



## Distance Education Plan 2016-2019

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## Statement of Purpose

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The Distance Education (DE) Plan was written to align with College of Marin's mission and the goals of the Strategic Plan and the Educational Master Plan. The DE Plan will guide online instruction for the academic years 2016-2019. The purpose of this plan is to identify strengths and weaknesses and implement strategies to continually improve the quality of the College's DE Program. The DE Plan reflects goals and objectives for DE course and program development, course quality, and student and faculty support.

## College of Marin Mission Statement

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College of Marin strives to respond to community needs by offering student-centered programs and services in a supportive, innovative learning environment that promotes both social and environmental responsibility. The foundation of the college's commitment to educational excellence lies in providing equal opportunities and fostering success for all members of our diverse community by offering:

- preparation for transferring to four-year colleges and universities
- associate degrees and certificates
- career technical education
- basic skills improvement
- classes in English as a Second Language
- lifelong learning
- community and cultural enrichment

## DE Program Mission Statement

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In support of the mission, vision, and values of College of Marin, the Distance Education Program offers students access to quality instruction and assistance in online, hybrid, and web-enhanced environments. All distance education is subject to the general requirements under Title 5, as well as to the specific requirements of articles 55200 and 55204. In addition, instruction delivered as distance education is subject to requirements that may be imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12100 et seq.) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794d).

## DE Program Student Learning Outcomes

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The goal for all students in the DE Program is that they use the basic features of the course management system (CMS) at a proficiency level sufficient to access course materials; actively interact with their instructor and fellow students; complete all course assignments and assessments; and monitor their learning and grades during the semester.

In addition, with direct access to links to all student academic and support services available on the College of Marin CMS course sites and the Distance Education website, Distance Education students will be aware of all the academic and support services offered to them.

## Definitions and Terminology

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**Distance Education:** Per Title 5, Section 55200, distance education is defined as instruction in which the instructor and student are geographically separated and interact by way of online communication technology. The Distance Education classes taught at COM are either online or hybrid courses.

**Online Course:** An online course is one in which instruction takes place entirely online, with no face-to-face meetings, synchronous visits, or campus visits. Instructional time follows the Carnegie unit, which means that the amount of time spent in instruction and given to homework and study must approximate a one-to-two ratio. DE faculty must plan about one hour of instruction for every two hours of homework and study for lecture courses. (AP 4105, 2016)

**Hybrid Course:** A hybrid course, or course section, provides instruction both online and face to face, with at least one mandatory on-campus meeting. These are regularly scheduled meetings, and the dates are always posted in the schedule of classes. Instructional time follows the Carnegie unit, which means that faculty must plan for instruction and for homework and study at an approximate ratio of one to two—an hour of instruction for every two hours devoted to homework and study. (AP 4105, 2016)

**Web-Enhanced Course:** A web-enhanced course, or blended course, is any course tied to the traditional classroom but involving some sort of computer usage, such as a software simulation program, online design software, or engineering applications. It is not an online course but uses online activities to complement traditional coursework. There is no reduction in the number of required class meetings. Since in most cases traditional and web-enhanced courses are indistinguishable, they are not designated separately in college publications.

**Correspondence/Self-Paced Course:** With this kind of course, student and instructor are geographically separated, and the institution provides instructional materials and examinations

by mail or electronic transmission. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular or substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student, who works at his or her own pace. Correspondence courses are not offered at the College. (U.S Dept. of Ed 34 [C.F.R. § 602.3](#))

**Regular Effective Contact (REC):** According to Title 5, Section 55204, any portion of a course conducted through distance education must include regular and effective contact between instructor and students, by way of group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, or other activities, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, or email.

Section 55204 Subdivision (a) stresses the responsibility of the instructor of an online or hybrid course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status. The use of the term “regular effective contact (REC)” in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions of and receive answers from their instructor. These interactions between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously, must be substantive. Best practices for REC and substantive interaction are outlined in the [Administrative Procedure \(AP\) 4105 Distance Education](#).

The ACCJC’s *Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education* (2012) requires that in DE courses, there is not only regular contact but also “substantive interaction” between instructor and student. ACCJC, Western Association of Schools and Colleges Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education - Adopted June 2001; Edited August 2004; Revised June 2005, January 2010, June 2011; Edited August 2012).

**Accessibility:** In addition to the requirements of Title 5, all distance education is subject to the requirements imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S. Code Sections 12100 et seq.) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S. Code Section 794d). The term “accessible” means that a person with a disability must be able to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability, in an equally effective and integrated manner, with equivalent ease of use. (Office of Civil Rights (OCR), 2011)

**Online Education Initiative (OEI):** Funded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO), this overarching California Community College (CCC) initiative provides support to college online teaching and learning programs. It also coordinates resources and services available to the entire CCC system. Resources include the Common Course Management System (CCMS) and components such as student resources, faculty resources, other technology resources, and research and policy documentation. ([Online Education Initiative Glossary](#), 2016)

**Last Date of Attendance (LDA):** The U.S. Department of Education views attendance in an online class as active engagement in such activities as writing in discussion forums, submitting assignments, taking quizzes and exams, and taking part in other interactive class activities. Hence, the student’s “last date of attendance” in the online classroom is their last day of class participation.

## Background and Current Status

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College of Marin is a small suburban community college, and its Distance Education Program is modest when compared to those of other California community colleges. According to the Chancellor’s Office *Distance Education Report* (2013), nearly 27 percent of all students take at least one distance education course per term (p.1). College of Marin currently enrolls more than 5,500 students in credit courses each semester. Approximately 10 percent of these students register for at least one distance education course.

College of Marin’s Distance Education Program began in the early 2000’s when a small number of faculty members showed an interest in teaching online. As the demand for online learning—as well as state and federal initiatives to expand distance education programs—grew, the college responded by gradually increasing its online course offerings. The growth of the DE Program at COM has been slow and steady. It had little institutional guidance or oversight, however, until the formation of the Distance Education Committee (DEC).

In 2010, the Academic Senate approved the formation of the DEC as a subcommittee charged with overseeing the development and implementation of the college’s distance education offerings. Shortly after its formation, the DEC created the 2012-2015 DE Plan, which laid the foundation for the college’s DE Program. At present, the DEC consists of three faculty members, the Faculty Distance Education Coordinator, a staff Instructional Technologist, and a student counselor; the Assistant Vice President for Instructional Support chairs the committee.

Through its Distance Education Program, COM strives to provide access to quality instruction and support, in both online and hybrid courses, to ensure that students are able to reach their educational goals. Currently, no online degree programs are offered; however, more than 40 online and hybrid courses are offered each semester, across the following disciplines:

Career and Technical Education	Arts and Humanities	Math, Science, and Kinesiology
Administration of Justice	English	Anthropology
Business	Dance	Behavioral Sciences
Computer Information Systems	Drama	Chemistry
Court Reporting	Music	Engineering
Education	Philosophy	Geography
Multimedia Studies		Geology
Work Experience		Health Education
		Math
		Psychology
		Sociology

Table 1. Course Offerings

## DE Student Demographics

During the Fall 2015 semester, the college’s Distance Education Program served 560 students. Of these students, 83 percent took one or more DE course in combination with face-to-face courses and 17 percent took only DE courses and no face-to-face courses. While the predominant demographic of DE students is white, female, age 25, the DE Program serves a diverse student population.

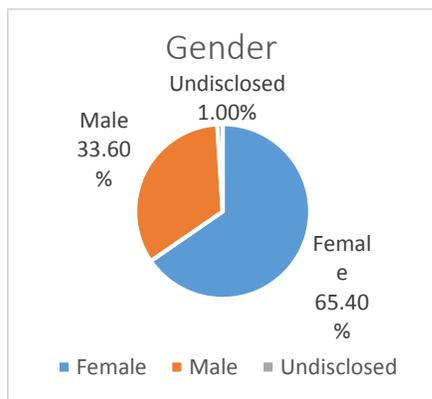


Figure 1. Enrollment by Gender

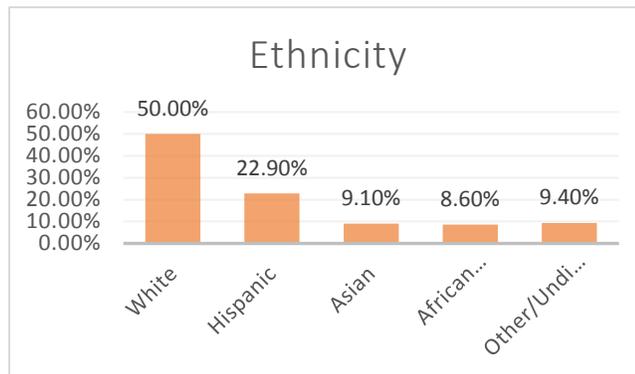


Figure 2. Enrollment by Ethnicity

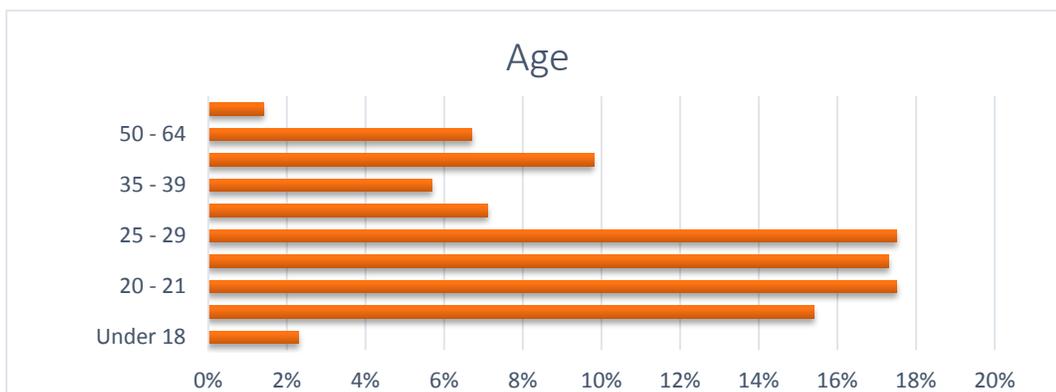


Figure 3. Enrollment by Age

Data collected in 2015 showed that 60 percent of enrolled students have plans to attend a four-year university, and 11 percent are already enrolled in a four-year college and are taking prerequisite courses (figure 4).

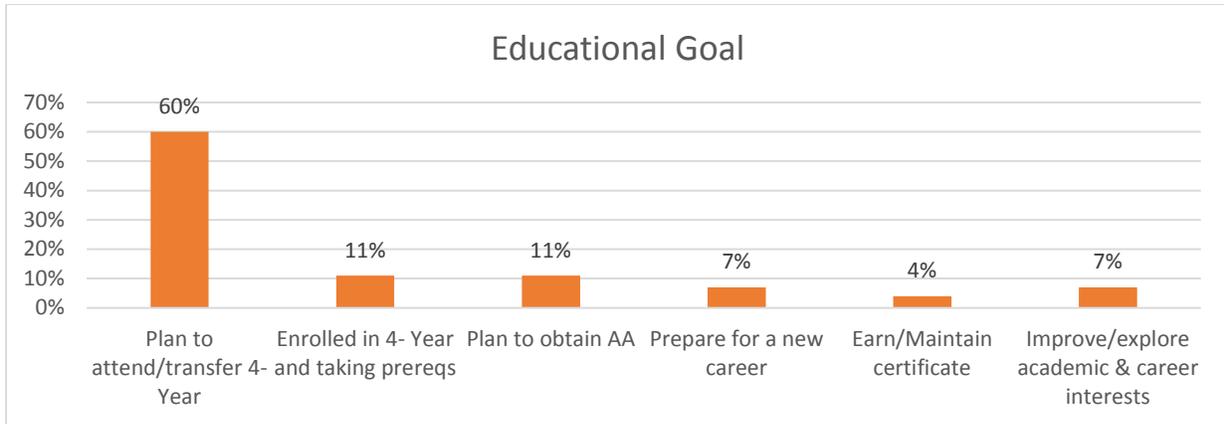


Figure 3. Educational Goals

In a survey of DE students taken in 2015, 55.4 percent indicated they had enrolled in the course because it met their requirements for transfer and also took the course because it was more convenient with their work schedule (figure 5).

Which of the following reasons applies to your enrollment in a distance education course at College of Marin (Please check all reasons that apply).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
The course met requirements for the associate degree	39.1%	36
The course met requirements for transfer to a 4-year college or university	55.4%	51
The course met requirements for a vocational certificate	9.8%	9
The course would improve my job skills/expand my job opportunities	29.3%	27
The course was convenient with my work schedule	55.4%	51
The course was convenient with my child-rearing schedule	12.0%	11
I had success with a previous distance education course	26.1%	24
I had a personal interest in the subject	34.8%	32
I enjoy learning on a computer	28.3%	26
I prefer this method of instruction	21.7%	20
The instructor's reputation	15.2%	14
All on-campus sections of the course were full	7.6%	7
I have a disability that makes it difficult to attend classes on campus	9.8%	9
Other reason (please specify)		7
<i>answered question</i>		92

Figure 4. Survey Enrollment Indicators

## Student Satisfaction, Success, and Retention

When surveyed at the end of the Spring 2015 semester, 74 percent of the college’s DE students indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the COM DE Program; 78 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend taking online classes at COM; and 72 percent said they would take another online course at COM.

Retention in DE courses has remained strong, averaging 82.1 percent throughout the academic years 2008-2015.

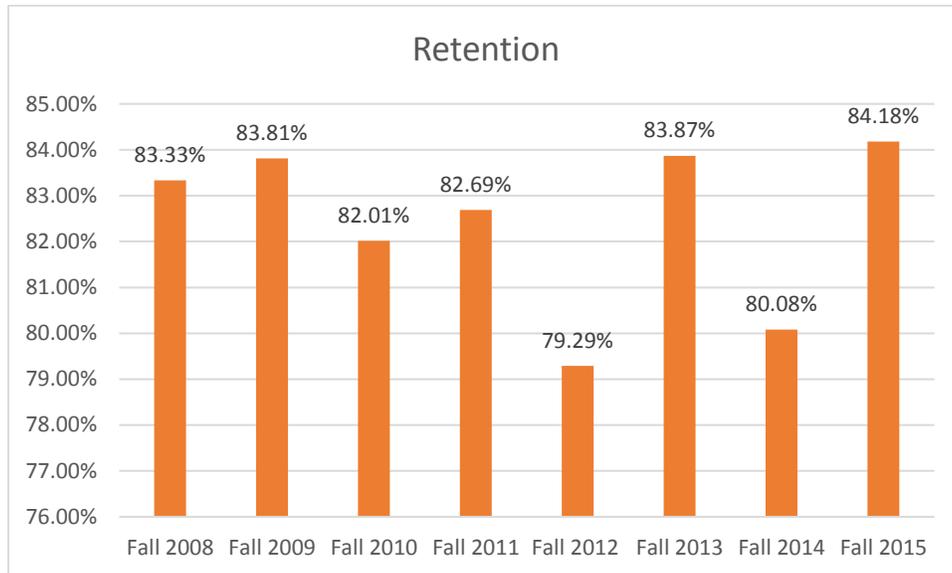


Figure 5. DE Retention

Despite high student satisfaction with and retention in DE courses, student success rates in COM DE courses remain low. “Success” is defined as completing a DE course with a grade of “C” or better (A, B, C, Credit, or Pass). Looking at fall semesters from 2008 through 2015, College of Marin’s DE success rates have ranged from 53.28 percent to 63.79 percent (Figure 5). These findings are consistent with the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office *Distance Education Report* (2013), which found that across the CCC system, the average success rate in the years 2005 through 2012 had increased from 53 percent to 60 percent (p.26).

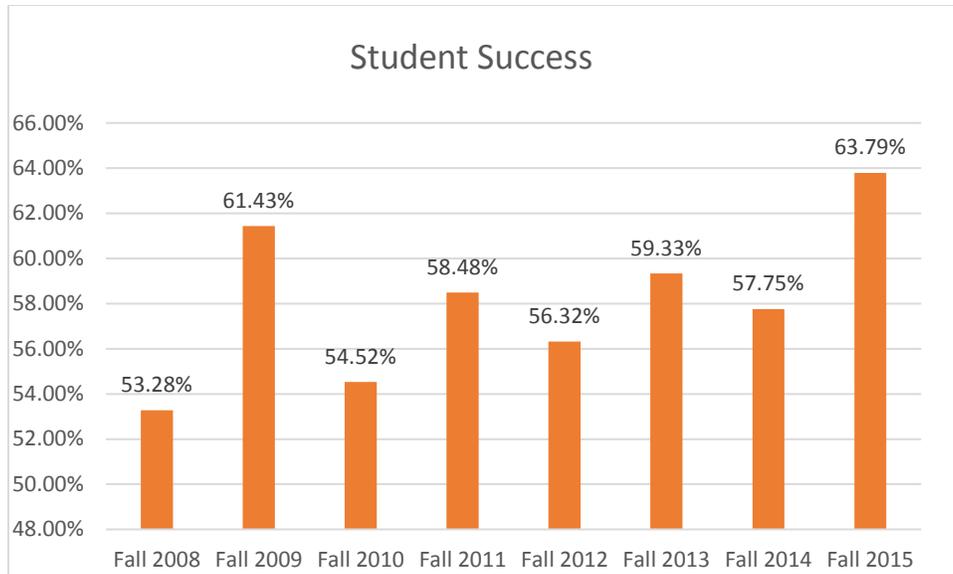


Figure 6. DE Student Success

After analyzing the student success and retention data in preparation for the 2015 DE Program review, the DEC attributed much of the gap between the high retention rates and the low student success rates to poor roster management by DE faculty. Allowing students to remain enrolled in a course when they should be dropped for failure to participate increases retention rates, of course, but also lowers success rates.

Other factors in the low success rates for students in DE courses include:

- Lack of understanding the time required to complete a DE course
- Lack of computer/information literacy skills
- Limited access to reliable technology devices
- Poor course design
- Access issues

## Student Support

To prepare for online learning, students are encouraged to take the college's [Distance Education Self-Assessment Survey](#). In 2015, COM implemented the OEI Readiness modules: [Introduction to Online Learning](#) and [Getting Tech Ready](#). Plans to launch an Introduction to Online Learning course were included in the Strategic Plan.

COM strives to provide DE students with support services equivalent to those offered on campus. Students have access to technical support through the following:

- [MoodleHelp@marin.edu](mailto:MoodleHelp@marin.edu) (Moodle help)
- FAQ located on the DE website: <http://www.marin.edu/DE/faq.html>
- [Helpdesk@marin.edu](mailto:Helpdesk@marin.edu) (MyCOM Portal)

Students also receive academic support through the following services:

- Online Writing Center
- Tutoring and Learning Center
- Online counseling services
- Online library services through “Ask the Librarian”

Links to the above services and resources are provided on the DE website and on the Moodle homepage. Links to the library are presented in a Moodle block located in all course shells.

## Faculty Support, Course Design, and Standards

After reviewing DE courses in 2015 in preparation for an accreditation site visit, it was found that many DE courses did not meet current ACCJC and federal standards for student authentication, regular effective contact (REC), and ADA Section 508 compliance.

Until the formation of the Distance Education Committee, DE faculty often approached their course design and delivery through trial-and-error, assuming they could move from face-to-face courses to an online format without modifying their classroom-teaching practices. At that time, formal training in online best practices and pedagogy were not required of DE instructors; online courses were not vetted for compliance prior to curriculum approval; and faculty support for course design was limited.

As the DE program grew, the lack of support and training for DE faculty became evident. The college created a designated Distance Education office—a dedicated central space where faculty could receive one-on-one support—and hired an Instructional Technologist and an Assistive Technology Specialist to aid faculty with course design and accessibility compliance.

Faculty who responded to a survey conducted to determine areas of need for help in professional development cited the following problem areas:

- ADA compliance
- Sharing/brainstorming ideas with other instructors
- Meeting requirements for a high-quality online course
- Review of best practices
- Community building and interactive course design

In response to faculty needs and to improve noncompliant courses, the DEC turned to the Online Education Initiative’s (OEI) resources for course design, accessibility, and regular effective contact. The DEC adopted the OEI’s [Course Design Rubric](#), and the following goal was incorporated into the college’s Strategic Plan:

**Performance Indicator SA3.2:** All Distance Education courses [will] meet a minimum score of 3 (Accomplished) based on the statewide OEI Course Design Rubric.

**Action step 2.1:** Evaluate all DE courses against the ACCJC Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education, as well as against the OEI Course Design Rubric.

On May 6, 2016, COM hosted a mandatory day-long workshop for DE faculty on “[Applying the OEI Course Design Rubric](#),” which was presented by the [@OneProject](#).<sup>1</sup> Members of the OEI provided training on the Course Design Rubric.

Mandatory DE faculty meetings during Flex Week were added to biannual DE-related workshop offerings on topics such as ADA compliance, course design, and best practices in online learning. (Descriptions of the meetings and workshops can be found on the [DE Faculty Support](#) webpage and in the [web archives](#).) Faculty were provided one-on-one meetings with the DE Coordinator and Instructional Technologist to review needed course-design improvements; given an opportunity to improve their courses using the OEI Course Design Rubric; and offered additional training through the @One Project. Noncompliant courses were removed from the course schedule. (The next section addresses concerns and issues with removing noncompliant courses.)

Additional efforts to improve COM’s distance education courses include:

- Identifying and preventing fraud and abuse and monitoring course participation by ensuring LMS authentication through the MyCOM portal
- Mitigating student-authentication issues within the District LMS by ensuring that all students are participating in online courses hosted in the District LMS, rather than through external applications that are not integrated with the District LMS (e.g., publisher learning platforms/applications)
- Discontinuing the offering of self-paced courses
- Minimizing reliance on content created by publishers, to comply with accreditation standards and education code guidelines for distance education
- Educating faculty on the creation of original content, to ensure academic honesty
- Educating faculty on roster management, to verify student participation and last date of attendance
- Promoting and verifying regular and effective instructor-to-student and student-to-student contact, per Title 5 Distance Education §55200-§55210

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<sup>1</sup>The @OneProject is funded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure program (TTIP).

- Improving ADA course accessibility (with support from the Assistive Technology Specialist) to move into compliance with ADA Sections 504 and 508 and Title 5 Distance Education §55200-§55210
- Creating and enforcing drop policies

The 6.41 percent improvement in the DE course success rate for Fall 2015 (figure 5) could be attributed to these focused measures.

## DE Plan Goals, Objectives, and Challenges

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Despite the uptick in student success rates, College of Marin DE courses still fall short of the 70 percent benchmark standard traditionally used to gauge success in face-to-face courses.<sup>2</sup>

The Public Policy Institute of California (2015) report “Successful Online Courses in California’s Community Colleges” states: “Online learning is a new medium based on emerging technology. It is not surprising that it confronts educators with new pedagogical issues surrounding course content design, delivery, and assessment” (p.9).

The report identifies four areas essential to the success of an online course: course design, faculty support and development, student orientation and expectations, and online course interaction.

Based on the PPIC Report, the CCCCCO Distance Education Report, OEI resources and findings, and evaluation of best practices and areas of need, the goals and objectives for continued improvement in DE student success, retention, and completion rates for 2016-2019 are:

- Improved Section 508 accessibility compliance
- Continued monitoring of academic integrity, student authentication, and last date of attendance issues
- Ongoing training of faculty, with an emphasis on pedagogy, on quality course design and delivery, regular and effective contact, accessibility, evaluation of teaching and learning, and professional development
- Providing students access to equivalent services including enrollment, accessibility services, tutoring, and counseling
- Ongoing training and provision of resources for students regarding online learning

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<sup>2</sup> The Public Policy Institute of California (2015) report defines an online course as successful “if at least 70 percent of its students earn a passing grade” (p.3). Of the 112 colleges in the California Community College system that were analyzed, the report’s authors found only “16 percent of online courses” in their sample had “passage rates of 70 percent or higher” (p.6).

Identifying these issues formed the basis of our DE Plan goals and objectives. They are also reflected in Objectives SA3.1 and SA3.2 in the Student Access 3 section of the College of Marin Strategic Plan 2015-2018. The focus of Student Access 3 includes supporting distance education and effective use of instructional technology (Appendix I).

## Challenges

In the following sections, programmatic needs and actions required to accomplish the goals and objectives are highlighted; however, the following challenges remain:

- Insufficient faculty time available to participate in trainings and course design; online and hybrid courses require more design (pedagogical, ADA, for example) considerations than face-to-face courses
- Course assignment and/or non-assignment based on noncompliance issues
- Philosophical differences regarding required training and teaching online and hybrid courses
- It has proven difficult to balance faculty curricular choices (and provide supportive and constructive guidance on best practices while recognizing their right to academic freedom) with compliance issues and the imperative to put courses on hiatus that do not meet OEI and accreditation standards
- DE faculty tend to have big workloads, and finding time to redesign a course during the semester can be difficult, particularly when the integration of new technologies, such as learning-management systems, is the reason the course must be refashioned. Flex time should be used by faculty to dedicate to course design as well as the unassigned time that is part of each faculty member's 37.5 weekly hours (for full-time faculty)
- Although participation in formal pedagogical training is not required of face-to-face faculty, the Distance Education Committee has relied upon the "right of course assignment," which is within the purview of the department dean, as a way of removing noncompliant courses from the schedule. This, however, can create conflict between a faculty member and his or her dean

## Revisions to Administrative Policies

As the DEC began writing the 2016-2019 plan, it became evident that a substantive change was required in the college's DE administrative and board policy. The outdated policy created difficulties in assisting faculty in bringing their courses into compliance under current DE best practices. Thus, the first task in writing the DE Plan for 2016-2019 was to update MCC District Procedure AP 4105 Distance Education, to reflect more current language in such areas as online and hybrid classes, the course-approval process, and instructor training.

The updates to AP 4105 include:

- Revised definitions of online and hybrid DE courses
- Requirements for mandatory training of faculty before they are assigned a DE course
- Best practices for establishing regular, effective, and substantive faculty-initiated contact
- Detailed requirements for accessibility compliance
- Specifics on enrollment, attendance, and participation in DE courses

The final version of [AP 4105](#) was approved by the COM Academic Senate in August 2016 and by the Board of Trustees in September 2016.

To make sure that all DE course outlines are properly vetted by the Curriculum Committee and the Distance Education Committee before course development begins, and prior to scheduling the course, the DEC found it necessary to revamp the curriculum procedure. The adoption of CurricUNET as COM's curriculum-management system, as well as the revised Distance Education addendum of the Course Outline of Record template, will help facilitate the new process when fully implemented in January 2017.

## Faculty Support and Professional Development

As part of the ongoing effort to meet the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan, the following activities will continue:

- Provide ongoing training in best practices for instructional technology, online learning, and course design, including regular and effective contact and accessibility compliance
- Support faculty in developing and redesigning their courses to meet a minimum score of 3 (Accomplished) based on the statewide OEI Course Design Rubric
- Seek input from DE faculty as to their professional-development needs
- Provide on- and off-campus opportunities for professional development, such as OEI-sponsored workshops and Flex workshops on ADA compliance and REC
- Develop and maintain a DE faculty handbook specific to COM DE policies and best practices
- Provide regularly scheduled meetings for DE faculty

To evaluate faculty that teach online and hybrid courses, Survey Monkey has been instituted to facilitate student evaluations and created an approved peer-observation form. The evaluation process for all faculty is currently in negotiation between UPM and the District. (The current CBA sunsets in December 2016.)

## Technology and Infrastructure

At present, all distance education courses are hosted in Moodle, the District's Learning Management System (LMS). Access to Moodle is provided through the MyCOM Portal, where

student authentication occurs. Within the portal, students use a single sign-on link to access Moodle.

In February 2015, the California Community Colleges (CCC) Online Education Initiative (OEI) announced its intent to award a contract to Instructure Inc. to provide Canvas (Instructure’s online course-management system) and related services to community colleges statewide. The OEI’s goal in the selection of a Common Course Management System (CCMS) was to allow for cost savings, negotiating power, operational efficiencies, centralization of shared services, and equity among large and small California community colleges (Spicer, Pilatti, Hill, 2016).<sup>3</sup>

College of Marin will adopt Canvas as its District LMS in Fall 2017. The college approved the adoption of Canvas following the OEI’s [Common Course Management System Consideration Resources](#). Full migration will be complete by Fall 2017, after a small pilot program beginning in Spring 2016.

The following timeline outlines the steps required for migration:

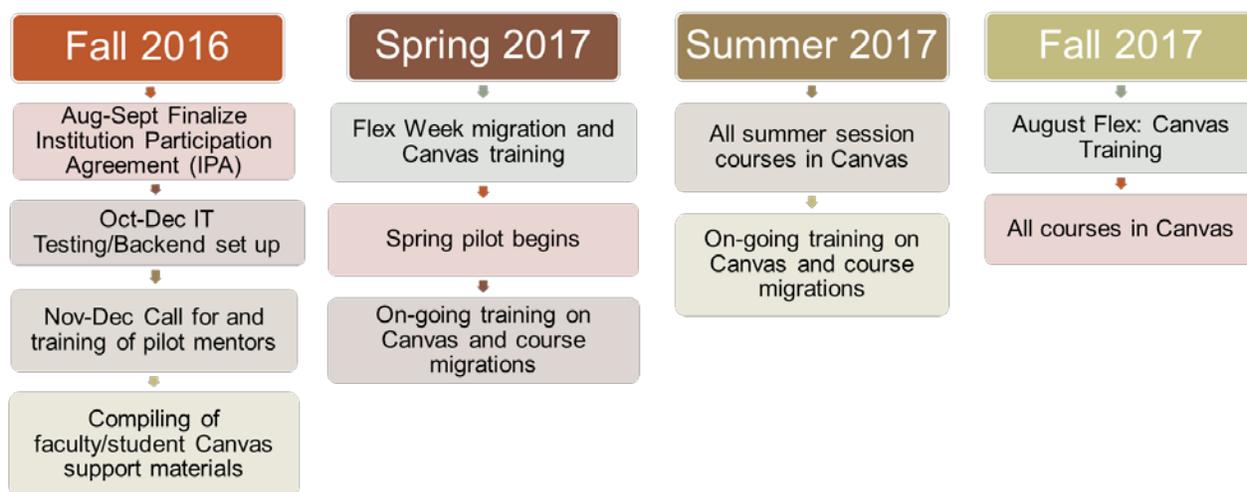


Table 2. Canvas Timeline

During the implementation phase, a trained faculty representative will assist fellow faculty mentors in each department in Canvas-related activities to ensure a smooth and successful transition by Fall 2017.

Guided by the Distance Education Coordinator, Instructional Technologist, and AVP for Instructional Support, the Canvas faculty mentors will:

<sup>3</sup> A Retrospective on Implementing Common Course Management Systems: Motivations, Benefits, Drawbacks and Recommendations: <http://mfeldstein.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A-Retrospective-on-Implementing-Common-Course-Management-Systems-1.pdf>

- Attend required Canvas training in Fall 2016
- Migrate, design, and pilot their own courses into Canvas in Spring 2017
- As part of a work group, test Canvas and prepare for implementation in Summer 2017
- Conduct Canvas training with faculty in Fall 2017; monitor and document Canvas training with faculty in Fall 2017

## Integrations and Software

To ensure student access to technology applications and software required by both DE and face-to-face faculty as part of their course curriculum, COM will work to integrate available plugins and LTIs to provide single-sign between the LMS and applications such as publisher tools and eBooks. COM funds the use of Turnitin, which will also be available in Canvas. All faculty and students have access to Turnitin through Moodle.

## Student Support, Success, and Retention

The DEC has set a goal of improving DE student success rates by two percent per year over the next three years. The following chart details current and future initiatives to enhance student support in hybrid and online courses and increase student success. The initiatives are aimed at better preparing students for using online resources, ensuring academic honesty, and providing consistent access to student support services.

Initiative	Timeline
Implement the OEI readiness modules and online orientation course	Spring 2017
Revise and update outdated DE language in the Online Course Schedule	Spring 2017
Prepare students to use the current LMS with hands-on workshops and by updating and improving the DE website FAQs	Ongoing
Provide technical support in DE courses through Moodle Help, the Canvas 24/7 ticketing system, and the DE website	Ongoing
Provide academic support through the OWC	Ongoing
Implement options for effective online tutoring, such as Net Tutor and dedicated TLC tutors	Fall 2017
Adopt Proctorio to ensure academic honesty in online exams	Pilot: Spring 2017 Full adoption: Fall 2017

Offer a one-unit orientation course for students taking distance education courses	Fall 2018
Provide a dedicated DE Counselor	Fall 2017

Table 3. DE Initiatives

The Counseling Department will appoint a DE Counselor to develop stronger relationships with students enrolled in online courses and to act as a liaison for instructional faculty who want to refer a DE student to counseling services.

The DE Counselor will:

- Draft a formal welcome letter, distributed to all faculty teaching DE courses, that will include:
  - An invitation encouraging students to make appointments, either in person or over the phone, with the DE Counselor, emphasizing the importance of having a current student education plan
  - A reminder of important academic deadlines, such as the add/drop deadline, grade change option deadline, and withdrawal deadline
  - A referral to resources on the Distance Education website, including success tutorials
- Perform outreach to struggling students at the request of DE instructors

## DE Growth, Budget, and Programmatic Needs

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### Program Growth

The emphasis on DE growth is currently on quality, not quantity. Any growth will be focused on the IGETC pattern courses for transfer to the UC/CSU. The DEC will consult with the Counseling Department and the Academic Senate to determine enrollment gaps in IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth course offerings.

The DEC has identified a need to develop science lab courses and a CSU GE-Breadth speech course that satisfy CSU GE-Breadth and IGETC requirements. These courses are difficult to offer online; however, because of the technology required for student access to audio and visual applications that can be easily integrated into the LMS, Canvas may offer better solutions, given its video-assignment submission capabilities. Science lab courses will continue to pose a challenge in acquiring software and/or simulations for students to adequately complete lab assignments online. The DEC will continue exploring best practices in the delivery of these courses.

The DEC will continually evaluate the Distance Education program to make sure that it is appropriately scaled to support transfer and graduation requirements.

## Program Staffing

The DE Program is currently staffed as per the following organizational chart:



Table 4. Distance Education Staffing

## Staffing and Facility Needs

Because of the increasing growth of the DE program and the increased need for faculty professional development and policy and compliance regulation, as well as the continued focus on technology integrations and course design, the DEC suggests the following:

- Replace the Instructional Technologist with an Instructional Designer, to better align with current educational-technology policies and practices in institutions of higher education
- Provide additional IT and help-desk support so that the Instructional Designer can focus on effective educational-technology implementation and faculty training
- Improve the physical space for the Distance Education Center so that it is more conducive to both faculty professional development and student learning

## Budget and Programmatic Needs

The following table itemizes current funding required for the DE program:

Item	Amount
Remote Learner (Moodle Support) - Annual fee	\$19,506 Note: will no longer be needed after migration to Canvas
Distance Education Coordinator	\$3,400/unit x 3 units per semester = \$20,400
Instructional Technologist	\$110,824 (salary and benefits)*
Travel	\$1,500
Professional Development (for example, "Train the Trainer" for Canvas)	\$8,000

implementation and 12-week @one course for faculty new to teaching online and hybrid courses)	
Software licensing fees and supplies	\$1,500

Table 5. DE Budget

\*In 2017, the Instructional Technologist position should be transitioned to an “Instructional Designer” position to truly reflect the scope of the position and provide the faculty the course design support that they need.

### Additional Required Funding

- After the Canvas implementation, the DEC projects the full cost of the learning-management system will be paid by the CCCC. After 2019, a portion of the LMS expense may be passed on to CCCs. The projected cost of Canvas after 2019 is \$30,000, although this may change, depending on state-government initiatives and funding.
- Professional development funds
- Funds for plug-ins and software to enhance online courses (for example, “VoiceThread,” Proctorio, tutoring)
- Stipend for faculty mentors (need amount per member)

## DE Vision and Future

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COM’s focus is on producing quality online and hybrid courses and increasing student success rates while growing the program strategically. The goals and objectives were created to make sure the college’s DE faculty are adequately trained and proficient in best practices of online learning and receive the support they need to rectify course-design compliance issues. The other broad goal is to provide the resources and services required for student success.

The adoption of Canvas as the District Learning Management System supports the goals and objectives by providing an LMS that allows for improved course design, technology integrations, technical support, and student access. The move to Canvas also aligns with the CCC Chancellor’s Office and with OEI aims to *ensure that significantly more students are able to complete their educational goals, by increasing both their access to and success in high-quality online courses.*

Through the adoption of Canvas and the college’s commitment to quality courses, COM gains access to the OEI resources designed for Canvas, as well as opportunities to participate in the OEI Consortium, along with the Course Exchange. The Course Exchange will enable streamlined student access to courses throughout the CCC system by way of reciprocity agreements. As student success rates improve, the long-term goal is to make some of the College’s courses available through the Course Exchange. This will offer both COM students and those across the CCC system increased opportunities to complete their educational goals.



## Appendix I: Strategic Planning Objectives

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**EMP Recommendation Student Access 3** Support distance education and the effective use of instructional technology

**Champion:** [Hire a] VP of Student Learning and Student Services

**Objective SA3.1:** Evaluate the scope and scale of the Distance Education Program in supporting enrollment and student success goals

**Performance Indicator SA3.1:** [Make sure the] Distance Education program is appropriately scaled to support transfer and graduation requirements, based on data and feedback collected

**Action 1.1:** Research the distance education program offerings of other California Community Colleges

**Action 1.2:** Consult with the Counseling Department and Academic Senate to determine enrollment gaps in IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth course offerings

**Action 1.3:** Draft a 2016-2019 Distance Education Plan, based on research and information collected

**Work Team:** [Needs a verb, such as Hire a] DE Coordinator (lead), Instructional Technologist, and IT personnel

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Objective SA3.2:** Train faculty members in best practices in instructional-technology use

**Performance Indicator SA3.2:** [Make sure that] all Distance Education courses meet a minimum score of 3 (Accomplished) based on the statewide Course Design Rubric for the Online Education Initiative (OEI).

**Action step 2.1:** Evaluate all DE courses against ACCJC's Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education and the Course Design Rubric for the Online Education Initiative (OEI)

**Action step 2.2:** Provide faculty ongoing training on best practices in online learning, current trends in technology for online and onsite instruction, and increasing student engagement

**Action step 2.3:** Prepare students to use Moodle with an online student orientation, hands-on workshops, and updated and improved DE website FAQs

**Work Team:** DE Coordinator (lead), Instructional Technologist, IT personnel, Academic Deans, Curriculum Department **Timeline:** Initial evaluations completed by fall semester/ongoing

## References

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California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (2013). Distance Education Report.

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[http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/reportsTB/REPORT\\_DistanceEducation2013\\_090313.pdf](http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/reportsTB/REPORT_DistanceEducation2013_090313.pdf)

Johnson, H., Mejia, M.C., & Cook, K. (2015). Successful Online Courses in California's Community Colleges. Public Policy Institute of California.

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