



# 2008-09 ANNUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT TO THE CLPCCD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

*Las Positas College*

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Nov. 17, 2009



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## INTRODUCTION

For most of the past decade, the growth and success of the LPC Distance Education program can be attributed to the hard work of faculty and staff, along with the ardent support of the administration. However, building the breadth and depth of the program was accomplished without the benefit of a formal, institutionalized plan. That changed in May 2008 when the LPC Distance Education Strategic Plan was approved. The plan was put into motion at the outset of the 2008-09 academic year, and during that time, the college's Distance Education Committee began addressing the plan's goals and outcomes, as well as tackling other important issues that invariably arise in the ever-changing field of online learning. This report summarizes the key accomplishments over the past year.

## DISTANCE ED STRATEGIC PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The highlight of the strategic plan's implementation was the development of a program to provide students with additional online course opportunities that satisfy both AA General Education and IGETC requirements. This met the plan's goal to "Expand the variety of Distance Education course offerings to meet the needs of students". Working collaboratively with Academic Services, LPC's DE Committee set forth criteria from which faculty would be selected into the Online Course Development Program and receive stipends for training and developing a course. Six instructors were accepted into the OCDP: Robin Roy (Psyc 3), John Ruys (Psyc 2), Tom Orf (Geog 1), Steven Bundy (Psyc 4), Karen Oeh – adjunct (Anth 1) and Kathleen Corbett – adjunct (Soc 4). Their courses will begin being offered in Fall 2009.

Another of the plan's goals is to "Provide DE students with access to support services required to successfully complete their educational goals". During Spring 2009, Steven Bundy and fellow counselor Stephanie Foley began researching best practices of providing intervention services to at-risk online students. Stephanie also worked with two instructor volunteers to do some preliminary outreach in order to develop a solid plan for the Fall when this will be implemented in earnest. Richard Dry and Lisa Everett volunteered for their online courses, English 1A and Nutrition 1, respectively.

Also in the student support arena, the college will pilot electronic portfolios in the Fall. These ePortfolios offer students the ability to collect and post evidence (written papers, presentations, projects, etc.) to the web in order to create a record of what they have learned. Students can also use ePortfolios to show potential employers, and faculty can use them to assess student work. Faculty member Jim Gioia will be working with Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator Scott Vigallon to launch these ePortfolios with Jim's students. Jim's class is not a DE class, but if the pilot is successful, DE instructors would have the option of also using ePortfolios as a method for measuring student outcomes.

The DE Committee addressed the plan's goal to "Establish training requirements for faculty learning to design online and hybrid courses for the first time". The committee understood that anything mandatory would have to be negotiated into the faculty contract, but it was able to get the Academic Senate to approve the following statement: "Whereas Blackboard is such an integral part of our education, all faculty who use it need proper training, including training in copyright and accessibility issues". The approved language was inserted into the

LPC Online Learning Faculty Handbook and on the Four I's (Blackboard training) web page on the Innovation Center web site.

The DE Strategic Plan can be found on the college's Intranet site (accessible on-campus only) at [http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/de\\_strategic\\_plan-final.pdf](http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/de_strategic_plan-final.pdf).

## DISTANCE ED DROPPING LANGUAGE

The LPC DE Committee, realizing that many procedures and guidelines are centered around face-to-face instruction, set about recommending commensurate language for online students. One of those areas was the Instructor's Withdrawal Option. Working closely with Chabot's DE Committee, the LPC committee developed language on dropping DE students that was approved by the Senate and by the college administration. The new language says: "The instructor may drop students who miss the first meeting of a course. The first meeting of online or hybrid Distance Education courses is the first day of the class as specified in the class schedule listing. For these courses, instructors may drop students who do not login to their Blackboard course and/or complete indicated activities by the third day of classes." This language was inserted into several places on the Online Learning web site. It is also supposed to be inserted into the college catalog.

## DISTANCE ED AND BLACKBOARD STATISTICS

For yet another year, enrollment in DE courses increased. During 2008-09, enrollments were 6,795 in 214 sections, compared to 5,669 in 171 sections the previous year. In terms of FTES, DE courses generated 840.70 FTES, an increase of 238.39 from 2007-08. Of the 214 DE sections, 38 were DE hybrids (51 percent or more online) and 14 were non-DE hybrids (51 percent or more face-to-face).

Once again, the most dramatic increase came in the number of sections and enrollments in web-enhanced courses (those face-to-face courses using the Blackboard course management system as a supplement). The number of sections jumped from 526 to 827 over the previous year, and the number of enrollments increased from 13,131 to 19,025.

Combining online, hybrid and web-enhanced figures, LPC offered 1,055 sections that used Blackboard with 26,143 enrollments in 2008-09. In addition, 164 instructors used Blackboard during the year, 55 more than the previous year.

*Distance Education statistics (1999-00 through 2008-09)*

|                        | 1999-00 | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total course sections  | 44      | 95      | 110     | 135     | 123     | 134     | 132     | 163     | 171     | 214     |
| Total disciplines      | 12      | 13      | 14      | 17      | 15      | 20      | 26      | 25      | 26      | 29      |
| Enrollment             | 1,746   | 2,196   | 2,571   | 3,405   | 3,369   | 4,366   | 4,744   | 4,991   | 5,669   | 6,795   |
| Online course sections | 8       | 65      | 89      | 124     | 123     | 134     | 132     | 163     | 157     | 176     |
| Hybrid course sections | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 14      | 38      |
| Telecourse sections    | 34      | 30      | 21      | 12      | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Videoconf. sections    | 2       | 0       | 0       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       |

*Blackboard usage statistics (2003-04 through 2008-09)\**

|   | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total sections                          | 168     | 307     | 383     | 559     | 706     | 1,055   |
| Enrollment for total sections           | 4,426   | 8,618   | 11,361  | 16,094  | 18,958  | 26,143  |
| Online course sections                  | 116**   | 134     | 132     | 163     | 157     | 176     |
| Enrollment for online course sections   | 3,338   | 4,366   | 4,744   | 4,991   | 5,338   | 6,053   |
| Hybrid course sections (DE)             | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 14      | 38      |
| Enrollment for hybrid sections (DE)     | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 331     | 742     |
| Hybrid course sections (non-DE)***      | 0       | 0       | 0       | 8       | 9       | 14      |
| Enrollment for hybrid sections (non-DE) | 0       | 0       | 0       | 158     | 158     | 323     |
| Web-enhanced sections                   | 52      | 173     | 251     | 388     | 526     | 827     |
| Enrollment for web-enhanced sections    | 1,088   | 4,252   | 6,617   | 10,945  | 13,131  | 19,025  |

\*The CLPCCD began using Blackboard in Summer 2003.

\*\*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.

## DISTANCE ED DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

In addition to being able to complete General Education requirements at a distance, students are being offered increasing opportunities to earn degrees and certificates via DE. By the end of the Spring 2009 semester, LPC offered five degrees that had at least 50 percent of their courses taught as DE: AA – Business Administration (Transfer Prep), AA – Business Entrepreneurship, AA – Computer Information Systems, AA – Marketing, and AS – Business. A handful of other degrees are approaching the 50 percent threshold.

Also, by the end of the Spring 2009 semester, LPC offered seven certificates that had at least 50 percent of their courses taught as DE: Business: Administrative Assistant, Business: Bookkeeping, Business: Business Entrepreneurship, Business: Retail Management, Computer Information Systems: Computer Applications Software (Microcomputers), Computer Networking Technology: Network and Wireless Security, CNT: TCP/IP Network Analysis.

## MOVING TOWARDS BLACKBOARD 9

Toward the end of the 2008-09 academic year, the DE committees at LPC and Chabot, along with District ITS, agreed that the Blackboard server should be upgraded to version 9 from the present 7.3 in time for Summer 2010 classes. In terms of new features and usability, this upgrade will represent the biggest change to the district's Blackboard system since the license to use the online, virtual classroom platform was purchased earlier this decade. Blackboard 9 introduces interactive Web 2.0 tools like blogs and journals, and it also features an improved navigational system, in addition to a whole new look and feel.

To prepare LPC faculty for this significant change, workshops will be held during the Fall and Spring that will provide both overviews of Blackboard 9 and instruction on new tools and features. Faculty will also have the opportunity to learn at their leisure by using online tutorials and testing the functions in an actual course. Student online and on-campus orientations will be updated so students will also feel comfortable with Blackboard 9.

## LPC STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

In late Spring, students were asked to participate in the State Chancellor's Office annual Distance Education Student Satisfaction survey. Based on responses to the statement "I would take another DE course from this community college," LPC students appear to be satisfied with online instruction. Of the 300 students who responded, 83 percent answered "Agree", while only 8 percent answered "Disagree". Nine percent had no opinion.

As in previous years' survey, students responded, generally, that their learning experiences in online courses are not significantly different than their learning experiences in on-campus courses. For example, when asked if their DE course demanded more, less, or the same amount of time for lessons, activities, and homework, 47 percent replied that the DE course

demanded the same amount of time (interestingly, 42 percent said the DE course demanded more time). Similar questions (and answer choices) revealed the same pattern: 44 percent replied that the method of instruction made the course as interesting as an on-campus course; 41 percent replied that the method of instruction made the course material as understandable; and 46 percent replied that they learned about the same in their DE course(s) as they would have learned in their on-campus class(es). Others answers to the latter three statements were fairly evenly split between More or Less.

However, for the most part, students do not feel that they receive the same level of interaction online as they do in an on-campus class. Fifty-eight percent reported that they interacted less with their DE instructor than they normally would with a classroom instructor. Also, 55 percent said they had less course-related interaction with other students in their DE class than they normally would in an on-campus classroom.

Complete survey results can be found on the LPC Intranet (on-campus only) at [http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/Sp09\\_student\\_survey\\_results.pdf](http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/Sp09_student_survey_results.pdf).

Another important survey conducted this past year was a measurement of the Program Outcomes for DE. These outcomes were written as part of the DE Strategic Plan and are intended to identify the skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participation in the DE program at LPC. Students were asked to assess their skills in four areas: communication techniques online with instructors and classmates, basic skills within course management system software, basic technology skills, and successful online study strategies. The results showed that students are meeting the program outcomes. A copy of those results can be accessed via the LPC Intranet at: [http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/DE\\_outcomes\\_Fall\\_2008-Results.pdf](http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/DE_outcomes_Fall_2008-Results.pdf).

## STATEWIDE DISTANCE ED EFFORTS

In August 2008, the Chancellor's Office for the California Community Colleges released its updated Distance Education Guidelines, which interpret the Title 5 laws governing DE. The guidelines, which explain new attendance accounting procedures for DE courses and introduce separate course approval for hybrids, were prepared by the State Chancellor's Office and the Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC). Scott Vigallon of Las Positas is a member of ETAC. The guidelines can be found at [http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/de\\_guidelines\\_8-14-08.pdf](http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/de_guidelines_8-14-08.pdf).

Through his work on ETAC, Scott was invited to join the Chancellor's Office Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines Task Force, representing statewide DE coordinators. In Spring 2009, the task force began updating the accessibility guidelines for students with disabilities, which have been in effect since 1999. The updated guidelines are scheduled to be released during the 2009-10 academic year.

Also in the area of web accessibility, LPC was among a handful of colleges chosen for a site visit as part of the State Chancellor's Office study on accessibility in online courses. Consultants working with the State Chancellor's Office visited LPC on Nov. 13 to learn how, among other things, we ensure that online courses are accessible. The consultants interviewed a disabled student who took an online course and later interviewed Jane McCoy, who teaches three online courses. They also spoke with Jim Gioia and Karen Zeigler from DSPS, along with Scott and Jeff Sperry from the Innovation Center.

The results of the consultants' site visits were two reports: 1) Needs Assessment of DE in the CCCs, Part 1, and 2) Needs Assessment of DE in the CCCs, Part 2 – Costs and Promising Practices Associated with Making DE Courses Accessible. The two reports can be accessed via the LPC Intranet at [http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/important\\_docs.php](http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/important_docs.php).

## ANTI-PLAGIARISM EDUCATION

In an attempt to remediate DE and non-DE students whose plagiarism cases get escalated to the dean level, an online Plagiarism Traffic School was created. Offending students will be inputted into the course, which is located in Blackboard, and they will have to view three presentations, complete one tutorial, and pass four short quizzes and one "final exam." The course focuses on academic honesty and proper citations, and it provides strategies for writing papers. It was planned by the LPC Plagiarism Task Force, with the following people contributing to its design: English instructor Karin Spirn, Librarian Tina Inzerilla, Librarian Cheryl Warren, Dean of Student Services Jeff Baker, Jeff Sperry, and Scott Vigallon. Scott developed the course in Blackboard.

To help ensure that students fully understand plagiarism before they begin writing papers for their classes, the Plagiarism Task Force also developed a lesson on it that is available to all instructors using Blackboard. The lesson consists of the Library's "You Quote It, You Cite It!" tutorial and an accompanying 10-question quiz written by Tina Inzerilla.

## OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

You can easily change the formatting of selected text in the document text by choosing a look for the selected text from the Quick Styles gallery on the Home tab. You can also format text directly by using the other controls on the Home tab. Most controls offer a choice of using the look from the current theme or using a format that you specify directly.

- Eight new DE courses were launched: Computer Information Systems 55B (Advanced Microsoft Office Skills), Computer Networking Technology 7301 (VoIP: Cisco and Asterisk), CNT 7401 (Intro to Linux/UNIX, Linux+), CNT 7501 (WhiteHat Hacker Testing), CNT 7502 (Wireshark, TCP/IP Analysis AND), ECD 53 (Child health/Safety/Nutrition), Library 8 (Intro to Library Research), and Marketing 60 (Retail Store Management).

- Ten faculty members completed the Online Course Development Program, which trains instructors new to online learning how to design, develop, and teach an online course. Three completed the training online, while the others completed it in face-to-face workshops.
- Forty-eight 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. Twelve of those instructors completed their training online.
- Working collaboratively with Chabot, the LPC instructional technology staff created the DE content on the Blackboard page of The Zone. This page gives students access to Blackboard courses and announcements, and other DE services and information.
- Working collaboratively with LPC and Chabot, District ITS created a new Blackboard course request form that allows faculty to request Blackboard courses directly from within CLASS-Web.
- Again, working with both colleges, District ITS inputted hyperlinks into the course notes of DE courses in CLASS-Web, allowing students to quickly access information about Online Learning in general and information about each course specifically.
- The LPC Online Learning home page was the second-most visited page on the entire LPC web site, behind only the college's home page. During the academic year, the Online Learning home page was visited 401,767 times, according to our web site tracking software.
- LPC's Instructional Technology Student Support desk fielded 3,380 inquiries from students. Among this total, 1,636 inquiries were telephone calls, 1,176 were emails, and 568 were walk-ins. Incidentally, the student support page on the Online Learning web site was visited 9,524 times. Support inquiries spiked at the beginning of the Spring 2009 term when the district implemented its new email system – called Zonemail – for students. The effect on DE students was that the email addresses they previously used in Blackboard were changed to Zonemail addresses. Despite district-wide efforts to mitigate any confusion prior to the start of the term, confusion was, nonetheless, quite evident.
- Toward the end of Spring 2009, District ITS, working with the colleges, gave students the ability to change their Blackboard email addresses in CLASS-Web from the default Zonemail addresses to an address of their choosing.
- In January 2009, the Innovation Center, which is the hub of instructional technology activity at LPC, and the DE program began reporting to the Vice President of Academic Services. Previously, the Innovation Center and DE reported to the Dean of Business, Computing, and Applied Technology.

## SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES

The success and retention rates among LPC DE Education students in 2008-09 were comparable to the previous year when they hit their peak. The biggest improvement was seen in Fall 2008 students who succeeded at a rate of 57 percent and who were retained at a rate of 75 percent – the highest such rates for Fall students this decade. In fact, the 75 percent retention rate was four points higher than Fall 2007 and eight points higher than Fall 2006.

Still, like most community colleges in California, Las Positas has seen lower success and retention rates in its DE courses compared to its face-to-face courses. Below are the figures for the 2008-09 academic year. For comparison purposes, figures for 2007-08 are below those.

|           | Summer 2008 |        | Fall 2008 |        | Spring 2009 |        |
|-----------|-------------|--------|-----------|--------|-------------|--------|
|           | DE          | Non-DE | DE        | Non-DE | DE          | Non-DE |
| Success   | 66%         | 75%    | 57%       | 70%    | 58%         | 70%    |
| Retention | 76%         | 88%    | 75%       | 85%    | 75%         | 84%    |

|           | Summer 2007 |        | Fall 2007 |        | Spring 2008 |        |
|-----------|-------------|--------|-----------|--------|-------------|--------|
|           | DE          | Non-DE | DE        | Non-DE | DE          | Non-DE |
| Success   | 65%         | 78%    | 56%       | 69%    | 60%         | 71%    |
| Retention | 80%         | 89%    | 71%       | 83%    | 78%         | 85%    |

The lower rates for Spring 2009 can possibly be attributed to students' confusion over their new Zonemail addresses. Some instructors anecdotally reported that they had students drop courses because of the email problem. With the new ability to change Blackboard email addresses in CLASS-Web, the hope is that email problems will no longer be an issue.

In an effort to determine why some students withdraw from DE courses, LPC and 55 other California Community Colleges participated in a statewide retention study. Students who withdrew from DE courses in Fall 2008 were contacted and asked to complete an online survey developed by the State Chancellor's Office. Results showed that the main reason students withdraw is because of personal problems. In fact, 33 percent of respondents selected "I had personal problems (family, health, job, child care, etc.)" as their number one reason. The second-most reason (11 percent) was "I couldn't handle the combined study plus work responsibilities". LPC conducted a similar in-house study in Spring 2006 and received similar results.

Complete results for the Fall 2008 survey are available on campus at [http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/fall08\\_retention\\_study\\_results.pdf](http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/distanceeducation/documents/fall08_retention_study_results.pdf). Keep in mind that only 62 students completed this survey. A possible reason for this is that the State Chancellor's Office decided that the survey would not be anonymous.

## FUTURE TASKS

The 2009-10 academic year is shaping up to be another busy year in DE at LPC. Aside from tasks already mentioned, such as preparing for the upgrade to Blackboard 9 and piloting ePortfolios (the DE counseling plan has been temporarily suspended due to budget constraints), LPC will continue tackling the goals and outcomes in its DE Strategic Plan. Among those items will be surveying students to help determine which degrees and/or certificates to possibly offer at a distance, getting administrators up to speed with all facets of DE, and depending on available funding, implementing help desk software and online tutoring for students.

This Fall, the Innovation Center will begin offering training and support for EduStream, a digital video repository that includes educational videos and learning objects. Additionally, EduStream will allow faculty to upload their own materials and share them with students. The service is offered freely to all California Community Colleges. Aside from Blackboard, EduStream, and the other training topics that the Innovation Center typically offer, new training will be conducted on classroom response systems (clickers). The Innovation Center will also take over training on the eLumen outcomes management system.

Two other important milestones are expected to be met this Fall:

1. All of the future technology training will be conducted under the auspices of Staff Development. For the first time, the Innovation Center's workshops will be integrated into Staff Development.
2. The Innovation Center will begin its inaugural Program Review process. This Program Review will include DE and will be part of a Non-Instructional Program Review Pilot at LPC.

Certainly not to be overlooked, the instructional technology staff will also be preparing for LPC's accreditation site visit in October. All of the above should lead to an exciting year ahead.

Thank you for your time.



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