



Feather River College

FEATHER RIVER COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION PLAN

2020-2022

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RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The outbreak of the Coronavirus has disrupted colleges and universities across the country, with many institutions canceling face-to-face classes and moving to fully online instruction.

To fight the spread of the Coronavirus and maintain healthy social-distancing, Feather River College (FRC) will quickly transition from on-campus, face-to-face instruction to online for the majority of the courses offered in the fall of 2020. It is unclear at this time if this format will extend into the spring of 2021.

Distance learning during a global pandemic has no precedent. It is a context with no perfectly aligned research to guide the way.

Moving from on-campus to online raises issues related to access and equity. There are the immediate logistical challenges of ensuring students have the basic technology they need to learn remotely.

To support students, faculty and staff, FRC will provide those resources that are available to ensure that the students and faculty are able to transition as smoothly as possible.

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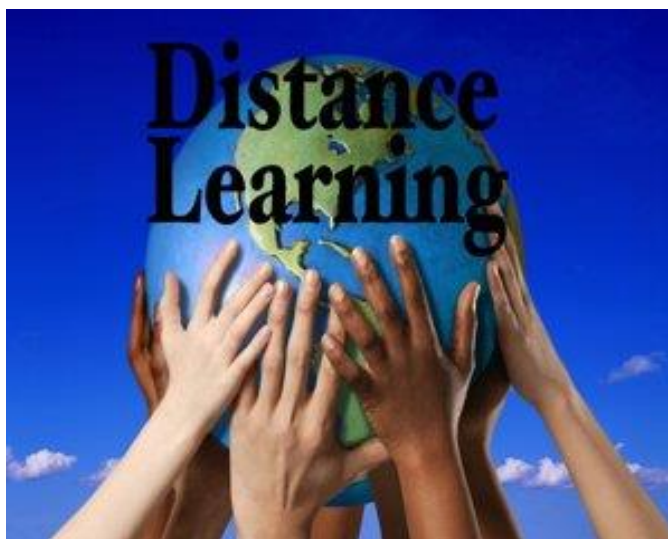
Introduction

This Distance Education (DE) Plan is designed to enhance Feather River College's (FRC) program development by examining the various elements that comprise our DE program, and incorporating the necessary changes to ensure that the DE program is sustainable, accessible, and provides the best learning environment for all of our students. The elements broadly covered in this plan include:

- Adoption of effective standards and practices in model distance education programs across the California community college system.
- Suggestions for teaching and learning that will ensure student success.
- Inclusion of student support services.
- A vision for expanding the DE courses to serve the current needs of students.
- Professional development opportunities for faculty.

Additionally, this plan includes sections on infrastructure, student success, and faculty and staff training. These sections contain goals and objectives determined to be integral to the development and implementation of a DE Program that maintains the standards for quality set by the CCCC and Feather River College.

This is a two-year plan that intends to address the evolving needs of students, the requirements for higher levels of education, an ever-changing technology, and workforce demands. Because these elements are in constant flux, this plan should be reviewed and revised as needed throughout the growth of the program. The development of this plan was accelerated during the COVID-19 crisis which elevated the college's distance education vision.



FRC Distance Education Mission Statement

The Feather River College Distance Education Program will enhance the course schedule and increase student access to curriculum to help students meet their educational goals. Distance Education services will support entirely online courses and supplement courses taught on campus (face-to-face). The DE Program will reflect the college mission statement, the institutional code of ethics, instructional standards and practices for ensuring academic quality, and reinforce campus values. The DE Program will enable the efficient use of college resources and facilities, and make every reasonable effort to ensure its instructional technology is accessible, reliable, and user friendly for students, staff, and instructors.

Distance Education Program Status

Infrastructure

Prior to spring 2020¹ FRC offered approximately 60 online courses. FRC has the capacity to offer more online courses and course sections as there have been technological improvements. On December 10, 2015 the Board of Trustees approved the transition from Moodle to Canvas as its Learning Management System (LMS). In an effort to have one common LMS for all California community colleges, the Chancellor's office provided Canvas at no cost to the institutions. Canvas provides a better interface between students and teachers.

In the fall of 2018, FRC participated in the Online Education Initiative (OEI) with the intent of offering courses in the California Virtual Campus Course Exchange. Because of this participation, the college received access to several student support services as part of the OEI grant. These include NetTutor (online tutoring service), Pisces (collaborative platform), Cranium Café (online counseling service), Proctorio (online remote proctoring service)², and Quest/Smarter Measure (online learning readiness indicator). Please note that as of December 31, 2020, Proctorio may no longer be offered through the CVC-OEI grant.

On December 11, 2019, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) approved FRC's Substantive Change Proposal to develop fully online programs. Discussions determine which programs to offer fully online. This determination involves several components, such as staffing, scheduling, program management, course development, and the needs and interests of students.

¹ The Spring 2020 schedule was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 campus shutdown.

² Please note that as of December 31, 2020, Proctorio may no longer be offered through the CVC-OEI grant.

Definitions

Distance Education

Distance education is defined, for the purpose of accreditation review as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.

Hybrid Courses

Hybrid courses are DE courses that include 50% or less of instruction delivered through DE technology. When the technologies used for education and communication outside the classroom are used to supplant some, but not all face-to-face instruction, reducing the time actually spent in the classroom, the result is a blended or hybrid classroom course.

Correspondence Education

1. Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
2. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
3. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.

Correspondence education is not distance education³

Distance Education Program Standards and Supports

All DE courses are developed and implemented with the standards outlined below. The Council on Instruction reviews these standards as necessary to ensure student success. These include:

- Institutional Support
- Program and Course Development Process
- Teaching and Learning Standards
- Technical Program and Course Development
- Faculty-Related Issues
- Student Support Services

³ From the "Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence" Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Many standards for DE courses also come from the course design rubric designed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office.⁴ (not currently adopted by the college) *, that incorporates all of the standards outlined below which addresses the following areas:

The rubric is divided into four sections; each section will be "rolled out" over the next two years:

Section A: Content Presentation - how content is organized and accessed in the course management system.	In fall 2020, the DE Program will provide training to faculty on rubric, section A. Section A is comprised of 14 elements. These elements will be divided into four sections to give faculty an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how to incorporate each into their courses.
Section B: Interaction - regular effective contact (instructor-initiated and student-initiated communication).	Section B contains six elements, which will be divided into two sections. Training for Section B will begin in fall 2021.
Section C: Assessment - the variety and effectiveness of assessments within the course.	Section C contains eight elements and will also be divided into two sections. Training for Section C will begin in spring 2022.
Section D: Accessibility - ensuring a student using assistive technologies will be able to access the instructor's course content as required by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (also known as "508 Compliance").	Section D contains sixteen elements. Section D will be addressed throughout the entire training as it pertains to accessibility.

The Distance Education Program intends to phase-in the adoption of the course design rubric over a period of two years. The rubric will inform faculty training and the development of new online courses. The rubric will be helpful for guiding improvement of and restructuring current courses. Training will occur once each month throughout the academic year, or as needed.

⁴ One of the goals of the DE Program is to present the course design rubric to Academic Senate for approval. Planned date of adoption by the Academic Senate, Fall 2020.

It is anticipated that the training on the course design rubric will conclude by summer 2022. If required, training will continue until all faculty fully grasp each component of the course design rubric.

Courses that are peer reviewed and aligned to the OEI Course Design Rubric:

- have met the CCC's highest level of design standards to support online student success;
- can be made available for cross enrollment to students in colleges participating in the online exchange; and,
- are given priority listing with a special icon in the CVC-OEI Finish Faster online course search.

Institutional Support

General Standards

- The institution will engage in an ongoing dialogue to ensure the continued improvement of the DE Program.
- Procedures that ensure continual monitoring of all technical systems related to online program delivery are reviewed through shared governance.

Support for Faculty

- Support for course development are available, particularly in the area of accessibility compliance.
- Training for faculty, staff and administrators will be an integral part of the DE Program.

Support for Students

- Online self-assessment tools are available to assist students in determining their readiness for online courses.
- There is an Online Readiness Indicator (Quest for Success uploaded into Canvas).
- Schedule and catalog are easily accessible from the college's website.
- Courses requiring proctoring during tests will be clearly identified.
- It is recommended that faculty add the links for student success posted on the FRC website under *Taking Online Courses*, into their respective classes. These links are listed in **Appendix A**.

Equity

In an effort to close the achievement gaps for online students and disproportionately impacted populations, FRC's focus on equity will include:

- Addressing the disparity in student enrollment, retention, grade distribution and success between students in online and face-to-face courses

- Addressing achievement gaps that are exacerbated in online environments--specifically involving disproportionately impacted students, such as African-American and Latino/a, first-generation college students, low-income and academically underprepared
- Faculty Training on equity-minded course design.

Course Development

The Curriculum Committee reviews the following criteria to assess the viability of DE course offerings:

- The benefit to students
- Alignment to the Course Outline of Record components
- A DE addendum that adequately designates the following:
 1. How students will engage in the class on a weekly basis. This is to ensure “regular and effective contact” as required in Title 5 and the approved Regular Effective Contact Policy. Student-to-Student interaction must also be demonstrated.
 2. How the course will uphold and maintain the rigor required for study in the discipline.
 3. How the instructor verifies student identity
 4. That assignments are aligned with the defined student learning outcomes.

Once the course is approved and the instructor has built the online course, it will be reviewed by the DE department to ensure it complies with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d), regarding accessibility.

Other Standards

In addition to the OEI course design rubric elements, the following will be included in an FRC online course and syllabus:⁵

- Direction/navigation links to an online orientation module.
- Course requirements and faculty expectations.
- Links to student support services.
- Expectations and instructions for students on how to be active learners.
- Clearly displayed course objectives and student learning outcomes.
- Courses will ensure regular and ongoing student-instructor interaction, and student-student interaction.
- It is recommended that all assignments, tests and their respective due dates be posted on the home page of the course
- Learning support resources and availability (i.e., proctoring) identified.

⁵ Course syllabi should adhere to the syllabus standards published by the Office of Instruction.

- Instructions on how to post assignments; how to communicate with instructor and with other students.
- Each instructor will explain his/her policy regarding late assignments.
- Faculty will include in their syllabi the College's policy on cheating and plagiarism

Technical Program and Elements in Course Development

- DE students have access by phone, email and instant messaging to technology support. Information on how to contact support by phone is on the college's website, and will be explained in the course syllabus and on the course Canvas page. Assistance for Canvas specific questions or issues is available by clicking on "?" which links students to Canvas Help or call +1-877-921-1120 (during business hours).
- Students have access to learning resources including, but not limited to the library, tutoring, advising, information resources, research databases, and the bookstore.
- External links used in the course should be checked.

Accessibility Standards

- All DE courses will be accessible for screen readers. Images and links will include alternate text upon cursor contact.
- Courses will provide sufficient instructions for students to complete tasks.

Course Review

- Courses will be reviewed consistent with the adopted review schedule.
- Intended learning outcomes will be reviewed for clarity and appropriateness
- Courses should reflect approved CORs, including student learning outcomes will be reviewed for clarity and appropriateness
- Students provide feedback on faculty using an approved evaluation instrument

Faculty Teaching Online

- Full-time faculty may teach a portion of their course load online.
- Part-time faculty may teach their full course load online.

Online Office Hours

- Faculty do not have to be on campus to conduct online office hours.
- When instructors teach online and face-to-face, faculty may offer online and face-to-face office hours simultaneously.
- Office hours may also be conducted using the Conference Tool or the World Wide Whiteboard both in Canvas, or CCC Zoom.

Training for Online Faculty

Prior to teaching online for FRC, instructors should complete Canvas trainings and/or demonstrate Canvas proficiency. Training and course development opportunities may include:

- A self-paced course housed in Canvas called “Instructor Orientation”. This training provides a systematic approach on how to build and set up a Canvas course. Additionally, starting in the summer of 2020, there will be periodic training sessions on Canvas.

Faculty who complete the entire “Instructor Orientation” course including assignments and receive a 70% passing score, will become Certified FRC online Instructors.

- Trainings offered by @ONE. Some of these trainings are free and self-paced: <https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/>.
- The Course Design Academy, @ONE provides professional development for online educators. The Academy is a free professional development program that provides peer feedback on course design for online courses. FRC may provide a stipend to faculty who participate in the academy.

Faculty may also qualify for online teaching by completing training through a recognized online instruction program, such as the @ONE Certification Program.

In addition to third-party services, the Assistant Dean of Instruction is responsible for providing training for faculty to teach online.

Distance Education Program Action Plan

Three areas that are critical to an effective distance education delivery and student success in online classes. These include

- Student Support
- Faculty Support
- Governance and Guidelines.

Program Goals

- Increase student retention and success.
- Improve faculty proficiency and participation in Canvas.
- Increase professional development offerings.
- Create fully online transferable degrees.

Objectives

1. Student Retention/Success

- Continue refining online student support services in addition to current resources, such as Net Tutor, Cranium Café, etc.

- Expand support hours to include evenings and weekends.
- Evaluate effectiveness of instructional support navigation for students, such as the online readiness questionnaire for students and the various Canvas tutorials for students.
- Increase course offerings for online degree completion.

2. Faculty Support

- Establish minimum standards for online teaching.
- Provide professional development workshops for faculty teaching online including Canvas “tutorial bites.”
- Provide instructional design support to online faculty.
- Provide access to online resources that enhance the development of an online course.

3. Governance and Guidelines

- Develop an approach for reviewing DE courses.
- Recommend faculty embed specific questions within their assignments for verifying online student identity.
- Communicate and oversee implementation of the OEI course design rubric (**Appendix B**).
- Assess the DE Program in relation to student achievement.
- Ensure that all online courses are in compliance with ADA Section 508 guidelines for accessibility (**See Appendix C**).

Action Items

- Create and implement an annual survey to assess instructor needs and interests in trainings and workshops.
- Schedule “Brown Bag Lunches,” roundtables and/or webinars on online teaching.
- Develop monthly 10-15-minute Canvas training snippets via zoom
- Increase awareness and usage by faculty of student support services, such as NetTutor.
- Establish POOR (peer online course review) process.
- Present the OEI course design rubric to the Academic Senate for approval.
- Identify transfer patterns to determine which majors to offer online.
- Identify online options for lab classes such as biology, chemistry etc. (in addition to Labster, implemented in spring 2020).

Distance Education Program Status

Strengths of the DE Program

- There is District support for the growth of the DE Program
- Excellent IT support is available to faculty, staff and students.

- Faculty and staff have access to Canvas training tutorials uploaded in Canvas
- Faculty demonstrate interest in improving online education and increasing course offerings.

Weaknesses

- Few courses are currently offered in CTE programs.
- There are no District wide policies for faculty assessment of teaching via distance learning modalities.
- There is no process for verifying out-of-state students taking online courses, leaving the college open to state authorization issues and penalties.
- Success for online students has improved, but remains lower than the success in face-to-face courses.

APPENDIX A: Online Student Tutorials for Student Success

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/intro/index.html>

Introduction to Online Learning

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/tech/index.html>

Getting Tech Ready

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/organizing/index.html>

Organizing for Online Success

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/study-time/index.html>

Online Study Skills and Managing Time

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/communication/index.html>

Communication Skills for Online Learning

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/reading/index.html>

Online Reading Strategies

<http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/modules/instructional/index.html>

Instructional Support

APPENDIX B: Course Design Rubric

<https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/CVC-OEI-Course-Design-Rubric-rev.2.14.2019.pdf>

APPENDIX C: Checklist for ADA Compliance in Online Courses

		Yes	No	N/A
Links	a. Provides wordings for the links. Avoids using “click here” for the links.			
	b. Uses text descriptions for the links.			
Text	a. Uses serif fonts for easy readability			
	b. Uses dark font colors on light backgrounds (preferably use black text on a white background)			
	c. Avoids extremely bright colors as a background color.			
	d. Uses one font throughout the site.			
	e. Avoids overuse of all CAPS, bold or italics			
	f. Avoids underlining words, as the screen reader can mistake it for a navigation link.			
Images	a. Images are clear.			
	b. Image files are optimized for efficient loading.			
	c. Use of animated images is limited to only those that contribute to the learning experience – supporting the course content.			
	d. Avoids animated or blinking images, text or cursors. These can cause seizures for some people.			
	e. All images have alt texts/long descriptions attached to them.			
Audio	a. Audio quality is clear.			

	b. Audio file length is adequate to meet the goals of the activity without being too large to restrict users' ability to download the file on computers with lower bandwidths.			
	c. A written transcript is provided with all audio files.			
	d. Audio file length is adequate to meet the goals of the activity without adding unnecessary information.			
	e. Audio player required is compatible with multiple operating systems and requires only a standard, free plug-in.			
Video	a. Video quality is clear.			
	b. Video file length is adequate to meet the goals of the activity without being too large to restrict users' ability to download the file on computers with lower bandwidths.			
	c. Provides closed-captioning or has accompanying text-based scripts for all videos.			
	d. Video file lengths are adequate to meet the goals of the activity without adding unnecessary information.			