

2012-13 ANNUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT TO THE CHABOTLAS POSITAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Las Positas College

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INTRODUCTION

The 2012-13 academic year saw the infusion of new money and the introduction of new legislation that has the potential to change not only Distance Education, but also higher education as a whole, in California for years to come. First, the governor released his proposed budget in January that calls for \$16.9 million going to the community colleges to, among other things, create a virtual campus that will increase access to new online courses and allow students taking those classes to earn credits by passing exams. Then two months later, Senate Bill 520 was introduced. This contentious bill called for establishing a statewide platform through which students who have trouble getting into certain lower-division, high-demand classes could take approved online courses offered by the California Community Colleges, California State University System, University of California system, and outside providers. If that bill is passed and signed into law, colleges and universities could be compelled to accept credits earned in Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, that can enroll thousands of students.

The MOOC phenomenon has caught on nationwide, and efforts in California have been particularly innovative. Although these efforts will be explained later in this report, the bulk of the report—as usual—will focus on LPC's Distance Education efforts the past year. And once again, those efforts have been substantial.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

For the third time since 2007, LPC submitted a Substantive Change Proposal to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, seeking approval to offer three degrees and two certificates at a distance. These programs needed accreditation approval because students could complete 50 percent or more of their respective courses online. The 42-page proposal, featuring an appendix with 105 documents of evidence, was approved by the accrediting body on May 9. Prior to that, it was approved by the Distance Education Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Board of Trustees. It included the following programs: Environmental Studies, AA; Humanities, AA; Psychology, AA-T; Sociology, AA-T; Business Workforce Proficiency Career Certificate, and Computer Desktop OS Security Career Certificate.

The total number of degrees approved for Substantive Change is now 15, and the total certificates approved is 18. The proposal, appendix, and approval letter can be found on the college's accreditation website under Substantive Change for Distance Education at http://www.laspositascollege.edu/accreditation.

OTHER ACCREDITATION ISSUES

During the process of completing the Substantive Change Approval, LPC continued its efforts to meet all of the latest accreditation guidelines for Distance Education. Those efforts included:

- Developing Regular Effective Contact Guidelines. According to Title 5, all Distance Education courses, whether they are fully online or hybrid, must demonstrate regular effective contact. For hybrids, this contact is required not only during on-campus meetings, but it is also required during the virtual meetings. The ACCJC has also stated that regular effective contact in all online and hybrid courses is a requirement for accreditation. Furthermore, if there is no such contact, Distance Education courses can be designated correspondence courses during an auditing process, and this can affect the college's ability to provide federal financial aid to students. LPC's Regular Effective Contact Guidelines aims to set forth the "minimum standards of regular effective contact," as stated in the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges. The contact guidelines were approved by the Distance Education Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Academic Senate. They can be found at http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/contact.pdf.
- Integrating Distance Education into the new LPC mission statement. The accreditation guidelines for Distance Education state that colleges need to provide "Evidence of analysis of how the institution's mission statement is developed, approved, and communicated to all stakeholders taking the institution's commitment to distance education and/or correspondence into consideration." To this end, members of the Distance Education Committee participated in post-town meeting breakout sessions October 3 to give input from the Distance Education perspective on the proposed new mission statement. As a result, the glossary of terms that will accompany the new mission— Las Positas College is an inclusive learning-centered institution providing educational opportunities and support for completion of students' transfer, degree, basic skills, career-technical, and retraining goals—contains several references to Distance Education. Furthermore, a representative from the Planning Task Force, which was the group responsible for creating the new mission, acknowledged that Distance Education was considered when crafting the statement. Ample evidence has been collected to meet the ACCJC's guideline.
- Crafting board policies on Distance Education. Two of the accreditation guidelines state that we need: 1) Evidence that the board has taken the quality of the institution's Distance Education/Correspondence Education into consideration in the development of the relevant policies, and 2) Examples of board statements on DE/CE program quality and integrity. Because there are no existing board policies on Distance Education, the LPC Distance Education Committee and the Chabot Committee On Online Learning produced draft policies for the two above needs. Language from those two drafts is expected to be included in a final policy or two that, ultimately, will be presented to the Board of Trustees for ratification.
- Designing a page in CLASS-Web specifically for Distance Education students. This page is intended to address student readiness and integrity, as well as dispelling myths about Distance Education. Students will be asked to acknowledge a series of statements on the page, and District ITS will be able to generate statistics on those answers that can be used as accreditation evidence. LPC's Distance Education Committee and Chabot's Committee On Online Learning worked

ADDITIONAL COLLABORATION WITH CHABOT

Aside from the board policies and CLASS-Web page, LPC's Distance Education Committee collaborated with Chabot's Committee on Online Learning on three others issues: 1) Updating the official Evaluation of Instruction procedures for instructors teaching online for the first time. Those modifications were, ultimately, placed into the faculty contract; 2) Developing the Blackboard Publisher Building Blocks Guidelines, which govern the process in which textbook publishers' software add-ons to Blackboard are managed; and 3) Modifying the automated email students get when they are waitlisted for a class for which they are trying to register. The changes are intended to help Distance Education instructors manage their waitlist situations more efficiently.

DISTANCE ED AND BLACKBOARD STATISTICS

Enrollment in LPC Distance Education courses inched up a bit from 6,914 in 2011-12 to 7,080 in 2012-13. Since the college offered the same number of online sections (188) as the previous year, the slight increase is attributable to the 10 additional DE hybrid sections offered in 2012-13. The 41 DE hybrid sections were the most ever offered by LPC in that modality.

Since LPC uses Blackboard for online, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses (those that enhance on-campus courses), statistics are available for total usage. For the most part, statistics from 2012-13 were very comparable to the previous year. The number of sections using Blackboard rose slightly from 1,081 to 1,091, and enrollments for all sections rose from 31,838 to 32,225. Finally, the number of web-enhanced sections rose ever so slightly (837 to 838).

Distance Education statistics (1999-00 through 2012-13)

	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06
Total sections	44	95	110	135	123	134	132
Total disciplines	12	13	14	17	15	20	26
Enrollment	1,746	2,196	2,571	3,405	3,369	4,366	4,744
WSCH	5,291	5,580	7,236	9,816	10,931	13,288	14,732
FTES	172.2	182.1	240.9	328.6	362.4	437.4	483.4
Online sections	8	65	89	124	123	134	132
Hybrid sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telecourse sections	34	30	21	12	0	0	0
Videoconf. sections	2	0	0	1	0	0	0

	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Total sections	163	171	214	242	233	219	229
Total disciplines	25	26	29	30	31	30	30
Enrollment	4,991	5,669	6,795	7,851	7,119	6,914	7,080
WSCH	16,202	18,253	25,539	25,991	23,606	24,309	24,224
FTES	532.2	602.3	840.7	853.1	774.4	795.1	790.1
Online sections	163	157	176	205	198	188	188
Hybrid sections	0	14	38	37	35	31	41
Telecourse sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Videoconf. sections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Total sections	168	307	383	559	706	1,055	1,195	1,115	1,081	1,091
Enrlmt for total sections	4,426	8,618	11,361	16,094	18,958	26,143	32,295	31,553	31,838	32,225
Online course sections	116**	134	132	163	157	176	205	198	188	188
EnrImt for online course sections	3,338	4,366	4,744	4,991	5,338	6,053	7,105	6,485	6,233	6,335
Hybrid course sections (DE)	0	0	0	0	14	38	37	35	31	41
Enrlmt for hybrid sections (DE)	0	0	0	0	331	742	746	634	681	745
Hybrid course sections (non-DE)***	0	0	0	8	9	14	17	32	25	24
Enrlmt for hybrid sections (non-DE)	0	0	0	158	158	323	486	875	680	677
Web-enhanced sections	52	173	251	388	526	827	930	853	837	838
Enrlmt for web-enhanced sections	1,088	4,252	6,617	10,945	13,131	19,025	23,958	23,559	24,244	24,468

^{*}The CLPCCD began using Blackboard in Summer 2003.

STATEWIDE ISSUES AFFECTING LPC

As mentioned in the Introduction, plenty of changes are in store for higher education in California, and Distance Education will most likely play a starring role. The preliminary plan at the state level seems to be that the 2013-14 academic year will be one of preparation, with new online courses becoming available for the 2014-15 year. The seeds for the prospective changes were sown during the past year. Here is a synopsis of the key events, presented chronologically:

Senate Bills 1052 and 1053 signed

On September 27, 2012, Governor Brown signed Senate Bills 1052 and 1053. SB 1052 established the California Open Education Resources Council (composed of 3 faculty senate members from each of the higher education segments in California), which will determine the 50 most popular courses, then review and approve open source materials before promoting strategies for their use. SB 1053 establishes the California Digital Open Source Library (under the administration of the CSU) to house open source materials and provide free or low-cost online access to these materials for students, faculty and staff. Earlier in the month, SB 1028 was passed. This is an education budget trailer bill that provides for matched funding up to \$10 million.

^{**}Seven online course sections did not use Blackboard.

^{***}Hybrids that do not meet for 51 percent or more at a distance are not reported as DE classes.

Rebooting CA Higher Education Conference occurs

A one-day conference took place January 8, 2013, at UCLA called "Rebooting CA Higher Education: Leveraging innovations in online education to improve cost effectiveness and increase quality". The purpose was to raise the awareness and discuss key issues regarding the potential for online education to lower the costs for, and increase access to, higher education in California. Speaking were representatives from the various innovation movements at universities and educational technology companies (including MOOCs) in the U.S., politicians, and representatives from faculty unions, academic senates, college presidents, and students from the three systems in California.

Governor Proposes Budget

On January 10, Governor Brown released his proposed budget, which called for \$16.9 million to the community colleges "to increase the number of courses available to matriculated undergraduates through the use of technology. The focus should be on the courses that have the highest demand, fill quickly, and are prerequisites for many different degrees. Priority will be given to development of courses that can serve greater numbers of students while providing equal or better learning experiences, but only if those courses are aimed at advanced students who are likely to succeed in these types of courses. This initiative will include three key elements: (1) the creation of a 'virtual campus' to increase statewide student access to 250 new courses delivered through technology, (2) the creation of a single, common, and centralized delivery and support infrastructure for all courses delivered through technology and for all colleges, and (3) the expansion of options for students to access instruction in other environments and earn college credit for demonstrated knowledge and skills through credit by exam."

San Jose State University Pilots MOOCs

On January 15, San Jose State University and MOOC provider Udacity announced an agreement to develop a pilot program that will offer college classes for credit to not only waitlisted SJSU students, but also to high school students, waitlisted California Community Colleges students, members of the armed forces, and veterans. This marked the first time that a broad range of students, not just matriculated students, were given access to online college classes for credit from an accredited university. The three courses in the pilot—Pre-Algebra, College Algebra, and Elementary Statistics—cost students \$150 per course. Enrollment was limited to 100 students per course, with 50 SJSU students and 50 non-SJSU students. SJSU faculty members worked with Udacity to design and create all three classes to include video instruction interspersed with quizzes and other interactive elements. Each course was enriched with support provided by Udacity staff members and course mentors, who tracked, encouraged and monitored students. Mentoring was available via chat rooms, a helpline, instructor-facilitated peer meetings and outreach when a student fell behind and needed more encouragement and support.

Senate Bill 520 introduced

Senate Bill 520 was introduced on March 13, and it called for establishing a statewide platform through which students who have trouble getting into certain lower-divsion, high-demand classes could take approved online courses created within, and outside of, the state's higher-education system. If bill is passed and signed into law, state colleges and universities could be compelled to accept credits earned in MOOCs. Although this bill has been amended

after receiving input from those in higher education in California, it, nevertheless, remains controversial, particularly among faculty and faculty unions.

Mt. San Jacinto College MOOC launched

On May 13, Mt. San Jacinto's MOOC, Crafting an Effective Writer: Tools of the Trade, was launched on the MOOC platform, Coursera, enrolling 35,000 students from around the world. This course, funded by a \$50,000 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant, is believed to be the first MOOC launched by a California Community College. It is a free, non-credit course intended for any student in a basic English class who needs writing help and for students to prepare for their English assessment exam. The course is open-entry, open-exit for any student to jump in and get the information he or she needs. Nine faculty and staff members built the course, and six students provide tutoring support.

FEDERAL ISSUES AFFECTING LPC

State Authorization

In a Dear Colleague letter issued on July 27, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education revealed that it will not enforce the provision of the federal state authorization regulations that mandate that colleges prove they are certified to operate in every state in which they enroll online students. However, the controversy over the regulations raised enough awareness that colleges still need to adhere to the separate state regulations. Therefore, colleges must still seek authorization to enroll out-of-state students into Distance Education classes. That authorization can be costly, and depending on the number of out-of-state students, can cost colleges tens of thousands of dollars annually. Because of that cost, a few national organizations are working together to create a reciprocity agreement that would allow colleges to teach students in other states without seeking authorization and paying fees to those states. An early version of the plan, though, states that colleges will pay fees to a consortium instead, and those fees would be based on total FTES per college, not per Distance Education FTES.

Student Complaint Requirement

The state chancellor's office recommended that all colleges adhere to the stipulation in the state authorization regulations that says: "The institution must also provide its students or prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with its accreditor and with its State approval or licensing entity and any other relevant State official or agency that would appropriately handle a student's complaint." A web page was created and linked to the LPC Online Learning site to meet this requirement. That page is located at http://www.laspositascollege.edu/onlinelearning/complaints.php.

LPC SURVEY RESULTS

Student Survey

The annual DE Student Satisfaction Survey was completed in December, and like every other year, results were positive. When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with different components of online learning, the 318 students who completed the survey were mostly satisfied or very satisfied in all areas. This included the DE program as a whole (75%), overall course quality (76%) and overall course satisfaction (73%).

When asked if they would take another DE course from LPC, 85 percent indicated that they would. Students also indicated (66 percent) that they learned about the same in their DE classes than they would have in an on-campus class. Interestingly, 20 percent said they learned more in their DE classes, and 14 percent said they learned less.

Students also voiced their opinions in the comments section. Positive comments centered on the organization and structure of certain courses and the willingness of specific instructors to respond to student emails promptly, offer help and guidance, and offer encouragement. Negative comments centered on a desire for more interaction, particularly with the instructor. Several students wished the instructor would reply to their queries faster. Some were not happy with the structure of their classes, namely the disorganization of content and the last-minute changes made by instructors. A few students said their classes were unprofessional-looking, with many spelling and grammar errors. Several mentioned that their classes took more time than face-to-face classes. Some thought the time limits for exams were too short. A handful of others mentioned their dislike of Blackboard and Zonemail.

Complete DE Student Satisfaction Survey results can be found at http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/DE_student_survey_Fall 2012_results.pdf.

Faculty Survey

Based on the need to address accreditation and Substantive Change requirements—along with the fact that faculty opinion and needs were a bit overdue—LPC launched a Distance Education Faculty Survey in the Fall. Thirty-seven instructors responded, and among the interesting responses were:

- The main reason they teach in the Distance Education format is to increase flexibility to students who have other commitments (87%). The second most popular reason is to expand student learning opportunities (65%).
- When asked their satisfaction levels with various aspects of the Distance Education at LPC, 89% were either Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Blackboard, 97% with the Distance Education program as a whole, 76% with the student success in their class(es), and 62% with student retention in their class(es).
- Email (92%) and online discussion boards (53%) are, by far, the most common methods by which instructors communicate with students.

Ninety-two percent of instructor would consider using a free or low-cost (non-publisher) textbook or electronic textbook in their course(s). Eighty-four percent of those need to be assured of the quality of the less-expensive text before adopting it.

Complete Faculty Survey results can be found at http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/DE_faculty_survey_results_Fall_2012.pdf.

ONLINE TUTORING

LPC completed the second year of its online tutoring efforts. Student tutors for Writing and Math were trained to provide synchronous tutoring using the CCC Confer platform. Asynchronous tutoring using email was added for both subjects, and additional email help for Writing, called Ask an English Tutor, was implemented by English faculty in the Reading and Writing Center. Student participation in synchronous tutoring was dismal, resulting in discussions to end that service. However, results for Ask an English Tutor were encouraging.

Of the 49 students who participated in the Ask an English Tutor program, 48 finished their courses, and of those who finished, 25 received a grade of A, 17 received B's, 2 received C's, 1 received an F, 3 received a Pass, and 1 received a No Pass. These statistics amount to a 98% retention rate and a 96% success rate. Only 3 of the students responded to a follow-up survey, but all 3 of them gave high marks to their online tutoring experiences.

BLACKBOARD UPDATE

The 2012-13 academic year began with an upgrade to Blackboard version 9.1 Service Pack 7. This version introduced a few new features and enhancements, namely interactive rubrics for grading, auto-submission of timed assessments, and additional assignment activities prepared for grading. In June 2013, the Blackboard system was upgraded to 9.1 Service Pack 9. With this upgrade, faculty can now choose from a variety of themes and structures to modify the design of their courses. They can also automatically re-grade students' exams if they find an error after students have submitted exams, and they can navigate from course to course more easily. As with all upgrades, faculty are offered training on campus and online.

On September 10, 2012, Blackboard switched from a free to a paid version of its Mobile Learn app for mobile devices. Students now pay either \$1.99 for one-year of access to Blackboard or \$5.99 for an unlimited amount of time. The paid app works with iOS and Android devices on all carriers and networks and is available through Apple's App Store and Google Play. Blackboard remains free to use on a computer. It is also free to use in a browser on a mobile device that is not using the app.

SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES

For the third consecutive year, LPC set a milestone in its retention rates among Distance Education students. For the first time in either a fall or spring semester, the retention rate reached 82% in Spring 2013. The previous high mark was 80% achieved during Spring 2012. The 82% also matched the highest for any semester, including summer sessions. Rates for summer students, which, because they involve different variables than for fall or spring students, tend to be higher, so this makes the achievement even more impressive. The 82% retention mark for summer was set in Summer 2012.

The retention and success rates for Fall 2012 were 78% and 60%, respectively, which matched LPC records for a fall semester set in Fall 2011.

Complete rates are below. For comparison purposes, figures for 2011-12 are also provided.

	Sum	mer 2012	F	all 2012	Spring 2013		
	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	
Success	68%	81%	60%	72%	62%	73%	
Retention	82%	89%	78%	86%	82%	88%	

	Sum	mer 2011	Fa	all 2011	Spring 2012		
	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	DE	Non-DE	
Success	64%	78%	60%	72%	63%	72%	
Retention	77%	87%	78%	86%	80%	86%	

DE success and retention rates dating to Fall 1999 can be found at http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/de_rates_charts.pdf.

OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Other achievements during the 2012-13 academic year included:

- The Distance Education Committee made an addition to the Instructor's Withdrawal Options: Distance Education that covers the Summer session. That addition was approved by the Academic Senate.
- The Distance Education Committee co-chairs, Richard Dry and Scott Vigallon, made a presentation to the college on November 7 about the positive aspects of Distance

Education. A video of Mr. Dry's online English students was shown, and the latest success and retention rates, along with student satisfaction survey results, were presented.

- The college's new Program Review Update form was modified to include questions on assessments of student learning outcomes in Distance Education courses and a summary of faculty dialog about the results.
- For the first time at LPC, students can earn a degree (Sociology AA-T) solely online.
 The Computer Network Technology's TCP/IP Network Analysis Career Certificate began offering all six of its courses online the previous academic year.
- During the academic year, 222 instructors used Blackboard to teach either online, hybrid, or web-enhanced courses. Fifty-four instructors taught DE courses.
- Seven new DE courses were launched: Business 77 (Financial and Insurance Procedures for Medical Offices), Computer Information Systems 59C (Web Programming-JavaScript/AJAX), CIS 9001 (Database Management Systems), Early Childhood Development 50 (ECD Principles and Practices), ECD 96 (Work Experience Seminar), Kinesiology 17 (Athletic Training/Sports Medicine), Psychology Counseling 25 (Transition to College).
- CurricUNET was implemented and successfully used to process new Distance Education courses. Thirteen new courses were approved by the Curriculum Committee: CIS 79 (Medical Office Procedures), CIS APM (Advanced Project Management), Psychology 12 (Life Span Psychology), Math 40 (Statistics and Probability), Geology 3L (Historical Geology Lab), Mass Communications 32A (Introduction to Radio Production), Mass Communications 32B (Intermediate Radio Production), Kinesiology 6 (Personal Trainer), ECD 63 (Early Childhood Curriculum), ECD 90 (Practicum-Supervised Experience), English 41 (World Literature: 17th Century to the Present), English 35 (Modern American Literature), and Sociology 13 (Research Methods).
- Three faculty members completed the Online Course Development Program, which trains instructors new to online learning how to design, develop, and teach an online course. Those three are: Kimberly Tomlinson (Religious Studies), Cindy Keune (Math), and Marina Lira (Psychology Counseling).
- Twenty-two faculty members completed the Integrating the Internet Into Instruction (Four I's) program, which trains instructors in Blackboard basics and allows them to use Blackboard to enhance their face-to-face courses. Thirteen of those instructors completed their training online.
- The Teaching and Learning Center continued offering on-campus and live, virtual orientations to students new to Online Learning at the beginning of each semester. These orientations are conducted using the CCC Confer web-conferencing system.

- LPC's Instructional Technology Student Support desk fielded 2,181 inquiries from students. Among this total, 1,159 inquiries were telephone calls, 361 were emails, and 661 were walk-ins.
- LPC continued its participation in the statewide DE Captioning Grant. The grant, administered by College of the Canyons, allows participating colleges to have videos in all courses that use a course management system (Blackboard) captioned by a vendor (RapidText). Captioning work is paid for by the grant. In 2012-13, LPC had 16 videos captioned, bringing its 4-year history to a total of 148.
- The LPC Online Learning home page continued to be one of the most viewed pages on the entire LPC web site. During the academic year, the Online Learning home page amassed 192,830 page views. The mobile version of the Online Learning site had 1,269 page views.

FUTURE TASKS

The 2013-14 year has the potential to be a watershed year in the history of Distance Education at LPC. Of course, this depends on what transpires at the state level concerning legislation, MOOCs, online learning platforms, and money...and the local acceptance of it all. If changes are, in fact, approved and mandated, LPC most likely will spend the next year analyzing those changes and preparing for implementation. The preliminary plan at the state level is for changes to be implemented for the 2014-15 academic year.

LPC will also spend the next year preparing for another Blackboard upgrade. This version will introduce new features and enhancements, including the streamlining of papers submitted through the assignments tool, an improved content editor, and increased social learning capabilities. System administrators at LPC and Chabot, along with District ITS programmers, will need training on a new data integration system rolled out by Blackboard that changes the way student, faculty, and course data is integrated into Blackboard from Banner.

Moreover, LPC will continue striving to meet its existing Distance Education goals and the new goals it set in April. Those new goals are: 1) Promote library resources for Distance Education classes, 2) Increase participation in the student survey for course evaluations, 3) Investigate the offering of MOOCs, and 4) Implement a Class-Web Distance Education acknowledgments page.

The above is in addition to the daily tasks of Distance Education administration, faculty technical and pedagogical training and support, Blackboard system administration, etc.

AND FINALLY...

Since delivering Distance Education to thousands of students is a collective effort, special thanks goes to each of the LPC faculty members, Classified employees, administrators, and District ITS workers who make it happen. In particular, Jeff Sperry, LPC's Instructional Technology Support Specialist who works in the Teaching and Learning Center, has been instrumental with his contributions to the success of the program.

Thank you for your time.

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