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Grossmont College
Regular and Effective Contact Policy for Distance Education

Background:

In hybrid or fully online courses, ensuring **regular effective contact** guarantees that the student receives the benefit of the instructor's presence in the learning environment both as a provider of instructional information and as a facilitator of student learning. In a face-to-face course the instructor is present at each class meeting and interacts via all class announcements, lectures, activities and discussions that take a variety of forms. For example, discussions can be held as part of a lecture format, group work scenarios, or content review sessions. The instructor also serves as a content advisor when he or she answers questions both as they come up in class and as they arise in individual situations. These types of questions are dealt with via the telephone, email, or face-to-face office visits.

Title 5 regulations do not make a distinction between regular and distance education courses beyond the need to have a separate curriculum approval process and the need to ensure regular effective contact. Therefore, it is assumed that those qualities of regular effective contact described ~~above~~ ^{below} for the face-to-face environment should also be applied to the distance education situation. The distance education guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding regular effective contact that addresses "the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each distance education course/section or session".

Grossmont College Policy:

All distance education courses at Grossmont College, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact as described below:

1. **Initiated interaction and frequency of contact:** Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. Distance education courses are considered the "virtual equivalent" of face-to-face courses. Therefore, the frequency of the contact will be at least the same as would be established in a regular, face to face course. At the **very least**, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the distance education format. Contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained, given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, over the course of a week an should occur as often as is appropriate for the course. A **response time of 24-48 hours, Monday through Friday is desirable** but may vary based on course requirements and extenuating circumstances. It must be clear whether or not the instructor will be available after hours or on weekends and holidays.
2. **Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence:** An instructor and/or department established policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. If the

Recommended by the Distance Education Subcommittee 09/26/11 (Adapted from Mt. San Jacinto College and Palomar College)
Curriculum Committee Approval
Faculty Senate Approval
Effective _____ Academic Year

instructor must be out of contact briefly for an unexpected reason (such as illness or a family emergency that takes the instructor offline), notification to students will be made in the announcements area of the course that includes when the students can expect regular effective contact to resume. If the offline time results in a lengthy absence (a week or more), a substitute instructor should be sought who can assist students while the instructor is unavailable. If, for whatever reason, a faculty member is unable to comply with the regular, timely, and effective contact guidelines set forth, students must be informed via email or high priority announcement as to when they can expect regular, timely, and effective contact to resume.

3. **Type of Contact:** Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all Grossmont College distance learning courses, instructors will, at a minimum, use three or more of the following resources to maintain contact with students:

- a. Orientation materials
- b. Weekly announcements in the course management system
- c. Threaded discussion boards within the course management system with appropriate instructor participation. "Questions for the Instructor" forums are good, but should be used in conjunction with other forums.
- d. Email contact (within or outside Blackboard)
- e. Participation in online group collaboration projects
- f. Face-to-face informal meetings (e.g. review sessions)
- g. Face-to-face formal meetings (e.g. regular, scheduled class sessions)
- h. Timely feedback for student work
- i. Regular podcasts
- j. Instructor prepared e-lectures or introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, creates the "virtual equivalent" of the face-to-face class.
- k. Virtual Office hours via the chat function in the course management system or other synchronous systems such as CCC Confer.
- l. Other as appropriate

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SENATE RESOLUTION ON PART-TIME ASSIGNMENTS
(DRAFT: Lambe/Blanchard/Holder/Milroy)

Whereas, the State of California continues to reduce funding, suggest workload reductions, and imply that educational institutions should plan for a worst-case scenario of more drastic cuts in the budget,

Whereas, all community colleges need to be sensitive to the diminishing employment opportunities available to part-time faculty who constitute the majority[1] of the instructors on campuses across the state.

Whereas, the state of California is recommending workload reductions for community colleges as one solution to our budget deficit, an action which could eliminate approximately 600 sections at Grossmont for the 2011-12 year,

Whereas, our part-time faculty provide discipline expertise and scheduling flexibility within our programs, essential elements for a successful comprehensive community college,

Whereas, it takes tremendous time and effort to build an established pool of highly effective, experienced and qualified part-time faculty at any institution and is therefore important to preserve these pools in quality and number,

Resolved, that The Grossmont Academic Senate acknowledges the seriousness of the situation and recommends that full-time faculty consider preserving part-time faculty employment in each department, with a goal of keeping our current part-timers employed with consistent assignments, whenever possible.

Be it further resolved that department/division-wide discussions occur on scheduling decisions and class assignments that include preservation of consistent part-time assignments as a possible alternative to overload where applicable.

[1] (Grossmont employed 220 full-time faculty and 531 part-time faculty in Fall 2010)