

# Grossmont College

## Distance Education Plan

### 2012-2015

G R O S S M O N T  
C O L L E G E



**Vision: Changing lives through education.**

#### **GROSSMONT COLLEGE MISSION**

Grossmont College is committed to providing an **exceptional learning environment** that enables **diverse individuals** to pursue their hopes, dreams, and full potential, and to **developing enlightened leaders** and thoughtful citizens for the **local and global communities**.

Our mission is fulfilled by providing the people of East San Diego County with:

- Transfer degrees and certificates programs
- Career technical education and workforce development
- Basic skills
- Student support services that promote student access and achievement
- Community education

#### **GROSSMONT COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT**

Support faculty and staff in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to build a rich and engaging online learning environment.

## **INTRODUCTION FROM DR. COOKE**

The Grossmont College Distance Education Plan identifies and defines college-wide priorities needed by our campus to support student success in online education courses. A product of an annual process that solicits input from faculty, staff and administrative representatives of Academic Affairs and Student Services, this plan is integral to the annual planning and budgeting processes. It is informed by the Educational Master Plan and aligns with the College's Strategic Plan and is also integrated with the Technology Plan. It is reviewed and revised annually within the overall college planning cycle.

The Grossmont College mission is greatly enhanced by the opportunities and benefits online learning brings to our students and community. It is our goal to provide our college with the continuing advantages of online learning. This plan provides the framework for achieving that goal and supports the College Strategic areas of focus related to student access, student success and stewardship of our resources as outlined in the current Strategic Plan.

This Plan focuses on the continuous improvement of Distance Education at Grossmont College over the next three-year period. It is designed to be a part of a dynamic process that responds to ongoing research and the ever-changing and evolving landscape that encompasses the field of education.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Distance Education plan, developed through a process of collaborative consultation between District Information Systems, Planning and Resources Council, the Technology for Teaching & Learning Committee (TTLC) and Academic Senate is intended to guide the planning and implementation and continuous improvement of distance education at Grossmont College. This plan focuses on college needs with some overlap with district needs.

TTLC charged the Distance Education (DE) Subcommittee with updating the Distance Education plan to reflect the college's current needs and goals. The DE Subcommittee undertook the development of the College's plan by using the previous Distance Education plan and the College's Technology Plan as a guide. The committee informally surveyed their constituents; researched Distance Education Plans developed by other institutions and examined the current state of Distance Education within the College to determine where we would like to be in three years.

Implementing the most reasonable plan in challenging economic times is difficult at best. However, difficult times are when it is critical to plan carefully. Specifically, we must embrace innovation, timely implementation, regular evaluation, and continuous improvement.

Given the constant ever-changing landscape of Distance Education, it is challenging to predict the needs in terms of supporting it over the next three years. In order to help us focus on the various aspects, the Distance Education Plan includes numerous overarching objectives that are further defined by specific goals for the next three years.

## **PURPOSE**

A Distance Education Plan provides direction and clear understanding to members of our internal and external learning communities; it indicates where we are now and *imagines* where we want to be. This document will serve as a road map for our journey in offering students access to quality education via distance education courses. It will help us explain the various points of interest and destinations to the travelers involved. The purpose of planning is not just to produce a document, but to produce a framework for continuous action that creates and maintains a rich educational environment.

## **ANNUAL EVALUATION**

In order for this Plan to maintain currency and effectiveness, it must be evaluated annually. TTLC will schedule an evaluation of the Distance Education Plan during one meeting each fall. During that meeting the Committee, along with the DE Subcommittee, will review current trends in distance education, evaluate the progress the College has made since the last review, and make recommendations for modifications or additions to any part of this Plan. Once the review is completed, all modifications will be submitted to TTLC, Planning & Resources Council and Academic Senate for review and approval.

Areas of evaluation may include:

1. The Impact on Learners – Is the college effectively engaging students in relevant authentic, learning in the distance education environment?
2. Effective Practice - Are learning environments characterized by powerful, research-based strategies that effective in the distance education format?
3. Educator Proficiency - Are educators proficient in implementing, assessing, and supporting a variety of effective tools and techniques for teaching and learning in the distance education environment?
4. Robust Access, Anywhere, Anytime - Do students and school staff have robust access to technology-anytime, anywhere-to support effective designs for teaching and learning in the distance education environment?
5. Digital Equity - Is the digital divide being addressed through resources and strategies that ensure that all distance education students are engaging in an educational program aligned to the college vision?

## **OVERARCHING THEMES / GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

We have identified the following overarching themes that have guided the development of this plan and we will strive to keep them in the forefront as we implement and review it. These themes correspond with those in the Technology Plan.

### **Universal Design**

UD is a goal that puts a high value on both diversity and inclusiveness. Typically, designers consider the average user. In contrast, universal design (UD), according to the Center for Universal Design, "is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design".

Making a product or an environment accessible to people with disabilities often benefits others. For example, automatic door openers benefit individuals using walkers and wheelchairs, but also benefit people carrying groceries and holding babies, as well as elderly citizens. Sidewalk curb cuts, designed to make sidewalks and streets accessible to those using wheelchairs, are often used by kids on skateboards, parents with baby strollers, and delivery staff with carts. When television displays in airports and restaurants are captioned, programming is accessible not only to people who are deaf but also to others who cannot hear the audio in noisy areas.

### **Web-based / Mobility**

When researching applications for teaching and learning, we will encourage the implementation of those that are web-based. There are many benefits to using web-based applications, including:

- information that is accessible to audiences anywhere in the world,
- updates can be made quickly and easily,
- applications can be accessible 24/7 using a browser, which is a familiar interface that encourages use,
- online availability allows users to access centralized data at their own pace at a time that is best for them.

### **A Culture of Transparency and Innovation**

In the spirit of the public sector and the transparency that should accompany it, we will encourage a culture of sharing our collective experiences and knowledge for the greater good. We will also encourage the benchmarking of similar and dissimilar institutions to identify best practices and emerging ideas. This will require replacing our "not invented here" attitude with a "proudly borrowed from there" orientation. This will require a new or renewed willingness to share and distribute the best of our own course content and experiences.

## **Andragogy**

Andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn, is a theory based on the psychological definition of an adult. People become adults psychologically when they arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives and are self-directing. Up until recently in the area of education, the pedagogical model of instruction, the art and science of teaching children, has been applied to the teaching of adults. In the pedagogical model, the instructor has full responsibility for making decisions about what will be learned, as well as how and when it will be learned. It is based on the assumption that learners need to know only what the teacher is teaching, promoting dependency on the instructor. As adults mature they become increasingly independent and responsible for their own actions, and need to be self-directed and problem-solvers. The andragogical model of instruction is based on assumptions about adult learners' ability, need and desire to take responsibility for their own learning. We include this definition here to explain our use of this term throughout this document.

## OBJECTIVES

### **Objective 1: Provide training and resources to faculty to ensure good practices are exercised.**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Promote the Tools & Techniques for Online Teaching & Learning document approved by Academic Senate.
- b. Promote the Regular and Effective Contact Policy approved by Academic Senate.
- c. Determine guidelines for minimum standards used for course development, design and delivery.
- d. Formalize professional development workshops and training for online instructors which includes pedagogy/andragogy and methodology, and technical development.
- e. Develop a mentor program for new and continuing online instructors.
- f. Encourage faculty to participate in the Distance Education Subcommittee.
- g. Provide training on the use of social networking and social media in the distance education classroom.
- h. Document guidelines for adding/dropping students in keeping with Admissions & Records procedures and provide them to faculty.

### **Objective 2: Design accessible instructional materials that allow students with disabilities to fully participate in the educational processes of their courses.**

Goals/Actions to meet objective:

- a. Promote the concept of universal design in all guidelines, materials, and other instructional design resources intended for faculty who teach online and in hybrid environments.
- b. Work with Academic Senate and other appropriate governing bodies to publicize institutional responsibility for complying with federal and state mandates for the design and delivery of accessible courses.
- c. Provide instructional design resources, available in multiple venues, to assist faculty in the design of accessible materials for their courses (<http://www.grossmont.edu/accessibility/>).
- d. Develop an evaluation/check-off system to ensure that all courses, whether online or hybrid, meet federal and state mandates for accessibility before offering them in the schedule.
- e. Provide training to instructors on web accessibility and 508 Compliance.

**Objective 3: Provide instructional training, online resources and student services to students for successful online learning.**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Develop a course or workshop for student success in online learning.
- b. Offer face-to-face Blackboard orientation sessions to students.
- c. Establish a district-wide online student "One Stop Shop" for distance education.
- d. Provide students an online self-assessment that will help them determine if they possess the necessary technical and study skills to succeed in distance education courses.
- e. Provide information to counselors to explain online courses and the skills necessary to be successful.
- f. Provide simple screen recordings for videos and multi-media presentations
- g. Encourage collaboration between instructors and librarians to provide librarian sessions emphasizing the use of electronic resources and availability of librarians via online communication.
- h. Enhance online counseling services.
- i. Provide online tutoring services via Grossmont College's various tutoring centers.

**Objective 4: Provide equivalent services to both on and off-campus students.**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Provide equitable online Library instruction, resources and services.
- b. Promote the use of online Student Services, such as counseling and financial aid assistance.
- c. Promote online services to students who are enrolled in distance learning courses via the College's online services webpage by clicking on the hyperlinks:  
<http://www.grossmont.edu/departments/services/>
- d. Promote the use of the web for other resources including the bookstore and careers.
- e. Evaluate the use of support services by online students.
- f. Analyze the support services and make recommendations for additional services and/or improvements.

**Objective 5: Provide technical and instructional support for faculty.**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Develop a recommended staffing plan to support distance education that includes technical support.
- b. Develop a recommended staffing plan to support distance education that includes instructional design support.

**Objective 6: Conduct quality assurance of distance education courses.**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Establish a means for the Curriculum Committee and the Distance Education Subcommittee to work in consultation to develop a process that will ensure that the sound, consistent application of curriculum standards applies to all courses proposed for the online method of delivery so that they conform to the same strict content and quality standards for traditional on-campus courses.
- b. Research the Quality Matters program, an annotated rubric which is the centerpiece of a continuous improvement model for assuring the quality of online courses through a faculty peer review process.
- c. Develop and offer training for peers and managers to evaluate distance education courses.

**Objective 7: Conduct continuous evaluation and assessment regarding student success in online and hybrid classes both locally and nationally**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Work with Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness on tracking student success in online and hybrid classes at Grossmont College.
- b. Analyze results and compare them with community colleges across the nation and identify areas of improvement and report findings to appropriate committees and governing bodies.
- c. Work with Academic Senate and other appropriate governing bodies to create a recommended class size for distance education courses that is based on sound pedagogy/andragogy.
- d. Utilize specific teaching/learning strategies which promote self-directed learning, including peer review and self-assessments.

**Objective 8: Research the feasibility for students to attain an Associate's Degree online district-wide**

Goals / Actions to meet objective:

- a. Work with the Grossmont College Curriculum Committee and Grossmont and Cuyamaca Academic Senates to solicit input from faculty on the feasibility of offering online classes that would enable students to obtain a degree or certificate via distance education.
- b. Work with Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) to provide quantitative and qualitative research and anecdotal data regarding pedagogical/andragogical and other issues related to offering degrees online.