<b>D. Evidence of Resources Necessary to Initiate and Support the Change</b> .....	9
<b>E. Evidence that the Institution Has Received Necessary Internal and External Approvals</b> .....	10
<b>F. Evidence that Each Eligibility Requirement Will Be Fulfilled</b> .....	10
1. Authority .....	10
2. Mission.....	10
3. Governing Board.....	11
4. Chief Executive Officer .....	11
5. Administrative Capacity .....	11
6. Operational Status .....	12
7. Degrees .....	12
8. Educational Programs .....	12
9. Academic Credit .....	13
10. Student Learning Outcomes and Achievement.....	13
11. General Education.....	13
12. Academic Freedom Statement.....	13
13. Faculty.....	13
14. Student Services.....	14
15. Admissions.....	14
16. Information and Learning Resources.....	15
17. Financial Resources .....	15
18. Financial Accountability .....	15
19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation.....	16
20. Integrity in Communication with the Public.....	16
21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission .....	17
<b>G. Evidence that Each Accreditation Standard will be Fulfilled</b>	
Standard I.....	17

Standard II.....	17
Standard III .....	18
Standard IV .....	19

## **H. Appendices**

Appendix A: Fact Book of College of the Canyons	
Appendix B: Analysis Alternative Delivery	
Appendix C: Annual Survey of Online Students	
Appendix D: DLA Sample College of the Canyons	
Appendix E: Substantive Change Proposal COC July 2008	
Appendix F: College of the Canyons 2013-2014 Catalog	
Appendix G: Educational and Facilities Master Plan	
Appendix H: Technology Master Plan	
Appendix I: Board Policy 2710	
Appendix J: College of the Canyons Administrative Organizational Chart	
Appendix K: Title 5, Section 55002.5 of the California Code of Regulations	
Appendix L: Attendance Policy Draft	
Appendix M: College of the Canyons Curricunet System	
Appendix N: Sample Career and Technical Education Brochures	
Appendix O: Sample Academic & Administrative Program Review	
Appendix P: Title 5, Section 55061 of the California Code of Regulations	
Appendix Q: Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations	
Appendix R: California State Education Code – Section 70900-70902	
Appendix S: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office	
Appendix T: California Community Colleges Statewide Academic Senate Curriculum Resources	
Appendix U: College of the Canyons Faculty Handbook	
Appendix V: College of the Canyons Faculty Association Contract, page 41	
Appendix W: American Federations of Teachers Contract	
Appendix X: College of the Canyons 2013-2014 Tentative Budget	
Appendix Y: The California Community College System Office (CCCCSO) <i>Sound Fiscal Management Self-Assessment Checklist</i>	
Appendix Z: History of Audit Findings 2001-2002 through 2013-2013	
Appendix AA: College of the Canyons 2012-2018 Strategic Plan	
Appendix AB: College of the Canyons Spring 2014 Schedule of Classes	
Appendix AC: Distance Learning Program Review	

## **A. Description of and Justification for Proposed Change**

### **1. Concise Description**

This proposal for substantive change of programs at College of the Canyons (the College) is being submitted to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) to seek approval to offer the following Associate Degrees and Certificates 50 percent or more in a distance education delivery format:

#### Certificates of Achievement and Specialization

- Accounting Technician Certificate of Achievement
- Accounting (Transfer) Certificate of Achievement
- Marketing Certificate of Achievement
- E-Commerce-Business Certificate of Specialization
- E-Commerce-Technology Certificate of Specialization
- International Trade-Finance Certificate of Specialization
- International Trade-Marketing Certificate of Specialization
- Administrative Assistant Certificate of Achievement
- Medical Office Administrative Assistant Certificate of Specialization
- Website Development Certificate of Specialization
- Network Associate Certificate of Specialization
- Fire Technology Pre-Service Certificate of Achievement
- Water Systems Technology Certificate of Achievement
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management Certificate of Achievement

#### Associate of Science and Associate of Science for Transfer Degrees

- Administrative Assistant (AS)
- Biological Sciences (AS)
- Computer Applications (AS)
- Computer Science (AS)
- Engineering (AS)
- Geology for Transfer (AS-T)
- Administration of Justice (AS)

- Accounting Technician (AS)
- Accounting (Transfer) (AS)
- Marketing (AS)
- Human Resources Management (AS)
- Early Childhood Education (AS)
- Fire Technology In-Service (AS)
- Hotel & Restaurant Management (AS)
- Hotel Management (AS)
- Restaurant Management (AS)
- Mathematics for Transfer (AS)
- Mathematics (AS)
- Real Estate (AS)
- Water Systems Technology (AS)
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (AS)

Associate of Arts and Associate of Arts for Transfer Degrees

- Liberal Studies-Elementary Teaching Prep (AA)
- Art (AA)
- Communication Studies (AA)
- English (AA)
- Geography for Transfer (AA-T)
- History (AA)
- Physical Education-Kinesiology (AA)
- Liberal Arts and Sciences (AA)
- New Media Journalism (AA)
- Sound Arts (AA)
- French (AA)
- Spanish (AA)
- Music-Composition (AA)
- Music-Concert Performance (AA)

- Music-Guitar Performance (AA)
- Music-Jazz Performance (AA)
- Music-Voice Performance (AA)
- Recreation Management (AA)
- Social Science (AA)
- Sociology for Transfer (AA-T)
- Sociology (AA)
- Theatre Arts for Transfer (AA-T)
- Philosophy (AA)
- Theatre (AA)
- Theatre Performance (AA)
- Psychology for Transfer (AA-T)
- Psychology (AA)

## **2. Justification and Relationship to Institutional Mission**

With the increasing diversity and needs of our student population, it is critical that we offer a variety of instructional delivery formats to ensure both access and student success. The offering of courses and programs at a distance is consistent with our Mission Statement, which indicates that we offer an accessible education that provides students with essential academic skills, and that we embrace diversity and promote student engagement (Appendix A). Our district service area spans 367 square miles in the northwest portion of Los Angeles County, including some very remote areas. As such, in order to provide access to education for students in our district who live a significant distance away from our campus sites, it becomes important to provide distance education as a viable delivery format. In addition, our online courses fill at a rate significantly faster than our traditional, face-to-face courses (Appendix B). Further, today's students are expected by the workforce to become technologically-literate. Distance education courses promote student immersion in technology. Also, in our efforts to seek a diverse campus community, distance education courses allow for us to reach out to individuals who may be unable to reach us due to distance, work schedules, family dynamics, or other restrictive reasons.

We also would like to note that student success and retention rates in our online classes are consistently higher than the statewide average for retention and success in both online and face-to-face classes in California Community Colleges. For example, during 2009-2010, the Statewide retention rate was 74 percent for traditional-format classes and 67 percent for online classes. At the College, in fall 2010, full-semester online classes had a retention rate of 88 percent, while short-term online classes showed a retention rate of 91 percent. Similar positive differences are noted in the success rates of our online classes (Appendix B).

### **3. Rationale for Change**

From fall 2005 to fall 2008, the number of online sections offered at the College increased from 14 sections to 167 sections. During that same time period, the unduplicated student headcount for these sections increased from 436 students to 3,942 students. Due to reduced state funding at the time, the number of online sections offered decreased from 167 sections in fall 2008 to 79 sections in fall 2010. Subsequently, as the result of the College's enrollment management strategy and in response to the overall demand for additional access, the number of online sections increased from 79 sections in fall 2010 to 106 sections in fall 2011. The unduplicated headcount for these sections increased from 2,115 students to 2,180 students. The number of online sections offered in fall 2011 mirrored the number of online sections offered in fall 2007 (110 sections). Since 2011, the number of online sections has steadily increased. In fall 2012, there were 133 online sections offered. In fall 2013, this increased to 150 online sections.

The College annually administers the Annual Survey of Online Students (Appendix C). Every year, students indicate a high level of dissatisfaction with the small number and limited variety of online course offerings. Furthermore, our recent Analysis of Alternative Delivery Modes (fall 2011) demonstrated that online classes fill to 97 percent roughly three weeks before the face-to-face equivalent courses fill (Appendix B). For these reasons, we see a high demand for the expansion and continued support of the distance education courses and programs listed in this proposal.



## **B. Description of Changes in Delivery Mode for Educational Programs**

It is important to note that our offering of the aforementioned degrees and certificates in a distance education format is supplementary to our existing offering of these same degrees and certificates in a traditional, face-to-face delivery format. The courses in these programs are approved through the same curriculum approval process as traditional delivery format courses, except that they are supplemented with a Distance Learning Addendum (Appendix D).

Our Distance Learning Addendum ensures that the approved curriculum for courses offered in a distance education format meets the ACCJC Definition of Distance Education, as indicated in the June 2013 Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education. Furthermore, design and instruction within distance education courses comply with the federal and state laws governing accessibility for students needing accommodations.

## **C. Description of Planning Process Leading to the Change Request**

The College has been offering courses in a distance education format for several years. However, per a previous substantive change request (Canyon Country Education Center, submitted 2008), our distance education courses were aligned with programs offered at our Canyon Country Campus (Appendix E). We now plan to offer courses and programs in a distance education format separate from offerings at the Canyon Country Campus.

Because these courses and programs are no different than what was offered before, we anticipate no change to our campus human, technology, nor facilities resources. These resources were investigated in the previous substantive change approval for the Canyon Country Education Center in 2008. Nonetheless, due to an overall increase in the use of technology for both online and face-to-face courses, we added hundreds of computers, a new facility for The Learning Center (TLC), as well as improved wireless access and staff at both the Canyon Country and Valencia campuses. Further, we since have

received full re-accreditation (fall 2008 site visit) with noted commendation for our distance education programs and support.

**D. Evidence of Resources Necessary to Initiate and Support the Change**

As mentioned in the previous section, we anticipate no additional resources as necessary to initiate and support the change. This is because we have already been offering courses and programs in a distance education format in association with our Canyon Country Campus. We now seek to offer programs and courses in a distance education format that bears no dependence on the programs and courses specific to the Canyon Country Campus.

**E. Evidence that the Institution Has Received Necessary Internal and External Approvals**

Internally, all of our courses are approved through our local curriculum committee and new courses are approved by the appropriate state authorities. In order for courses to be approved for distance education at the College, a separate approval of the Distance Learning Addendum must be approved by our curriculum committee (Appendix D). This ensures that the basic requirements for distance education, such as regular and substantive interaction, are specifically referenced in the curriculum approval. (A more complete description of the curriculum process is found below, under Standard II.)

**F. Evidence that Each Eligibility Requirement Will Be Fulfilled**

**1. Authority**

The College has authority to operate as a degree-granting institution due to continuous accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accreditation body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. This authority is noted on the page immediately following the title page of the College of the Canyons Catalog (Appendix F).

## **2. Mission**

As an innovative institution of excellence, the College offers an accessible, enriching education that provides students with essential academic skills and prepares students for transfer education, workforce-skills development, and the attainment of learning outcomes corresponding to their educational goals. To fulfill its mission, the College embraces diversity, fosters technical competencies, supports the development of global responsibility, and engages students and the community in scholarly inquiry, creative partnerships, and the application of knowledge.

The growth of distance learning offerings has been integrated into District planning processes. For example, the 2012-2018 Educational and Facilities Master Plan includes references to distance learning not only in a distinct section describing the Distance Learning Department, but also in areas ranging from Workforce Development to Matriculation to facilities plans for the Canyon Country Campus (Appendix G). The same can be noted for the most recent Technology Master Plan, as well as annual program plans for the Distance Learning Department (Appendices H, AC).

## **3. Governing Board**

A five-member Board of Trustees governs the Santa Clarita Community College District and is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution. The Trustees are elected to the Board for four-year terms. The terms of the Trustees are staggered to provide continuity. The student body elects a Student Trustee who votes on College business (except for closed session issues) in an advisory capacity. The Board holds monthly meetings open to the public with notices and agendas widely posted in advance. The Board dedicates a minimum two meetings each year to workshops related to the college's budget development process and fiscal status.

The Trustees also adhere to a conflict of interest policy (Appendix I). The intent of this policy is to ensure that, if there is a conflict of interest, the interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution.

#### **4. Chief Executive Officer**

The Board selects and appoints the chief executive officer (CEO) of the College. Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook, Chancellor of the Santa Clarita Community College District and President/Superintendent of College of the Canyons, is the CEO, whose primary responsibility is to direct the operations of the District and lead the College. Dr. Van Hook has led the district as its CEO for over 25 years.

#### **5. Administrative Capacity**

The institution has sufficient administrative staff whose experience and qualifications provide the support necessary for the College to carry out its mission and purpose (Appendix J). The senior staff is very stable with minimal turnover. The Chancellor-President has led the College for more than 25 years, the longest of any currently sitting California community college CEO. The Executive Cabinet members, whose average tenure is 10 years, annually provide the Chancellor with staffing plans that evaluate and assess the need for change.

#### **6. Operational Status**

Students are enrolled in a variety of courses that lead to 69 two-year degrees, and 70 certificates of achievement and specializations (Appendix F). Courses and programs prepare students to transfer to public or private four-year colleges and universities, or for employment in career technical education fields, and to participate in internships and upgrade skills related to employment.

#### **7. Degrees**

The majority of the College's course offerings and programs lead to degrees, as described in the College's catalog (Appendix F). As of fall 2012, 71 percent of students were enrolled in transferable courses and 86 percent were enrolled in credit-bearing classes. Degree opportunities and transfer courses are clearly identified in the College catalog. Approval of the substantive change to support programs and courses to be offered in a

distance education format will further expand the number of degree opportunities and certifications that are accessible to our student population.

## **8. Educational Programs**

The College's educational programs are consistent with its Mission Statement, based on recognized fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, and maintain appropriate levels of quality and rigor for the degrees and certificates offered. Basic skills programs in reading, writing and math help students develop the proficiencies necessary to advance to college-level curricula or to qualify for entry-level employment. Those with limited English proficiency may enroll in ESL courses. The College has 57 departments that offer courses and programs serving Career and Technical Education as well as transfer-oriented students. These departments offer 71 associate degrees, 37 certificates of achievement, and 4 noncredit Competency certificates. In 2012-13, the College awarded 847 associate degrees, 549 certificates of achievement, and 228 certificates of specialization. Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees generally require 60 semester units, including 21 units of general education. Certificates of Proficiency require a minimum of 30 units. Skills Certificates require fewer than 18 units of course work.

## **9. Academic Credit**

Academic credit is based on Title 5, Section 55002.5 of the California Code of Regulations (Appendix K).

Attendance in online classes is covered in the draft District Attendance Policy (BP 4233), which is currently being reviewed by the Academic Senate (Appendix L). The following is a relevant excerpt from this policy:

“Academic Engagement in Distance Education– is academically related activities, described in the relevant course outline of record, including, but not limited to regular or substantive interaction between the students and initiated by the faculty through discussion board posts, completed assignments, or electronic conversations with faculty. This does not include passive activity in the course;

e.g. watching a lecture, downloading an assignment, or other non-interactive activities.” (BP 4233 Attendance, Section H.)

## **10. Student Learning Outcomes and Achievement**

The College defines and publishes program student learning outcomes (SLOs) in course outlines, in the College catalog, in occupational brochures, and in instructional planning documents (Appendices M, F, N, O). Program reviews are completed every three years with updates provided annually. The program review process requires that budget requests are aligned with college-wide strategic goals and links planning with budget allocation and augmentation requests. Embedded in the program review are SLO assessment results, analysis of results and plans of action which are used for department goal-setting and budget requests. As a result of interdisciplinary dialog in the Program Review Committee (a sub-committee of the Academic Senate, as of 2012) a new section in the report asks faculty, staff and administrators to identify “New Objectives Related to SLOs as Indicated in Use of Results Section.”

Academic integrity and student authentication are addressed in a number of ways. First, the College endeavors to promote a culture of academic integrity. For example, the College Statement on Academic Integrity applies to all students in all delivery formats. The Distance Learning Department makes available to faculty a host of resources on how to promote academic integrity in online classes. Further, professional development workshops on the topic of promoting academic integrity in the online classroom are a regular feature of professional development (FLEX) week.

On a more practical side, the College subscribes to the plagiarism-detection tool, TurnItIn.com. When students log in to the learning management system (Blackboard), they are met by the following statement, along with a link to the student conduct code: “Through the entry of my username and password I affirm that I am the student who enrolled in this course. Furthermore, I affirm that I understand and agree to follow the regulations regarding academic integrity and the use of student data as described in the

Student Conduct Code that governs student rights and responsibilities. Failure to abide by the regulations may result in disciplinary action up to expulsion from the college.”

Students must use a unique user name (seven-digit ID number) and a password of their own creation. Finally, all classes offered in an online format utilize the learning management system, so that the College can ensure integrity of the online classroom, including student grades and data usage.

## **11. General Education**

General education courses have the required breadth to promote intellectual inquiry. These courses include demonstrated competency in writing and computational skills and serve as an introduction to major areas of knowledge (Appendix P). The quality and rigor of these courses is consistent with the academic standards appropriate to higher education as defined by the College’s Curriculum Committee. The general education component of each program is consistent with standards established in Federal Regulations, State Education Code, the Chancellor’s Office for the California Community Colleges, and as recommended by the Statewide Academic Senate (Appendices Q, R, S, T).

## **12. Academic Freedom Statement**

The institution’s faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general. Regardless of institutional affiliation or sponsorship, the institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. The Academic Senate reviewed and updated the institution’s Academic Freedom Principles and Guidelines Statement in 2013.

## **13. Faculty**

The District has 180 (fall 2013) full-time faculty and 578 adjunct instructors teaching at the College. The names, degrees and years of employment of full-time faculty are listed in the College catalog. The faculty serves approximately 16,333 students by providing them with quality programs in transfer and occupational education and in the mastery of

basic skills and ESL. Faculty responsibilities are stated in the Faculty Handbook and in the contracts between the Santa Clarita Community College District and the College of the Canyons Faculty Association and the American Federation of Teachers (Appendices U, V, W).

#### **14. Student Services**

The College provides appropriate services to students and develops programs that meet the educational support needs of its diverse student population. The College provides services in the following areas: Admissions and Records, Testing Center, Extended Opportunity Programs & Services, Assessment Center, Athletics, Bookstore, Cafeteria, Career Services & Job Placement, Center for Applied Competitive Technologies, Center for Early Childhood Education, Community Education, Cooperative Work Experience, Counseling & Program Advisement, Disabled Students Programs & Services, Distance Education, Employee Training Institute, Extended Opportunities Programs & Services/Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, Financial Aid/Scholarship, Foundation, Honors, High Tech Center, Human Resources, International Students Program, Library, Math, Engineering & Science Achievement, Open Media Lab, Outreach, Performing Arts Center, Progressive Adult College Education, Public Information, Sports Information, Campus Safety, Small Business Development Center, Student Business Office, Student Development, Student Health & Wellness Center, Traffic School, Transfer Center, Tutoring/Learning/Computing Lab, University Center, and Volunteer & Service Learning Center (Appendix F).

The College provides necessary services to students in formats that are accessible to students participating in online classes. The following services are all available online: Admissions and Records (including registration, graduation applications and transcript requests), Bookstore, Counseling & Program Advisement, Financial Aid/Scholarships and Student Business Office (including payment of student fees).

#### **15. Admissions**



The College's admissions policies are consistent with its Mission and conform to parameters outlined in state law and College regulations. They are published in the College catalog, the schedules of classes and on the College's website. To enroll at the College, a student must satisfy the published requirements.

## **16. Information and Learning Resources**

The College provides specific long-term access to information and learning resources and services to support its educational mission. These resources and services are provided for and delivered by many different divisions, departments and centers; but, in general, they primarily are the responsibility of the Library and the Tutoring/Learning/Computing Lab.

Learning resources are primarily delivered by two areas: the Library and The Learning Center (TLC). Access to services in the Library and TLC is available online for students in distance education courses. The College of the Canyons Library provides service to students at two facilities, one on each campus. A staff of 2 full-time faculty librarians, 9 part-time (adjunct faculty) librarians, 3 full-time classified staff, 2 permanent part-time staff, and approximately twenty college assistants and adult hourly staff work to ensure the college community has access to a range of materials and equipment to support learning needs.

Taking into consideration the various formats of materials and the different sites at the College (including both libraries but also materials purchased and catalogued by the Library but held at other campus locations) total items in the collection number 71,452 titles. Circulating books at the Valencia campus library total 48,064 volumes alone. The Library provides access to a range of subscription databases, including multi-disciplinary resources such as Academic Search Premier and ProQuest and discipline-specific resources such as ERIC and MEDLINE. The Library also subscribes to eBook collections, including an academic collection from the vendor, EBSCO, that features full text from over 120,000 titles. The databases and eBooks are accessible from links on the Library website. In addition to its collections and subscriptions, the Library offers online

research guides for use in specific disciplines as well as citation style guides to assist students in documentation of their research.

In order to provide more resources and support for DE students, the Library has expanded its online resources. Additionally, the Library offers chat reference service to provide assistance to students who cannot come in to the physical facilities.

The Learning Center (TLC) provides tutoring to students as well as exam proctoring. TLC offers services at the Valencia campus and the Canyon Country Campus. The staff consists of one full-time administrative director, four full-time classified staff, , eight adjunct faculty members and over 180 college assistant and adult hourly workers.

TLC supports students participating in online classes in a number of ways:

- TLC staff operate the helpdesk for student questions regarding the College's learning management system (Blackboard).
- Online tutoring takes place on Blackboard through a combination of submission of student work for tutor review and live-chat with instructors referring students directly, enabling them to access the service. Time is logged for each session and transferred to the tracking software CI Track. Then students are registered into the online tutoring section number in Datatel. Tutoring takes place only in instances when TLC is open, the tutor is physically present in TLC, and the instructor of record is on-site to supervise.
- Students wishing to take examinations at an alternate location are to locate a proctor and provide TLC with the proctor's information. The proctor fills out and returns an agreement, acknowledging policies and guidelines. Once the form is received back, TLC staff verify the web address given and the proctor's credentials and contact information by going to the institution website and verifying the contact information. The proctor then receives a phone call from TLC staff, and examination details are sent via email to the proctor's official organization email address. Exams are distributed and collected by TLC staff trained as proctors, and the exams are handled by students only when the exams are distributed by a proctor.

- In fall 2012, the College constructed a new TLC of 41,000 square feet (an 800% increase over the previous TLC) and added 10,000 square feet to its Library. Over 200 computers for student usage were added to these facilities.

## **17. Financial Resources**

While most of the financial resources of the District come from the State of California, additional funding is obtained by aggressively seeking federal and private sources to augment the budget. All funds coming to the District are carefully tracked, accounted for and documented (Appendix W). The District maintains adequate reserve levels for contingencies and for expansion and maintains a minimum of six percent ending fund balance. The District strategically accumulates funds in accounts for future needs such as repairs of campus buildings and future retiree health care costs. The District is careful to use one-time dollars to only fund additional one-time expenses. The District maintains conservative financial management policies and practices that ensure continued fiscal stability for the foreseeable future, using an accepted instrument to assess fiscal management each year (Appendix X).

## **18. Financial Accountability**

The College is audited on an annual basis by an independent auditing firm. The firm is selected by evaluating the scope of its experience, the size of the firm and its ability to provide backup personnel and a wide range of expertise. References are carefully evaluated. The auditing firm employs Audits of Colleges and Universities, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The Board of Trustees reviews the audit findings, exceptions, letters to management, and any recommendations made by the contracted auditing firm. Annual audits are conducted for the District, the Foundation, and two General Obligation bonds. The annual audits have been outstanding with no audit exceptions and no material weaknesses identified in 30 audits over six years (Appendix Z).

## **19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

The results of goals, strategies and outcomes of the College's Educational and Facilities Master Plans are reviewed on an annual basis (Appendix G). The College's ongoing planning processes are reflected and documented in many publications such as its Strategic Plan, which includes its Strategic Goals and Accomplishments (as published in two documents), the Educational and Facilities Master Plans, budget development documents, Technology Plan, and annual departmental plans, all of which are updated on regular cycles (Appendix AA, G, X, H, O). The College Planning Team (CPT) reviews these reports and publications, documenting the activities aimed at improving programs and services. The District Educational and Facilities Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and Economic Impact Report are available to the public on the College's website.

The Distance Learning Department completes an annual program review that informs the Educational and Facilities Master Plan and the Technology Master Plan.

The College determines the learning support needs of students participating in Distance Education in a number of ways. First, the College conducts an annual survey of online students. In this survey, students taking online classes are asked to indicate the extent to which they are aware of and have found helpful a variety of student services, ranging from payment of fees and financial aid application to searching for classes and making counseling appointments. Students are also asked to rate their satisfaction with aspects of taking online courses, with, for example, 77 percent of the respondents stating that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of online courses at the College (Appendix C).

Second, the College examines student success in a variety of delivery formats, including Distance Education. For example, in 2012, the College completed a report entitled, *Analysis of Alternative Delivery Modes Fall Terms*. This report examined fourteen questions, including the overall retention and success rates by instructional delivery method, including online and hybrid classes. Further, this report gathers demographic data on students in online classes, including gender, age, and residence distribution inside

and outside the District. This data is used by departments to inform their program planning (Appendix B).

## **20. Integrity in Communication with the Public**

The College displays in writing and practice the model of institutional integrity. The Mission Statement of the College is clearly articulated in the College catalog, on its website, in the Educational and Facilities Master Plans, and on attractive posters placed in visible locations across both campuses and at off campus locations (Appendix F, G). The College catalog, schedules of classes and the website also provide the public with current information on degrees and curricular offerings, bond compliance requirements, student fees, financial aid, refund policies, admissions policies, transfer requirements, hours of operation, and appropriate contact information such as phone numbers and specific webpages where needed (Appendix AB). The College also provides information about College policy and procedures such as how to address grievances and complaints, the College's nondiscrimination policy, as well as academic honesty, information regarding various activities such as College performances, and important deadlines such as late registration and financial aid, distributed by direct mail, email and through several other media. The College works with local media to ensure publication of important dates and activities of interest in various community and media calendars. The names of the Board of Trustees are listed in the catalog and on the website.

## **21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

The Board of Trustees for the Santa Clarita Community College District provides assurance that the College adheres to the eligibility requirements, accreditation standards, and policies of the Commission through the creation and enforcement of its policies.

## **G. Evidence that Each Accreditation Standard will Still be Fulfilled**

The College will hold all courses and all operations in the distance education format to the same standard as those at the main campus in Valencia.

**Standard I:** The Mission Statement, which guides College of the Canyons, applies equally to distance education courses and programs. The mission statement references “accessible” education that “prepares students for transfer education,” and that the institution “embraces diversity.” Courses and programs in a distance education format help to provide greater access to students, better prepare students in a world that requires increasing online work and communication, and promote diversity by reaching out to a student population that may not otherwise seek out an education.

**Standard II:** The curriculum committee approves and reviews course proposals and submits them to the Board of Trustees for ultimate approval. Delivery methods are evaluated for their effectiveness in a number of ways. First, the curriculum committee conducts a separate review of courses that are proposed to be offered in a hybrid or online format (Appendix D). The review process is meant to ensure that a course taught at a distance is taught to the recorded course outline and to ensure quality through regular effective instructor-student contact. Specifically, the curriculum committee examines the distance learning addendum to ensure that:

- Sufficient detail is present to show how the face-to-face delivery is being modified to for distance education. This entails both content and assignments. For example, if the course is typically a lecture course, how will the lecture material be delivered to students? If students typically make in-class presentations, how students do this in the distance education format?
- Instructor-student interaction is present and indicates that the instructor initiates that interaction rather than making students initiate it. Specific examples of ways instructors interact with students are analyzed. If a discussion board is used for interaction, an example of how the discussion will be conducted must be given.
- Methods of evaluation match those in the face-to-face course
- Accessibility is addressed via 508 compliance

Second, the collective bargaining agreements between the District and faculty unions call for regular evaluation of instruction (Appendix V). The contracts specify procedures for both peer evaluation and student evaluation of instructors. A process for deploying

student evaluations in online classes and for peer evaluation of online classes has been in place since 2006.

Third, the College conducts the Annual Survey of Online Students (Appendix C). The survey provides important student data on a variety of areas, ranging from student services to bookstore services to the quality of online courses. Overall, respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with online classes offered at the College. The areas receiving the most satisfaction were the College website (82 percent) the stability of the Blackboard course management system (78 percent), and the overall quality of online courses at the College (77 percent). Significantly, the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am familiar with the student learning outcomes in my course(s)” was 83 percent.

Fourth, the College examines student success in a variety of delivery formats, including distance education. For example, in 2012, the College completed a report entitled, Analysis of Alternative Delivery Modes Fall Terms (Appendix B). This report examined fourteen questions, including the overall retention and success rates by instructional delivery method, including online and hybrid classes. It was found, for example, that for the fall 2007-fall 2011 semesters, course retention, and success rates were higher for face-to-face courses than other delivery formats. Retention rates for all online and face-to-face classes were within 11 percent of each other. Success rates were within 15 percent of each other. Also, the collective bargaining agreement with full-time faculty states that online and hybrid courses should have the same course size as on-ground courses (Appendix V).

**Standard III:** In hiring faculty, the College expects a higher degree of preparation from online faculty than for traditional faculty delivering courses in a traditional, face-to-face format. All faculty must meet the minimum qualifications in their respective disciplines. Online teaching faculty also are required to receive advanced training in online teaching and learning in order to teach in a distance education format. Online faculty undergo the same evaluation procedures as their counterparts teaching in a traditional format.

The technology supporting our distance education courses is sufficient for the consistent and reliable delivery of these courses online. The College maintains the hardware and software needed to support high quality instruction. The technology infrastructure is sound and will also be maintained through systematic review and upgrades as necessary. Our institution uses Blackboard Learn as its learning management system, and supports instruction with tools such as CCCConfer and other asynchronous and synchronous communication tools. All technology used for online classes is accessible to all students, per the requirements of Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other state and federal guidelines and regulations. In addition, distance education is considered and included as a separate section in the District's Technology Master Plan (Appendix H). The College has one full-time staff member in Information Technology dedicated to administration of Blackboard. There is a full-time administrator and full-time staff member in the Distance Learning Department who provide training to faculty on online teaching methods and tools as well as advisement to online students.

**Standard IV:** The College has an Educational Technology Committee with faculty, staff, and administrator representation to address questions, concerns, and goals for distance education at our institution. This group is a subcommittee of the Technology Committee, which is a district-wide collegial consultation committee. Further, faculty representatives on the Educational Technology Committee report back to their divisions. The Committee's mission reads: "The Educational Technology Committee is a subcommittee 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."



## H. Supporting Evidence:

- Appendix A: [Fact Book of College of the Canyons](#)
- Appendix B: [Analysis Alternative Delivery](#)
- Appendix C: [Annual Survey of Online Students](#)
- Appendix D: [DLA Sample College of the Canyons](#)
- Appendix E: [Substantive Change Proposal COC July 2008](#)
- Appendix F: [College of the Canyons 2013-2014 Catalog](#)
- Appendix G: [Educational and Facilities Master Plan](#)
- Appendix H: [Technology Master Plan](#)
- Appendix I: [Board Policy 2710](#)
- Appendix J: [College of the Canyons Administrative Organizational Chart](#)
- Appendix K: [Title 5, Section 55002.5 of the California Code of Regulations](#)
- Appendix L: [Attendance Policy Draft](#)
- Appendix M: [College of the Canyons Curricunet System](#)
- Appendix N: Sample Career and Technical Education [Brochure 1](#), [Brochure 2](#)
- Appendix O: [Sample Academic & Administrative Program Review](#)
- Appendix P: [Title 5, Section 55061 of the California Code of Regulations](#)
- Appendix Q: [Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations](#)
- Appendix R: [California State Education Code – Section 70900-70902](#)
- Appendix S: [California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office](#)
- Appendix T: [California Community Colleges Statewide Academic Senate Curriculum Resources](#)
- Appendix U: [College of the Canyons Faculty Handbook](#)
- Appendix V: [College of the Canyons Faculty Association Contract, page 41](#)
- Appendix W: [American Federations of Teachers Contract](#)
- Appendix X: [College of the Canyons 2013-2014 Tentative Budget](#)
- Appendix Y: [The California Community College System Office \(CCCCSO\) \*Sound Fiscal Management Self-Assessment Checklist\*](#)
- Appendix Z: [History of Audit Findings 2001-2002 through 2013-2013](#)
- Appendix AA: [College of the Canyons 2012-2018 Strategic Plan](#)
- Appendix AB: [College of the Canyons Spring 2014 Schedule of Classes](#)
- Appendix AC: [Distance Learning Program Review](#)