LAS POSITAS COLLEGE
DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2012
10:00 AM, Room 2410 and CCC CONFER
MINUTES

LPC Members Present:
Scott Vigallon (TLC-Classified; co-chair)
Richard Dry (ALSS; co-chair)
Vicky Austin (Adjunct Faculty)
Jane McCoy (ALSS)
Frances Hui (ALSS; Library)
Bobby August (STEMPS)
Gina Webster (BSBA)
Javi Pinedo (ASLPC)

LPC Members Absent:
Janice Cantua (Admissions & Records)
Chris Lee (Student Services)
Marilyn Flores (Dean)
Howard Blumenfeld (STEMPS)
Deanna Horvath (ALSS)

Guests:

AGENDA:

I. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by co-chair Richard Dry at 10:04 a.m.

II. **Approval of minutes from April 27 meeting:** Minutes were approved May 2. Howard motioned, Vicky seconded. Minutes approved.

III. **Committee makeup for this year:** The committee welcomed newcomers Gina Webster and student Javi Pendo to the committee and welcomed back Bobby August. Bobby served this committee for several years previously. Chris Lee and Marilyn Flores, neither of whom could make the meeting today, are also newcomers. There was a question about whether or not we have too many representatives from the ALSS and STEMPS divisions. Scott said he would direct that question to Melissa Korber of the Senate after the meeting.

IV. **DE vs. Correspondence courses – Regular effective contact policy:** On a webinar with DE coordinators throughout the state May 9, the ACCJC announced that all DE courses must provide evidence of regular, effective contact between the instructor and students. This includes not only online courses, but also the online portion of hybrid courses. If there is no regular, effective contact, the courses can be designated correspondence courses during an auditing process, and this can affect the college's ability to provide federal financial aid to students.

The provision might affect online courses if students and instructors are not utilizing discussion boards, chats, blogs, wikis, journals, etc. Since hybrid courses have on-campus meetings, they might be less likely to utilize the online tools above. Instructors need to be notified of the provisions so they can make the necessary adjustments to their course design.

Aside from communication of the issue, LPC needs to develop a regular, effective contact policy for DE, as stated in the state chancellor's office DE Guidelines. Regular, effective contact is already integrated into the DE course proposal and DE evaluation processes. The Curriculum Committee chair and Academic Senate president have been notified of the need to develop such a policy.

The committee discussed a draft LPC policy that was modeled after Mt. San Jacinto College's Regular Effective Contact Policy. In particular, it discussed whether an instructor writing and posting a lecture constitutes effective contact and whether or not we can include the sentence beginning with, "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…"

Jane mentioned that what is posted in the syllabus has contractual implications. The committee agreed to change the words “will be posted” to “can be posted”. The committee tasked Scott to make that change and send the draft policy to all DE and hybrid instructors for feedback.

V. Updates

- **DE evaluation language:** At the FA meeting of DE committees from the two colleges Aug. 16, it was decided that evaluators would have 24 hours within a Blackboard course to evaluate and would have access to one module or one week’s worth of student work. This is what the LPC DE committee recommended last Spring. Evaluees can extend the time limit at their discretion. The Bb admin will input the evaluator into the course with blocked access, and it will be up to the evaluee to unblock the evaluator at the beginning of the 24 hours and block the evaluator at the end of the 24 hours. The evaluee will then contact the Bb admin to remove the evaluator from the course. Also, language will change to allow the evaluation of instructors teaching for the first time when that first time is during a Summer session. The above will be negotiated with the district. The committee discussed the fact that the language contains no mention of when the evaluation should take place during the semester. This was prompted by the evaluation of an instructor beginning the second week of classes. Jane said she will pass the committee’s concern to the FA Executive Board.

- **DE report to board:** This annual report was submitted to VP Noble on Aug. 22. It is supposed to go to the college president before being submitted to the board as an information item. When the report is approved, it will be posted along with past reports on the DE Committee grapevine site.

- **Mobile Learn pay version:** On Sept. 10, 2012, the free version of the Blackboard Mobile Learn app will no longer work. If you try to access the app from your mobile device on or after that date, you will be asked to pay either $1.99 for one-year of access to Blackboard or $5.99 for an unlimited amount of time. The paid app will work with iOS and Android devices on all carriers and networks. It will be available for download through the App Store and Google Play. This arrangement is for mobile devices that use the app; Blackboard remains free to use on a computer. It is also free to use in a browser on a mobile device that is not using the app. The above information has been placed on the Bb login page, as well as on the Mobile Learn page on the Online Learning site. Vicky suggested that it also be put on the Zone for students who log into Bb that way. Scott will do this.

- **State authorization**: In a Dear Colleague letter issued on July 27, the U.S. Department of Education revealed that it will NOT enforce the DE provision of the state authorization regulations. However, the controversy over the regulations raised awareness that colleges still need to adhere to state regulations. Therefore, LPC must still seek authorization to enroll out-of-state students into DE classes. The Office of Institutional Research reported that two students took LPC DE courses from Texas during Spring 2012. Because of that, a letter from VP Noble was sent to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on July 16 to inform the board that we enrolled two Texas students and to ask for an exemption. Texas offers exemptions if the petitioning college is accredited and has no physical presence in its state. LPC meets both criteria. Texas contacted VP Noble on July 31 with a form letter, stating that we should assess our status based on a flowchart on its web site. That was done, and now we have a Statement of Exemption from the Texas board.

- **DE waitlist:** According to CTO Jeannine Methe, the two issues the committee broached at our last meeting – adding to the waitlist FAQs and students emailing the instructor to get into the course while others are using their 48 hours to decide to add or not – have been resolved. The latter was solved by adding a column that tells the student that the course is open, closed, has a waitlist or requires add authorization.

- **Substantive Change Proposal:** As mentioned at the last meeting, work will begin on the college's third Substantive Change Proposal later this semester. LPC has several degrees and certificates, including AA-T degrees in Sociology and Psychology, that need ACCJC approval.

- **Upgrade to Bb 9.1 SP9:** Since we typically make major upgrades to the Blackboard system prior to each Summer session, the early plan right now is to upgrade to version 9.1 SP9 prior to Summer 2013. This release introduces new features, such as automatic re-grading of exams, course themes (preset design options), and course structures (content and course menu item links for particular types of courses). It also supposedly changes the way data is integrated from Banner. The data integration part will require research from Bb system admins and District ITS. SP10, which is supposed to be released in October, is a bigger upgrade that features social media as a centerpiece.

- **State legislation update:** Senate Bills 1052 and 1053 have passed the Senate and Assembly Appropriations Committees and the Senate floor. If they become law, they will become operative only if funding is secured. SB 1052 would establish the California Open Education Resources Council (composed of 3 faculty senate members from each of the higher education segments in California), which would determine the 50 most popular courses, then review and approve open source materials before promoting strategies for their use. SB 1053 would establish the California Digital Open Source Library (under the administration of the CSU) to house open source materials and provide free or low-cost online access to these materials for students, faculty and staff.

- **LPC mission statement and DE:** In October, the College Council, as part of its Mission Statement Review Process, is supposed to disseminate the mission statement to constituency groups for feedback. This will be our opportunity to meet the DE accreditation guideline that states: "Evidence of analysis of how the institution's mission statement is developed, approved, and communicated to all stakeholders taking the institution's commitment to distance education and/or correspondence into consideration."

  Richard asked about the college's commitment to DE in light of the fact that his discipline is considering cutting DE courses for Spring because of possible budget constraints. Jane mentioned that her discipline is doing the same. Richard doesn't believe the positive aspects of DE get communicated properly to the entire college. Those positive aspects include that DE courses fill very quickly, survey results consistently show that students are happy with DE courses and the DE program, those results show that students want MORE DE classes and degrees/certificates, they open access to students who might not be able to take college classes, they provide students with options to suit their learning styles, they are less expensive than face-to-face courses in terms of infrastructure, and are better for the environment. Richard suggested 15 minutes at a town meeting in late Spring for a presentation.

VI. **DE goals in Common Tool:** On July 26, Scott sent an email to the committee, asking for feedback about the DE goals included in the Teaching and Learning Center's Program

Development Common Tool. This was requested by the Office of Institutional Research. Scott added some items and changed others. Rajinder Samra wants this feedback by today. At the time of the original email, Richard replied, asking for an addition to the section about instructor development that discusses promoting exchanges of best practices among DE instructors. Scott added this in. Richard added that a best practices forum could possibly be done once a year at either the second half of a town meeting or on the Friday after Convocation. Scott suggested such a meeting for DE instructors at both colleges during Convocation if the same format as this year will be followed in the future. Concerning the Common Tool, the committee was OK with all of the recent modifications.

VII. **Online tutoring:** Online tutoring for Fall will begin Sept. 17. Pauline Trummel has identified two students, Brenna Gomer (Writing) and Ben MacDonald (Math), who will provide tutoring. Ben will tutor from 4-6 on Tuesdays and 2-4 on Wednesdays. However, Ben doesn't do Stats, but Brenna does. Brenna will work Mondays and Wednesdays from 4-6. Because of the need to separate live tutoring hours between Writing and Math, Brenna will only do asynchronous tutoring for Stats.

On Tuesday, they are scheduled to be trained by Scott to provide synchronous and asynchronous tutoring. This will be the final semester that the Foundation will fund Math tutoring. Pauline said she is planning to integrate Math online tutoring in Spring 2013.

Spring 2012 stats: Writing – 16 student sessions completed, 11 students served, 11 students retained, 10 students had success (3 A's, 7 C's, 1 F). Math – 8 student sessions completed, 4 students served, 4 students retained, 3 students had success (1 B, 2 C's, 1 F). Because the number of students was so low, Scott suggested that the committee consider a model that combines synchronous and asynchronous tutoring within Blackboard.

VIII. **DE accreditation guide evidence:** Over the summer, Scott brainstormed ideas of ways we can obtain evidence for the accreditation guidelines. He shared what he did with the committee. He asked Frances if she could work on the guidelines under Library and Learning Support Services. He said that at some point, we need to work on actually obtaining evidence, instead of just brainstorming. In the interest of time, we will begin finishing the brainstorming process at our September meeting.

Scott mentioned that a new rubric is being drafted that will be used for evaluating DE. The rubric is similar to the one ACCJC uses to evaluate Student Learning Outcomes, Program Review, and Institutional Effectiveness. Over the summer, Scott gave feedback on the first draft.

IX. **Spring 2012 retention and success rates:** In Spring 2012, for the first time in either a fall or spring semester, the retention rate reached 80 percent. In fact, it was only 6 percentage points below the retention rate of students in non-DE courses. Moreover, the success rate was 63 percent, the highest for a spring semester ever at LPC. The previous high was 61 percent in Spring 2010. The committee didn't feel any action was warranted as a result of these rates.

X. **Online success course:** Scott met with Diana Rodriguez, VP of Student Services, over the Summer and discussed the proposed .5-unit course on how to be a successful online learner. Diana said she would task one of her faculty members to champion the course through Curriculum. Scott then mentioned the possibility of an optional course that could be made available to every student already taking a Bb course. It would include elements of the current orientation online and just be there for students who want to learn more. Javi said it would be important to tell students exactly what the course is about and why it's there.

XI. **Policy for installing building blocks to Bb:** Scott mentioned that Bb admins at LPC and Chabot struggle with whether or not to install building blocks each time an instructor requests one. We currently have no process. These building blocks, which are add-ons to Bb, come from textbook publishers, among others. Any time, something is added to the Bb system, there is a potential for harm. At the least, these can add lots of unnecessary items to menus within Bb.

Scott asked if we should try to create a policy surrounding the installation of building blocks. Discussion of this item will continue next month.

XII. **Future meetings – use of CCC Confer:** We did not get to this item because of time constraints. It will be placed on the September agenda.

XIII. **Academic honesty addition:** Jane mentioned a scenario of possible student cheating during one of her Summer courses and would like the committee to discuss adding further language to the Academic Honesty Statement. We'll take this up next month.

XIV. **DE faculty survey:** We did not get to this item because of time constraints. It will be placed on the September agenda.

XV. **DE drop policy and Summer term:** We did not get to this item because of time constraints. It will be placed on the September agenda.

XVI. **Policy for adding non-instructors of record into Bb courses:** We did not get to this item because of time constraints. It will be placed on the September agenda.

XVII. **Student authentication:** We did not get to this item because of time constraints. It will be placed on the September agenda.

XVIII. **Next meeting:** Friday, Sept. 28. This meeting will be held from 10-12 in Room 2410.

XIX. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:xx a.m.