

**Distance Learning – Support Services Review
Spring 2011**

Five Fundamental Questions – 04/20/11

- 1. What are the primary services or outcomes provided by the support service area and what is the impact of those services and outcomes on students and other key stakeholders?**

Primary Services of Distance Learning:

- Work with academic departments on schedule development for both existing and new DL courses.
- Work with College support service areas to provide services and support for DL faculty and students.
- Design, develop and maintain Distance Learning website to provide information for both faculty and students about Distance Learning as well as college resources at ACC.
- Support Distance Testing and Early Intervention for ACC DL faculty and students.
- Report to governmental agencies and SACS requested information about Distance Learning.

- 2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats present that enhance or hinder the unit’s ability to provide those services and meet expected outcomes during the next five years?**

Strengths / Opportunities

- ACC provides a wide variety of DL course offerings with some degrees/certificates being offered at 100% online. Below are FY '10 figures showing the number of DL students, courses and sections.

	student	courses	sections
DIR	502	21	51
HYD	1468	51	75
ITV	2182	82	84
ONL	33721	825	1227
PRN	1112	47	48
TOTAL	38985	1026	1485
DIR	1.29%	1.41%	3.43%
HYD	3.77%	4.97%	5.05%
ITV	5.60%	7.99%	5.66%
ONL	86.50%	80.41%	82.63%
PRN	2.85%	4.58%	3.23%

- DL sections make every semester; very few get cancelled during session review, indicating their popularity with ACC students.

- DL is the second largest campus during the summer (headcount) and is between the second and fourth largest campus during the fall/spring.

Weakness/Threats

- The Distance Learning Office cannot guide/direct the growth of needed courses. Adding existing sections/developing new DL courses is at the purview of the academic departments. The DL Office cannot request specific courses and/or increase the numbers of sections, nor can DL request that specific non-DL courses be developed.
 - While the College provides workshops for teaching (Online) via Distance Learning, it is up to the individual academic department to request and/or require that their instructors go through the technology and pedagogy training. There currently are no college-wide rules and/or guidelines for training faculty who teach via Distance Learning.
 - Not all instructors allow for proctored Distance Testing, which restricts/puts constraints on students living outside the Austin area from taking Distance Learning (Online) Courses.
 - Some DL courses offered do not meet SACS definitions of Distance Education courses; instead fall into the Correspondence Education definition. The College is going to have to address this issue.
 - Making sure the College is aware of and adheres to the SACS requirements for Distance Education and Correspondence Courses.
 - Student lack of preparedness for taking a Distance Learning course either through lack of appropriate information provided by the College, and/or student lack of knowledge in what it takes to succeed in a DL course.
- 3. Using the answers to the first two questions, what improvements to primary services and/or intended outcomes will occur during the next five years?**
- Work with the academic departments to increase the number of specific (needed) DL courses and develop new (requested) DL courses to meet student and community needs. This would also result in increasing the number of degrees and certificates offered 100% via Distance Learning
 - Work with Student Services to ensure that correct, current, and appropriate information and services for taking and succeeding in DL courses are conveyed to the student. Ensure that the College and DL sites have information for DL students to succeed.
 - Work with College departments to ensure that SACS requirements for Distance Education are met. This includes working with the academic departments on training issues for DL faculty.
 - Work with the College administration and faculty in ensuring that all DL students can partake in proctored Distance Testing if the student is outside the Austin/Central Texas area.

4. How will the unit measure the extent to which planned improvements have resulted in better service or intended outcomes for students or other key stakeholders?

- Track the number of new and existing DL courses offered in specific needed disciplines as well as new courses. This also includes tracking the number of degrees and certificates that are offered 100% via Distance Learning.
- Document work with Student Services to get Distance Learning information out to the students and as well as work done on the DL website.
- Work with ACC administrative, academic and support service areas to ensure that ACC meets SACS requirements for Distance Education. This will be documented in the SACS Report that is scheduled for the 2013 site visit.

5. How will the planned improvements align with and contribute to the Mission and Intended Outcomes of Austin Community College?

- As per SACS Policy Statement, the College will have to include Distance Education in its mission statement.
- By working on DL course offerings and support services for DL students, ACC will bring additional education opportunities, not only to the citizens of Central Texas, but to all the state, as well as those ACC students living outside the state.