



# **2013-2014 Annual Distance Education Report to the CLPCCD Board of Trustees**

***Chabot College***

Report Prepared by:

**Minta Winsor**, *Distance Education Coordinator*

**Lisa Ulibarri**, *Instructional Designer*

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## What Chabot Students Say about Online Learning

(Quotes from Fall 2014 Chabot Students taking an online class.)

"I have the desire to do well but the only way I could possibly attain this goal was to start by taking online courses. I do have a full plate but because I know I am committed to doing my best, online courses are the first-step in moving forward toward my degree. I am actually grateful that there is such a thing as online courses in this day and age because I now have the opportunity to further my education."

"...Without distance learning I wouldn't have much of a chance to complete my goals in a timely manner and support my family the way they deserve to be supported. I know I'm taking on a lot this year, but I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. And with online classes and distance learning they're shining the way!"

"I learned more from my online class than my regular classes. I was able to watch the powerpoints and read on my free time with no distractions. There weren't people around me talking or any friends around me to distract me. There was no cute girl across the room that I have to look at every 5 minutes to admire. I liked the feeling of the online class vs. an actual class."

"I find it difficult to come to a campus all the time for all classes that I am taking due to finding child care all the time and making sure that my kids are dropped-off on time for school and picked up on time. So I prefer the flexibility of online classes to be able to juggle my family and my personal schedules."

"I prefer to take classes online due to the flexibility of distance learning. I can manage my time and work ahead if need be. I can work, attend family and friends functions, travel if deemed necessary and still have time to complete my assignments."



### Introduction

Online/Hybrid Learning offers a way to meet the changing needs of the students in the community, by providing flexible learning options and access to education. The Online Learning staff provide students, faculty, and staff support for online teaching and learning needs including Blackboard and related tools used for teaching online. Working collaboratively with the Committee On Online Learning (COOL), we foster the development of quality online and hybrid courses, as well as encouraging the use of online learning technology in face-to-face classes.

This report provides an overview of the strides and changes in the effort to provide high-quality Distance Education courses as well as support for online learners at Chabot College during the 2013-2014 academic year. The information & updates covered in this report include a detailed summary of Distance Education course offerings (online and hybrid courses), changes and updates with the supported learning management system (Blackboard) and faculty/student support, as well as other projects and resources currently in place or in development. Finally, the report provides current status of federal and state issues affecting Distance Education, as well as ongoing support services to meet the needs of online learning students.

### Distance Education (Online/Hybrid) Course Offerings

During the 2013-2014 year, Chabot College Distance Education courses consisted of fully online courses as well as a blend of hybrid courses (online courses with a varied number of required meetings). These instructor-led courses function through the assistance of technology, primarily through the Blackboard Learning Management System, as well as several other supplementary and supportive technologies.

In Fall 2013, Chabot offered 65 hybrid course sections and 108 online course sections (compared to 55 hybrid and 96 online course sections Fall 2012). In Spring 2014, Chabot offered 64 hybrid courses and 120 online courses (compared to 55 hybrid and 111 online courses Spring 2013). We saw a slight rise in the number of online courses from the 12-13 to 13-14 years due to the ability to add online courses without impacting classroom scheduling. Online & hybrid learning remains a prominent segment of Chabot College, with approximately 15% of all course offerings offered at the college, currently being taught in online or hybrid format.

The prominence of online and hybrid courses also reinforces the need to ensure quality instruction. Therefore, each semester we work with the Faculty Association (FA), evaluators, and the faculty being evaluated to help ensure that evaluations of online/hybrid courses are conducted as dictated in August 2012 in the *MOU: Evaluation of Distance Education Instructional Faculty* (available at <http://www.clpccd.org/HR/documents/FAMOUArticle10F.3.kEvaluationofDistanceEducationInstructional>



Faculty\_000.pdf). As the evaluation of DE courses requires the implementation of the Student Response to Instruction Survey as well as access to the evaluated courses in Blackboard. During the fall semester, 8 courses were evaluated, while 4 courses were evaluated during the spring term.

### **The Blackboard Learning Management System: Usage & Updates**

Since the implementation of Blackboard, Chabot College has continually experienced an increase in the number of Blackboard course site requests by faculty (whether for fully online, hybrid, or as a web-enhancement to regular courses) with each full semester. For Spring 2014, instructors requested the setup of 769 Spring 2014 Blackboard course sites, a 26% increase when compared Spring 2013 (611 sites in Spring 2013). Moreover, for Spring 2014, Blackboard course sites accounted for 62%, a 10% increase as compared to the previous spring (52%) of all course sections offered at the college. The number of courses using Blackboard has continued to increase in recent years.

In January 2014, between the fall and spring semesters, the district-wide Blackboard server (<https://clpccd.blackboard.com>) underwent a minor upgrade from version 9.1 Service Pack 9 to Service Pack 13 (still version 9.1). The new features of this minor upgrade included Accessibility Improvements, as well as enhancements to the Calendar, Content Editor Math Formulas, Course Menu, Discussions, Inline Grading for Assignments, & Retention Center, and new Social Learning Tools, new Test and Survey Options, & new Tool Deployment Options. Faculty were notified of these upcoming changes well in advance, and were provided details, instructions, and videos on each new enhancement and tool, along with the opportunity to “test-drive” the new features within the Blackboard Test Server.

### **Blackboard Mobile**

A frequent topic in both the Committee On Online Learning and the Technology Committee is the increasing number of students and faculty using mobile devices (iPhones/iPads, Kindles, other smart phones and tablets) for online learning and teaching. The Blackboard Mobile Learn App is a mobile device application which provides students and instructors with access to their Blackboard courses and content using their smart phone, iPod, or iPad. While this App is student-centered, faculty are also making use of this mobile capability. They enjoy the convenience of engaging with students in a more convenient method. The popularity of this mobile app has encouraged both the committees to discuss the need for optimizing other web-based campus resources for mobile viewing.

### **Support for Online Learning Students**

We are dedicated to providing support for online & hybrid students place the highest priority on providing comprehensive and prompt assistance, available to any student with internet access at any given time. As providing a high level of appropriate, helpful, and timely support to students is of utmost



priority, most requests are typically answered within a matter of hours. Typically during any given semester, over 300 support requests are submitted by students to Online Learning Student Support by way of an interactive online help form. Such requests include getting assistance with logging into Blackboard, technical issues, as well as instructional support for using Blackboard to complete assignments and tests.

Using the value of peer-to-peer support, we have found that assistance to online/hybrid students is often best met by other experienced online students. Therefore, we also currently employ at least one Student Assistant who serves as an Online Learning Assistant. The Online Learning Assistant is an experienced online student who provides in-person peer guidance to Chabot students taking online/hybrid courses. Students have the option to sit down with the experienced online student where they can receive an orientation to online learning, assistance with logging into Blackboard, navigating the course menu (specific to each course), accessing or modifying their email account for Blackboard, using major Blackboard tools, as well as tips for succeeding in an online course.

While the majority of support needs are addressed online through the Help Form, the intent for this student-assistant position is to provide students an on-campus place to seek advice and coaching for online learning. This is especially intended to assist online/hybrid students with getting started and learning how to succeed in their online and hybrid classes. We've had very positive feedback from students, most remarking that having an experienced peer available to help with online learning questions is an invaluable resource.

In addition to the Online Learning website, the online Help Form, and the Online Learning Assistant available on-campus, we also directly email students enrolled in online or hybrid courses an introductory list of startup resources at the beginning of the term by way of the SARS Call communication system. This "Getting Started" email sent to students also includes information on how to get help with online learning needs and on-campus assistance availability. The email also contains a link to the Online Learning Orientation which is available on-demand via the Online Learning website to best meet the needs (and schedule) of online students. This Online Learning Orientation also includes information for getting starting in an online/hybrid class, using Blackboard, as well as tips for succeeding in an online/hybrid class. In addition to the Online Learning Orientation, many support resources including success tips, guides, along with methods for requesting assistance can be found on the Online Learning website, located at <http://www.chabotcollege.edu/online/>.

The Student Learning Programs and Services section of Accreditation Standard II, states that each institution "assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method." Collaborative efforts continue in striving to make progress in offering students college services in an online environment to provide convenient access to student resources. One such successful effort is in the area of Online



Counseling.

### **Online Counseling Pilot, Spring 2014**

Thanks to the initial efforts by counselor Sadie Ashraf, as well as the District ITS support staff and countless others, Chabot's counseling department implemented an Online Counseling pilot in Spring 2014. The pilot included a new website as well as the implementation of the SARS eAdvising module, which provides students a password-protected system for communicating one-on-one with counselors. With two counselors assigned, a total of 32 students were referred to the eAdvising system during the Spring 2014 semester, with each month showing increased usage. Plans for improvement include implementing the intake form for students, and creating a focus group for feedback. The new service will be included in emails sent out to all students who enroll in online & hybrid courses.

While online counseling services play a key role in increasing access to online services to students, one major need that remains is access to online tutoring services. While there was a pilot to explore possible methods for online tutoring, it remains unavailable to students. We hope to explore cost-effective methods for online tutoring and online learning needs and work collaboratively with those areas in the effort to offer these essential services. As online learning at Chabot is reshaped and developed, we are continually faced with the pressing need to provide access to college services to our online learners.

### **Updates on Instructional Technologies for Online & Hybrid Learning**

As a supplement to learning management systems, Chabot faculty also utilize a number of Blackboard-integrated and web-based programs, including the campus-wide licensed Respondus test converter/publisher, the Blackboard-embedded SafeAssign plagiarism prevention service, and the web conferencing system Blackboard Collaborate.

One change during the 2013-14 year was the discontinuation of EduStream, the state-funded service which provided faculty with access to over 5,000 close-captioned professionally produced videos, as well as a repository for instructor-created media. Fortunately, 3C Media Solutions, a grant-funded media solutions service offered through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, provided a seamless transition for faculty storing media on EduStream to migrate their content over to 3C Media. Established in 1998, 3C Media is an educational media distribution source for video content, podcasts, streaming services, and event coverage for the 112 campuses of the CCC system.

### **Faculty Support & Training**



Throughout the year, faculty express interest in integrating web-based instructional technologies, especially the Blackboard Learning Management System, into their classroom setting as well as developing an online or hybrid course, and therefore submit requests for information, training, and assistance. These inquiries have generally come from the use of our online help form or direct email, which provides a convenient method for instructors to seek assistance at any time. Staffing for Online Learning has continued to operate in a reduced manner with only two positions currently existing: the Distance Education Coordinator (Minta Winsor) and the Instructional Designer (Lisa Ulibarri). Currently, these two staff members are responsible for providing all aspects of support for online learning (Students) and online teaching (Faculty) needs throughout the campus.

During Spring 2014, 250, or 56% of all Chabot instructors (both full-time and part-time) used Blackboard for their courses, a 10% increase when compared to Spring 2013 (205 instructors). And while we provide faculty training on utilizing online methods for online or hybrid courses, we also assist faculty in providing quality online instruction for any Chabot course. Each semester, we see continued growth in the use of Blackboard for non-DE courses.

In addition to faculty using Blackboard for the first time, we also receive support requests from all faculty using Blackboard. Over the course of the 2013 - 2014 year, we received 786 support requests from faculty ranging from technical support issues to instructional assistance such as providing the basic steps for content building. During the Fall 2013 semester, 369 support requests were received and resolved. In Spring 2014, approximately 417 support requests were received and resolved. In our responses to faculty, we strive to provide them with information that they can reference for future need. Therefore, we take pride in providing clear, detailed instructions which often include screenshots or links to other resources.

**Faculty Support Requests Received/Resolved:**

Fall 2013 - 369

Spring 2014 - 417

**New Blackboard Faculty for 2013-2014 year:**

Fall 2013 - 24

Spring 2014 - 12

**Institutional Research: Satisfaction Survey of Chabot Faculty/Staff:**

92% Satisfaction rate of those that used "Online Teaching/Blackboard Support"

In addition to the training occurring year-round, we collaborated with members of the Committee On Online Learning (COOL) on Flex day workshops. Based on feedback provided by faculty during a previous Flex Day session, in the Fall 2013 we offered a roundtable discussion entitled "Effective Strategies for Online Teaching." This session was very well attended and faculty enjoyed the informal





instruction-centered discussion. The fall session inspired a follow-up Show & Tell session for the Spring 2014 Flex Day. As part of the “Show and Tell” session, faculty informally demonstrated and discussed the unique methods they use in their own online courses. Attendees delighted in the opportunity to learn from their colleagues. Faculty provided feedback supporting similar, more informal, show and tell sessions for future Flex Days.

### **The Online Learning Link**

Over the 2013-2014 academic year, we have continued the release of *the Online Learning Link*, a monthly newsletter for Chabot College faculty about Online Learning at the college. Sent to all Chabot faculty, the newsletter has not only provided an efficient means of sharing information with faculty, but it has also served as a great way to focus resources on faculty need. We assess the support requests received each month to determine common topics or themes in the needs of faculty. These specific needs, while also addressed immediately in response to a support request, are also addressed *The Online Learning Link* articles and tips. We’ve found that faculty respond well to this type of informal guidance and enjoy the learning new methods with each edition of the newsletter.

In addition to being sent directly to all Chabot Faculty, *The Online Learning Link* is also sent to Administrators and Administrative Assistants, so that they are able to note the resources available to faculty. Some Administrators choose to re-send this newsletter to their faculty, highlighting what they feel are important resources particular to the needs of their division. We appreciate this effort to distribute and emphasize our newsletter to division faculty.

All published editions of the newsletter can be found at the following link:  
[http://www.chabotcollege.edu/cws/newsletter/default\\_conv.asp](http://www.chabotcollege.edu/cws/newsletter/default_conv.asp) .

### **The Committee On Online Learning (COOL)**

It is the charge of the Committee On Online Learning (COOL) to support faculty in online/hybrid course delivery ventures and development of their online course delivery plan proposals and demonstrations. All faculty who wish to teach a distance education course at Chabot College must first complete the Online Course Approval Process as required. This in-depth process includes background research, obtaining input from colleagues and administrators, explaining student benefits, a description of how the course content will be delivered, the nature of instructor-student and student-student interactions, how student learning will be assessed, how technology will be utilized, how students with disabilities will be accommodated, as well as a demonstration of course content (a requirement of instructors teaching



online for the first time).

The Online Course Approval Process is discussed at length in the Committee On Online Learning (COOL) meetings as the committee is responsible for reviewing both proposals and course demonstrations to ensure quality of our online classes. While this kind of involvement in the process is very time-consuming for each member of the COOL, along with the Online Learning staff, it ensures that we maintain a high-standard for our online classes and meet the learning needs of our students. A detailed overview of the Chabot Online Course Approval process is available at <http://www.chabotcollege.edu/cool/process/>.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the COOL (co-chaired by Business Instructor Wanda Wong and Distance Education Coordinator Minta Winsor) reviewed and facilitated a total of 21 proposals for 34 courses: 27 fully online courses & 7 hybrid courses (online courses with on-campus meetings) through the online course approval process. The process was streamlined due to an updated & paperless Online/Hybrid Course Proposal Form as well as a new Online/Hybrid Course Demonstration Review Checklist form, to ensure actual courses are on the right track for meeting best practices for online teaching & learning. Part of this new demonstration process included the shift to an online demonstration, so that the committee members could get an accurate student-view of the course. The committee found that this helped them to look critically at the course structure and offer helpful advice to the instructor prior to the course “going live” with students. The committee also developed Suggested Schedule Notes for Online & Hybrid Courses, as a suggestion for providing more consistent & current information for each online & hybrid course listing in the class schedule .

Below is the complete list of the proposals reviewed over the 2013-2014 academic year:

### Online Courses:

- Biology 25, Jennifer Lange
- Business 3, Nazjit Bhangal
- Computer Application Systems 50, Jane Wong
- Computer Application Systems 88A, Jane Wong
- Computer Networking Technology 67-77, John Gonder
- Computer Networking Technology 84-85, Wayne Phillips
- Geography 1, Donald Plondke
- Kinesiology 10, Kyle Robinson
- Kinesiology 14, Kyle Robinson
- Music Lit, Theory and Music 3, Victoria Lington
- Political Science 1, Sara Parker
- Psychology-Counseling 10, Laura Alarcon
- Psychology-Counseling 2, Laura Alarcon
- Sociology 1, Christina Mendoza



### Hybrid Courses (online courses with required on-campus meetings):

- Business 7, Norberto Ruiz
- Business 11, Gulnora Zakirova
- Computer Networking Technology 62A/B, Wayne Phillips, John Gonder
- Communication Studies 1, Christine Warda
- Kinesiology 21, Ken Grace
- Math 43, Matt Davis
- Math 53, Matt Davis

In addition to online & hybrid course proposal review (and demonstrations), the COOL discussed a wide variety of issues impacting Online Learning in the 2013-2014 year:

- Statewide issues impacting DE
- Use of Mobile devices for Online Learning
- Wait List emails and documentation
- CLASS-Web page to inform students after they register in an online/hybrid class
- Instructional technologies to enhance online learning
- Online course evaluations
- Blackboard upgrades and features
- Flex Day sessions for online/hybrid faculty

Detailed minutes of the COOL for the 2013-2014 year can be found at the following link:

[http://www.chabotcollege.edu/cool/meetings/201314/.](http://www.chabotcollege.edu/cool/meetings/201314/)

Near the end of the Spring 2014, Wanda Wong (Business Instructor) and Minta Winsor (Distance Education Coordinator) were elected to a second term as Co-Chairs for the 2014-2015 year. Ongoing committee goals intended for the 2014-2015 year include clarifying schedule information for students. While we continuously try to provide clear and adequate information to our online students, there are several areas that could be improved upon in regards to the clarity of course information. Other COOL goals include exploring and demonstrating effective tools and teaching strategies to enhance student learning in online and hybrid courses, streamlining committee processes using technology, and working towards ensuring that the college is providing equivalent online access to services.

### State & Federal Issues Impacting Distance Education

There are several state and federal issues currently impacting or having the potential to impact Distance Education at Chabot College, many of which are already addressed by current policies and practices



and/or are currently being addressed by way of accreditation requirements. Current Statewide and Federal issues relating to DE include:

- Online Instructional Materials Fee and Open Educational Resources
- State Authorization
- Last Day of Attendance
- Student Authentication
- Regular Effective Contact
- Online Education Initiative (OEI)

While obtaining the most recent updates by way of monthly webinars as provided by the Dean of Academic Affairs of the state Chancellor's Office, we will continue to work collaboratively with Las Positas College's (LPC's) online learning support staff, LPC's Distance Education Committee, the Committee On Online Learning (COOL), and ITS to meet the regulations, standards, and guidelines. As part of working collaboratively, we hold monthly calls with the Las Positas DE Coordinator and the faculty co-chairs of both the Chabot COOL and LPC's DE Committee. These calls cover a variety of topics including any Learning Management System needs, state regulations, new policies, and any district-wide issues concerning online learning.

## Accreditation

In July of 2013, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) released its latest edition of the *Substantive Change Manual*, which included key changes such as general modality approval for distance education, changes to off-campus location categories, and changes to the review process for standalone locations & branch campuses. Prior to the 2013 edition, the 2012 edition included several more accreditation requirements for Distance Education. Just a few of the requirements added to the 2012 version included demonstrating evidence of the inclusion of Distance Education in college/district policies in terms of quality and integrity, regular effective contact, authentication, and student readiness. A more comprehensive guide to accreditation requirements for DE can be found in the *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, also published by the ACCJC.

Two of the ACCJC DE guidelines state that we must have:

1. Evidence that the board has taken the quality of the institution's DE into consideration in the development of the relevant policies
2. Examples of board statements on DE program quality and integrity.



As district-wide policies impact both Chabot and LPC, Chabot's COOL and LPC's Distance Education committee worked collaboratively in producing draft policies for DE, put forward as "Distance Education Quality," and "Distance Education - Authentication and Verification of Student Identity." Both policies were approved by the Board of Trustees in the Spring of 2014.

The policy on DE quality states that DE in the District will include attributes such as instructional quality standards, comparable student support services, regular effective contact between instructor and students, adherence to Title 5 regulations, adherence to the CCCC's DE guidelines, faculty oversight of curriculum issues, evaluation of instruction, instructor & student access to training and support, student adherence to the academic honesty statements, adherence to the CCCC's DE Accessibility Guidelines, and adherence to federal copyright law .

The policy on authentication and verification includes reference to the secure web-based student verification processes which have already been in place for various district-wide systems for a number of years, but also reiterates who students must be made aware of and comply with college and district regulations related to authentication & academic honesty. In addition, the policy advises faculty to include a statement on academic integrity and employ various instructional strategies and technologies to promote student verification of student identity.

In attempt to meet the requirements of addressing student readiness and ensuring that that students are made aware of college and district regulations related to authentication & academic honesty, Chabot's COOL and LPC's DE Committee worked collaboratively with District ITS to create a new page in CLASS-Web specific to DE. Implemented in the late fall 2013 for the Spring 2014 registration period, students enrolling in an online or hybrid course is presented with a page titled "Student Acknowledgement of Requirements for Online & Hybrid Courses" and be asked to acknowledge a list of statements referencing computer readiness & course expectations, student authentication, as well as the District's Student Conduct and Due Process policy.

As new information is presented, we will continue to work with our Chabot colleagues and LPC's DE Committee to ensure that we meet accreditation mandates for DE.

## Conclusion & Future Plans

As displayed in the student quotes at the beginning of the report, Online Learning is essential to the academic progress of Chabot students. In many cases, our students could not otherwise attend college if they did not have access to education online. Online Learning has continued to be in high demand from students and steadily represents approximately 15% of the overall sections at Chabot College each semester.



There are a number of projects that are planned for the 2014-2015 year to benefit online learners. Working in conjunction with the Committee On Online Learning (COOL), we plan to continue clarifying online & hybrid course information within the course schedule, along with providing clear definitions of an online and a hybrid course. In this effort, there are also several campus policies that we would like to make more clear for online learners. Also in conjunction with the COOL, we also plan to continue strengthening and streamlining the Online/Hybrid Course Proposal process, including the transition of paper-based processes to online processes, and revising the timeline to better meet the needs of course development.

We also strive to ensure that equivalent services are available to online students, including the updating of our online, self-paced Orientation to Online Learning. As we have witnessed with the Online Counseling Pilot that was implemented during Spring 2014, efforts to provide online services to students takes the cooperation of the entire campus as it involves students service areas such as Counseling, Tutoring, and Admissions & Records.

Along with the improvements to assist online students, we hope to provide online faculty with opportunities to share successful teaching strategies for online learning. This kind of community amongst online faculty is currently present through the Committee On Online Learning. However, we'd like to provide opportunities for the online and hybrid faculty as a whole to discuss issues, share ideas, and have a sense of community to foster innovation in online learning.

It is through continued research, dedication, innovation and a creative thinking that we can continue to fully support the changing dynamics of online learning.

We sincerely appreciate your time and attention to learning more about the state of Distance Education at Chabot College.

Thank you,

Minta Winsor, *Distance Education Coordinator*

Lisa Ulibarri, *Instructional Designer*