



Substantive Change Proposal

Identified Change: Addition of courses that constitute 50% or more of a program offered through a mode of distance or electronic delivery

Institution: Las Positas Community College

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Description of the Change

Since Las Positas College’s original Substantive Change Proposal was approved in March 2007, the college has increased its distance education offerings to the point where seven more certificate programs and two more degree programs have at least 50 percent of their courses offered at a distance. Las Positas is seeking approval to offer these programs in the distance education mode.

Certificate Program	Percentage of Courses Offered at a Distance
Business: Bookkeeping	67% (4 of 6 courses)
Business: Marketing	63% (12 of 19 courses)
Business: Retailing	53% (10 of 19 courses)
Business: Retail Management	50% (7 of 14 courses)
Computer Information Systems: Project Management	67% (6 of 9 courses)
Computer Networking Technology: Network and Wireless Security	60% (3 of 5 courses)
Computer Networking Technology: TCP/IP Network Analysis	83% (5 of 6 courses)

Degree Program	Percentage of Courses Offered at a Distance
AA - Business Administration	52% (11 of 21 courses)
AA - Social Science (General)	50% (7 of 14 courses)

In addition, the Computer Networking Technology Emerging Technologies certificate, the CNT Computer Network Technician certificate, the CNT Computer Forensics Examiner certificate, the Computer Information Systems Web Development certificate, and the AA degree in Psychology (Transfer Prep) are close to reaching the 50 percent threshold and are projected to meet or exceed that mark. Therefore, Las Positas College requests approval for those programs, as well.

Reasons for the Change

The mission of Las Positas College is to provide “educational opportunities that meet the academic, intellectual, career-technical, creative, and personal development goals of its diverse students. Students develop the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community.” These additional certificates offer students in career-technical programs the skills necessary to help strengthen the local economy and achieve their career goals. Courses in the Social Science (General) and Psychology (Transfer Prep) degrees offer students more options to fulfill their transfer requirements.

The online format allows all students—many of whom are working professionals—the flexibility they need to complete course work. Because the college is located close to the 580 and 680

interstate exchange, traffic and long commutes add to the necessity of online learning for those students unable to make the drive or attend classes at any other time. Online courses also provide access for students with disabilities that make it difficult for them to travel to the campus or interact in person. For those students who have had difficulties gaining admittance into four-year colleges or universities recently, some are taking online courses at Las Positas to fulfill their requirements. Overall, the students who are coming to Las Positas are more technologically savvy than ever before, and they are choosing to get some, if not all, of their education online where possible.

Faculty at Las Positas are becoming more comfortable with technology, too, and as they do, more are interested in teaching online courses in order to meet their students' needs. Finally, while college enrollments have increased four percent annually over the past five years, the number of instructional facilities has not kept up with the pace. Without adequate facilities for face-to-face instruction, the online delivery format has provided access to programs and degrees that otherwise would not have been available.

Description of the Planning Process

The intended benefits of this change are that as students complete the certificates and Business degree in vocational disciplines, they will not only update their knowledge and skills, but they will also improve their chances of retaining and/or gaining employment in this struggling economy. It is also likely that students completing coursework in the Social Science (General) and Psychology (Transfer Prep) degrees will continue their studies at four-year institutions. The overall college infrastructure that will support these additional programs should not be affected much, if at all. All online and hybrid courses are hosted on the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District's Blackboard system, and there is ample room on the system for the courses within these programs. Blackboard administers the system at one of its facilities in Virginia, so there is no impact on district technical personnel. Many instructors for these courses have already been trained, so their support needs should be minimal. Over three full-time equivalent staff members are available to provide students with the technical support they might need. The college continues to supply students with a large number of online support services, including admissions, registration, library resources, and an online bookstore. These systems have been in place for years and will not be adversely affected.

The assessment of needs and resources to support online learning took place long before the aforementioned certificates and degrees reached the 50 percent threshold for Substantive Change. This assessment began in 2000 when Las Positas began the planning process for an online program. The narrative of this process was detailed in the college's 2007 Substantive Change Proposal. In a nutshell, all relevant constituency groups worked together to develop procedures and guidelines around topics such as targeted courses, faculty training, faculty incentives, faculty load, hiring faculty support personnel, online class size, intellectual property rights, choosing a course management system, creating a budget for distance education, student technical support, program evaluation, and developing best practices in designing online courses.

Currently, Las Positas utilizes a formal process to determine the need of adding online certificates and degrees. Discussion and analysis takes place within the Enrollment Management Committee, the Planning and Budget Committee, the Facilities Committee, as well as within the Program Review process (ref. Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4). Community feedback is also solicited. One example is from Visioning Day 2009, an event that included representatives from the entire college community, including local business owners and other external stakeholders, that served as a catalyst for the college's strategic planning efforts (ref. Appendix 5).

In the 2007 Substantive Change Proposal, the college listed several challenges in the pursuit of quality online education (ref. Appendix 6). Here are those challenges, along with solutions that have been implemented:

- Maintain and expand institutional equipment and resources to keep technology and staff current in this ever-evolving arena. Las Positas faculty now have the ability to capture live lectures digitally to post on the web (ref. Appendix 7). They also now have access to digital video and digital image repositories, and they can post online multimedia onto the college's iTunes U site, the new Las Positas YouTube Channel, or the EduStream hosting service (ref. Appendix 8, 9, 10, 11).
- Further integrate planning, decision-making, and support into other college areas and constituencies. The Distance Education Strategic Plan was adopted in May 2008 with the original thought that it would be incorporated into the Las Positas Educational Master Plan (ref. Appendix 12). However, the college has since embarked on a different institutional planning process as a result of our recent accreditation self-study. The result is that distance education planning will be included within the new Non-Instructional Program Review process (ref. Appendix 13). A pilot is currently underway, and since distance education falls under the purview of the Innovation Center, it will be included in the Innovation Center's program review. Goals and outcomes that have been accomplished from the original DE Strategic Plan are detailed below.
- Identify and implement supporting policies including ensuring quality of course design. An evaluation process for faculty teaching online has been negotiated into the faculty contract (ref. Appendix 14).
- Pursue and implement innovative programs and services that promote access and success concerns specific to online learners. Las Positas implemented a DE Counseling pilot on a limited basis whereby an adjunct counselor was proactive in contacting at-risk online students in an attempt to help them succeed in their classes. The college upgraded to Blackboard version 7.2, which includes a tool called the Early Warning System, designed to identify and communicate with students who might be falling behind in class. Furthermore, Dr. Vincent Tinto, an expert on retention and learning communities from Syracuse University, addressed Las Positas faculty during a two-day seminar (ref. Appendix 15). Although more work needs to be done in this area, retention and success rates have improved in online courses, going from an average of 72.3 percent and 57 percent, respectively, in the 2006-07 academic year, to an average of 75.3 percent and 60.3 percent in 2008-09 (ref. Appendix 16).

The issue of access, particularly to students with disabilities, has always been paramount at Las Positas. In late 2009, the college began to address the problem of instructors posting videos in their online courses that did not include closed captioning by participating in the statewide DE Captioning Grant (ref. Appendix 17). This program allows staff to work with a vendor to get all videos captioned, while the administrator of the grant, College of the Canyons, reimburses the vendor for services rendered.

- Work with the community and local industry to plan for online development in areas which meet local needs. Two of the activities within Goal 6 of the DE Strategic Plan are to design and develop additional courses for both traditional and nontraditional students, and to market specific courses to potential students throughout the community. The certificates and programs in this proposal are designed for both traditional and nontraditional students. Students are surveyed to determine their distance education course preferences (ref. Appendix 18).

Las Positas also stated in the 2007 proposal that it would enhance its online counseling and online tutoring, as well as its DSP&S, Financial Aid, and Health Center online services. Since then, Las Positas has added an online study skills course (Psychology Counseling 15) that teaches study skills for online learners, added a counseling web page specifically dedicated to online students to its Online Learning web site, produced a video explaining counseling services, and begun investigating other online counseling and tutoring resources (ref. Appendix 19, 20). The Online Learning web site's Students with Disabilities page has been updated with links to tutorials on how to make Windows XP and Vista more accessible (ref. Appendix 21). It also now contains links to make the Internet Explorer and Firefox browsers more accessible. In addition, other projects completed include training counselors on using DegreeWorks (a web-based academic advising, degree audit, and transfer articulation tool), producing a video tutorial for students on how to register for classes, adding a Financial Aid video tutorial to help students better understand Cal Grants, allowing students to make appointments with the Health Center online, and allowing students to assess their health by completing an online survey (ref. Appendix 22, 23, 24).

As mentioned above, several tasks in the DE Strategic plan have been accomplished.

- Surveys to determine students' DE course preferences have been launched and analyzed by the DE Committee (ref. Appendix 25).
- Developing faculty incentives for course development was met with the creation of a program to provide students with online course opportunities that satisfy both AA General Education and IGETC requirements (ref. Appendix 26).
- As previously mentioned, DE will be incorporated into the Non-Instructional Program Review process.
- Although a streaming server was not purchased, Las Positas gained free usage of the EduStream server for this purpose.
- An inclusive method for getting faculty input on purchases of major hardware and software tools was established when the shared governance DE Committee decided to evaluate potential purchases in its meetings (ref. Appendix 27).
- Students continue to get surveyed to determine if they meet the program outcomes for DE (ref. Appendix 28).

- The DE Committee addressed the issue of mandatory versus voluntary faculty training and was able to get the Academic Senate to approve the following statement: “Whereas Blackboard is such an integral part of our education, all faculty who use it need proper training, including training in copyright and accessibility issues”. The approved language was inserted into the Online Learning Faculty Handbook and on the Four I’s web page on the Staff Development site (ref. Appendix 29, 30).
- Finally, the Las Positas administrative staff has been trained on the important aspects of DE at Las Positas so they are knowledgeable about the program (ref. Appendix 31).

A few of the plan’s tasks were started, but have yet to come to fruition. Helpdesk software has been obtained, and it is currently being configured and tested. It is scheduled to be implemented in Summer 2010 in order to move a step towards offering 24x7 student technical support. In addition to being included in the DE Strategic Plan, weekend support is on the college’s planning agenda emanating from the accreditation self-study. Another item in the DE plan is to develop options to help ensure students are ready to take online courses. One of these options is to create a page that can be used in the student online registration process that gives information about distance education to potential students prior to registering for a DE course. This will hopefully be implemented by Summer 2010.

A third item in the DE plan is to provide intervention counseling services to at-risk online students. During Spring 2009, two counselors began researching best practices for providing these services, and one of them worked with two instructor volunteers to do preliminary outreach in order to develop a solid plan for Fall 2009 when this program was to be implemented in earnest. However, it was temporarily suspended due to budgetary problems emanating at the state level. Budgetary problems also claimed an online tutoring pilot. That pilot, which featured an English instructor who would be giving writing assistance to students enrolled in online English courses, was scrapped just prior to its implementation semester of Spring 2010. ePortfolios, which can be used as a method for measuring student outcomes, were supposed to be piloted in Fall 2009, but though a class set of ePortfolios was purchased, that program has yet to start.

Outside of the DE Strategic Plan, the college has seen other accomplishments since its last Substantive Change Proposal:

- The DE Committee, working closely with Chabot’s DE Committee, developed language on dropping DE students that was approved by the Senate and by the college administration. The new language says: “The instructor may drop students who miss the first meeting of a course. The first meeting of online or hybrid distance education courses is the first day of the class as specified in the class schedule listing. For these courses, instructors may drop students who do not login to their Blackboard course and/or complete indicated activities by the third day of classes.” This language was inserted into several places on the Online Learning web site (ref. Appendix 32). It is also supposed to be inserted into the college catalog.
- A new course request form was developed, allowing faculty to request Blackboard courses directly within the district’s online academic computing system.

- Las Positas participated in a statewide DE Retention Study, which examined reasons why some students drop online courses (ref. Appendix 33).
- Las Positas was selected as one of a handful of colleges across the state to participate in a site visit by a consulting group that conducted a statewide needs assessment on web accessibility for students with disabilities.

Evidence of Institutional Provision for Human, Administrative, Financial, and Physical Resources and Processes

Las Positas' online courses have been developed and are taught by our regular full-time and adjunct faculty. Each faculty member is hired under the same quality criteria as applied to the hiring of faculty that teach any course offered by the college. Since approximately 2001, the ability to teach in a variety of modalities, including distance education, has been a criterion in the hiring of all full-time faculty, and is included on a case-by-case basis for adjunct hiring, depending upon the expected assignment. Once hired, the college provides all faculty, adjunct and full-time, with access to further extensive professional development opportunities in online teaching.

The Vice President of Academic Services provides leadership and oversight of online offerings; in the same manner this office provides oversight of all academic programs. Each Dean is responsible for the support and management of online offerings in their assigned areas. Additionally, the Vice President is also responsible for overall coordination of online offerings, and is the supervisor for online support staff. This support staff includes an Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator, an Instructional Technology Support Specialist and staff in the college's Computer Center that provides a helpdesk function for online students. Online offerings also receive staff support from regular college functions such as Admissions and Records and Financial Aid. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning has also provided important support allowing for data-driven planning by the various groups and individuals responsible for online learning.

Through District Information Technology Services, the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) oversees the licensing of, and contract with, the course management system vendor, Blackboard, Inc. The CTO also manages the district's Senior Programmer Analysts who contribute to the administration of online education by developing technical processes by which faculty can request courses, students can evaluate instruction, and perhaps most importantly, by connecting SCT Banner, the district's administrative computing system, to Blackboard via a tool called Snapshot Controller.

Blackboard, Inc. hosts the server on which all of the online courses are delivered and manages the Snapshot process. It also hosts a test server and a faculty/system administrator support web site, as well as manages the Snapshot process. The college's system administrator for Blackboard consults with Blackboard Technical Support Managers on any problems relating to the

production server, test server, or the Blackboard software. A Blackboard account manager deals with contract issues and facilitates discussions on any high-level issues.

The district pays for the licensing of the Blackboard server, in addition to the Snapshot Controller and the Blackboard-provided support just detailed. It also pays the salaries of the CTO and two analyst positions. The salaries of the college employees are paid from Las Positas College's portion of the district budget.

At Las Positas College, the Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator runs the daily operations of the college's instructional technology efforts (including distance education), administers the Blackboard server, and trains and supports faculty not only in the technical skills needed to use Blackboard, but also in the pedagogical skills necessary to design, develop, and teach online courses. This person has a master's degree in Instructional Technology. Assisting the coordinator is the Instructional Technology Support Specialist, a full-time position responsible for technical support of all instructional technologies, along with training and support in making online materials accessible to students with disabilities. As mentioned, student technical support is provided by our Computer Center staff, which helps students with problems logging in to Blackboard, submitting assignments, etc.

The Online Course Development Program (OCDP) is the college's vehicle for training faculty to design, develop, and teach online courses. Based on best practices in online pedagogy, participants will design and develop their course over one semester, and then they will typically teach it the following semester. Faculty can participate in either the face-to-face or online versions of the OCDP. The outcomes of the OCDP are that upon completing the training, faculty will be able to:

1. Design and develop an online course with sound instructional design and pedagogical principles, while incorporating current learning theory.
2. Teach an online course in a manner consistent with best practices in teaching and learning.
3. Utilize the various functions of Blackboard to design, teach, and manage an instructionally sound online course.

During the course development process—and while teaching their courses—faculty are supported by the Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator, the Instructional Technology Support Specialist, and by an online resource site called the Blackboard Online Learning Team (BOLT). With the BOLT's discussion board, faculty from Las Positas College and Chabot College can ask, and answer, pedagogical or technical questions. The discussion board is also available to see how other instructors are using Blackboard and to share successes, frustrations, and lessons learned. In the resources section of the BOLT, there is information on online pedagogy, including teaching tips and sample lesson plans, and tutorials on how to accomplish most Blackboard techniques.

After the first year of the Online Course Development Program (while it was still called the Pilot Program), Las Positas College received the 2002 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Educational Technology Focus Award for its Online AA Degree Pilot Program. The

award was in the category of distance learning. As defined by the California Chancellor's office, "This award honors campus projects that have identified and solved significant problems with an elegance worthy of emulation—to serve users, provide for professional development of campus constituencies, or otherwise apply the potential of educational technologies to the business and mission of the institution."

In addition to support resources for online course development, faculty have access to training and support on instructional technologies that enhance their courses. These technologies include:

- Podcasts, which are audio files that students can download to their MP3 players, iPods, or even some cell phones and listen to wherever they are.
- Streaming video, which faculty can create as a benefit for visual learners.
- Professional video clips, which are licensed to the college and used to present content.
- StudyMate, which allows faculty to create interactive Flash lessons that serve as study resources, typically prior to exams.
- Inspiration, a program that creates concept map diagrams that particularly benefit visual learners.
- CCC Confer, an online web- and/or phone conferencing tool that can be used for either office hours or one-on-one tutorial sessions with students.
- Camtasia, a software tool that, among other things, allows faculty to narrate PowerPoint presentations and turn them into Flash files for posting online.

While faculty are participating in the Online Course Development Program, they undergo training on web accessibility in order to meet the requirements of Sections 504 and 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should faculty need online help, they can access Las Positas College's Web Accessibility web site, which includes guidelines, examples, related links, and the college's Interim Web Accessibility Policy (ref. Appendix 34, 35). The policy, which was created by a Task Force that included faculty, staff, and an administrator, was accepted by the Technology Committee in April 2003. The Task Force also designed a program in which students in the college's Visual Communications department worked with faculty to make instructional web content accessible to students with disabilities. This program was recognized with a Technology Focus Award from the California Community Colleges in September 2003. Additionally, the college is currently participating in the DE Captioning Grant, which is a statewide service that provides closed captioning and transcriptions for videos and audios in distance education courses (ref. Appendix 36).

All of the face-to-face training for the Online Course Development Program and other instructional technologies takes place in the college's Innovation Center. The Innovation Center is a 1,879-square-foot facility that houses 15 faculty workstations, a studio for digital recording, wireless Internet access, and a host of other innovative technologies. Because the Innovation Center is part of the college's official Staff Development efforts, it also includes a Staff Development lounge. Workshops and individual trainings are publicized by Staff Development. Other methods of faculty support for online learning come via faculty orientations and the faculty contract. The Instructional Technology/Open Learning coordinator has historically addressed faculty new to the college each semester by participating in the new faculty orientation process. At these sessions, he gives an overview of Instructional Technology and the support

available. These orientations are currently being transitioned for online delivery. In recent years, the faculty contract has added items specific to distance education, several of which aim to mirror provisions for teaching face-to-face. Examples include the Evaluation of Instruction process and the class size limits (ref. Appendix 37).

The student technical support for Blackboard login problems, submitting assignment problems, etc., is provided in the following ways: face-to-face, telephone, direct email, and via an online form on the support web page that automatically generates an email to the support account. In a Spring 2004 student satisfaction survey regarding the Blackboard software and technical support, the support desk received high marks (ref. Appendix 38). Aside from technical support, students also have access to other online services provided by the college and district, including email, admissions, course registration, counseling, financial aid, and library services. As mentioned, however, the college's efforts to offer sustained online counseling and online tutoring services have been stymied by budget problems.

To further assist students, Las Positas College offers a tutorial on its Online Learning web site called "Succeeding in an Online Course" (ref. Appendix 39). This tutorial consists of 7 lessons:

1. **What is an online course?**
2. **Are online courses right for you?** Includes 10 facts students need to know about online courses and a profile of students who tend not to do well in online courses.
3. **Successful study strategies.** Includes Getting Ready to Learn, Choosing the Right Time and Place to Study, Avoiding Procrastination, Developing a Support System, Participating Actively in Class, Reading Actively and Taking Notes, Preparing for (and Taking) Exams, Working in Groups, and Researching Effectively and Efficiently.
4. **Communicating online.** Includes Netiquette, Using Emoticons and Acronyms, and Tips for Writing Emails and Discussion Postings.
5. **Online student ethics.** Includes Cheating on Exams, Plagiarism, Copyright Violations, and Inappropriate Postings. Also includes links to the Academic Honesty Statement of the Las Positas College Faculty Senate, and the college's Student Conduct and Due Process policy.
6. **Preparing technologically.** Includes Computer Requirements, Web Browser Information, Plug-ins, Software, Student Email Addresses, and Password Information.
7. **Las Positas College resources.** Includes information on students with disabilities and technical support for students.

The college offers an online study skills course that includes instruction on how to be a successful online learner. This course has been developed and taught by a counselor who can be accessible to students who might need extra assistance with online course study strategies.

Students enrolled in online and hybrid courses are invited to attend on-campus or virtual orientations held the week before the semester begins and during the first week of classes. These orientations are designed to familiarize students not only with online learning in general, but also with utilizing Blackboard. They are not course-specific.

Typical topics covered at these orientations are:

- Dispelling myths about online courses
- Understanding the course requirements
- Online course overview
- Qualities of a successful online learner
- Tips to succeed online, including time management
- Student readiness for taking these courses, including those who tend to struggle
- Researching online
- Using Zonemail (the district's student email system)
- Basic Blackboard course navigation
- Using Blackboard course tools, including submitting assignments
- Blackboard tips, including those for taking quizzes
- Technical tips and requirements
- Technical support
- Academic support, including Counseling
- Popular FAQs
- Login procedures
- Importance of reading the class syllabus carefully
- Students with disabilities

For students who cannot attend the on-campus or virtual orientations, there is an asynchronous orientation posted on the Online Learning web site (ref. Appendix 40).

All of the activities affecting faculty and students are directed by the Las Positas Distance Education Committee. The committee, reporting primarily to the Academic Senate and secondarily to the Office of Academic Services, consists of 8 voting members (7 faculty and 1 Classified staff representative from the Innovation Center) and 5 non-voting members (2 Deans, 1 Vice President, 1 student, and 1 representative from Admissions and Records). The committee's charge is to "explore and recommend policies, procedures and tools to enhance student learning and services in the delivery of distance education offered through Las Positas College."

While providing the above, the committee has taken the lead in assuring quality in online courses by not only approving a set of best practices in designing online courses, but also by working with the faculty union to develop an Evaluation of Instruction process for online courses (ref. Appendix 41, 42). The committee has also sponsored faculty flex sessions in which online instructors present their courses to fellow faculty and discuss best practices.

As mentioned, the Distance Education Committee approved its first strategic plan in May 2008 (ref. Appendix 43). This plan identifies the DE needs of the college, as well as the areas where funding is needed. Presently, the college provides a budget for Instructional Technology, which is used to procure equipment, along with software licenses, for the Innovation Center.

Other institutional processes that contribute to online learning include marketing efforts, information provided for current and prospective online students, along with accommodations for any on-campus requirements. Marketing is done both online and in the printed schedule of classes. Online, students can search for, and register for, distance education courses in the district's CLASS-Web student information system. They can also view a listing of all online and hybrid courses by accessing the college's Online Learning web site. On the course listings pages on that web site, each course contains a link to additional, specific information that is intended to give prospective students a better understanding so they can make a more informed decision about registering for it. The Online Learning web site also gives students a plethora of other information they might need. Linked pages include Frequently Asked Questions, Technical Requirements, and Student Support. Similar information is provided to students in a dedicated Online Learning section of the printed schedule of classes. CLASS-Web, the Online Learning web site, and the printed schedule all provide information on on-campus requirements for hybrid courses. Hybrid course instructors, Department chairs, and the Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator work with the college scheduler to ensure that on-campus meeting dates, times, and locations are accurate.

Evidence that the Institution has Received Internal or External Approvals

Approvals for online courses and other online agreements have included: the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Senate; Las Positas College Council; collective bargaining agreements; Distance Education Committee and Technology Committee, which are subcommittees of Academic Senate and Planning and Budget Committee, respectively; and Chabot-Las Positas Board of Trustees. Committee structure on campus adheres to a shared governance process (ref. Appendix 44). Certificate and Degree programs and distance education modes of delivery have gone through the curriculum approval process of the college and the California Community College's System's Office. In keeping with Title 5 requirements for separate approval of online courses, the Curriculum Committee requires a DE proposal form for all online courses (ref. Appendix 45). There are no legal requirements to the development of online course offerings, but through the collective bargaining process, faculty and administration have addressed many related issues, such as intellectual property, course evaluation, office hours, and class size. It has been the position of both faculty and administration that policies related to online course development and delivery should parallel those for "face-to-face" delivery, whenever possible.

The college's first Substantive Change Proposal was approved by the ACCJC Committee on Substantive Change on March 16, 2007. In its approval letter, the committee stated: "The Committee commended the college for the completeness of the application. The Committee found that the information and documentation provided can serve as a model for the submission of courses offered through the mode of distance or electronic delivery. The information, background, and depth of research conducted in creating the environment and commitment to quality teaching and learning for faculty, students and the entire institution is a positive reflection of the College" (ref. Appendix 46).

In its January 2010 accreditation evaluation report, the ACCJC awarded the college's Innovation Center with a special commendation as part of the overall Information Technology commendation (ref. Appendix 47). The Innovation Center staff oversees and coordinates the distance education efforts of the college.

Evidence that the Eligibility Requirements will be Fulfilled

Las Positas College was last visited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC/WASC) in Fall 2009 and officially received notification of its accreditation reaffirmation in January 2010. The college completed its accreditation self-study report in Summer 2009 and will do so again in 2015. Las Positas College will continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation in the following areas:

1. **Authority:** Las Positas College has the authority to operate as a degree-granting institution by the State of California based on its continuous accreditation by the ACCJC/WASC. The development and offering of online courses falls within the scope of this authority.
2. **Mission:** Las Positas College's current mission statement was approved by college constituents in Fall 2008 and by the Board of Trustees on July 23, 2009. The offering of online courses and programs provides our community with additional educational opportunities and aligns with the college's commitment to diversity and to the preparation of students to fully participate in our technologically-oriented society.

Las Positas College is an inclusive, learning-centered institution providing educational opportunities that meet the academic, intellectual, career-technical, creative, and personal development goals of its diverse students. Students develop the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community.

3. **Governing Board:** The Chabot/Las Positas Community College District is governed by a Board of Trustees that consists of seven members elected by the county at large and two non-voting student trustees elected by the students of the two colleges. The function of the board is to determine policies, establish rules and regulations, and oversee the use of financial and other resources to ensure that they are used to provide a sound educational program consistent with the mission and goals of the district. The educational program includes all online offerings and services. The Board of Trustees approved this Substantive Change Proposal at its March 2010 meeting.
4. **Chief Executive Officer:** The Las Positas College President serves as the chief executive officer for the college and is responsible for the development of all programs and services and for the administration and operation of the college. The president was appointed by

the Board of Trustees.

5. **Administrative Capacity.** The college has a sufficient number of administrators to effectively manage the college's programs and services. All administrators are selected using appropriate statewide minimum qualifications and district guidelines and have the education and experience needed to perform their assigned duties, which includes oversight of, and support for, online courses and programs.
6. **Operational Status:** The institution is operational, with approximately 9500 students enrolled in Fall 2009. Most of these students are enrolled in courses that lead to degrees, certificates, or transfer. Online courses are extensions of existing courses and programs.
7. **Degrees:** Las Positas College offers 38 associate degree programs and 46 certificate programs. All students are enrolled in courses that either relate directly to completion of a degree/certificate program or are remedial/basic skill courses leading to degree/certificate applicable courses. Certificates and degrees offered via online courses are the same as those currently offered by the college.
8. **Educational Programs:** Las Positas College degree programs are congruent with the college's mission to provide a learner-centered education, with its values statement reflecting academic excellence. Programs are based on recognized higher education fields of study and conform to nationally recognized standards for content, length, quality, and rigor. Online courses and programs are designed and conducted with the same level of academic quality and rigor as traditional, face-to-face courses and programs.
9. **Academic Credit:** Credit for all coursework is awarded based on the Carnegie unit, the standard generally accepted in degree-granting institutions of higher education. When the Curriculum Committee approves a course, the awarding of credit is carefully reviewed for compliance with Title 5 of the Education Code. The award of credit is the same for online courses as it is for courses offered through other methods of instruction.
10. **Student Learning and Achievement:** The college's Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle process is currently working on defining the program learning outcomes, which will include assessment methods that will demonstrate that students who complete Las Positas College programs achieve the stated outcomes regardless of where or how they complete program requirements. Core Competencies that include general education courses have been developed and are included on the Student Learning Outcomes web site (ref. Appendix 48).
11. **General Education:** Las Positas College requires that any student receiving an AA or AS degree satisfactorily completes the college and general education requirements, basic competency requirements, and specific area requirements, in addition to the requirements of the student's major. All General Education requirements are listed in the Catalog. Additionally, Las Positas College requires proficiency in American Cultures and Mathematics. Many of the online course offerings have been developed to include

courses that meet the college's general education requirements.

- 12. Academic Freedom:** The Las Positas College statement on academic freedom is in the Faculty Handbook. In addition, the Faculty Association contract has a notation on academic freedom. The college adheres to the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District statement on academic freedom found in board policy 4320.

The academic freedom statement includes the following statement:

Academic Freedom exists and is nurtured in our community for the common good of all citizens. Students, faculty, administrators and society itself derive benefits from the practice of academic freedom with its open search for truth and its free exposition. Academic freedom is fundamental for the protection of the instructor's right in teaching and the student's right in learning in the classroom and on the campus. Academic freedom carries with it responsibilities correlative with rights, such responsibilities being implicit in all freedoms and assured by all members of the college to ensure the rights of others.

The use of online methods of instruction does not affect the academic freedom of faculty or students.

- 13. Faculty:** Las Positas has 104 fulltime faculty and 254 part-time faculty. All faculty, whether full-time or part-time, meet at least the minimum requirements established by the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges. The core of full-time faculty is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the institution's educational programs. The statement of faculty responsibilities is noted within the Academic Senate web site and is also noted in the Faculty Association contract. Online courses are developed and taught by qualified full-time or part-time faculty members who meet or exceed the minimum qualifications for their disciplines.
- 14. Student Services:** Las Positas College provides a wide range of student services including counseling, orientation, assessment, financial aid, transfer and career information, health services, and disabled student services. The focus of all student services is to help students successfully meet their educational goals. Most of these services are also accessible online, and the college is working toward making all services accessible online.
- 15. Admissions:** Las Positas College is an open access institution. The college admission policy is published in the college catalog beginning on page 11, and it clearly states the qualifications for admission to the college and its programs. Enrollment in online courses follows the same statutes and Board policies as for traditional courses.
- 16. Information and Learning Resources:** Las Positas College maintains a full-service library for student use. The library offers a wide range of print material including books, periodicals, and newspapers, as well as access to a vast array of electronic databases.

These databases, along with many other resources, are available to students over the Internet.

17. **Financial Resources:** The Chabot-Las Positas Community College District is funded by local property taxes and state apportionment. The district develops a budget, which is board approved. Using a district allocation process, the district distributes a portion of the district funds to Las Positas College, and the college independently develops an operating budget to support and improve student learning programs and services. The college has made a commitment to fund the development and offering of courses via online delivery to the same extent as for traditional courses. In some cases, additional funds have been allocated for the specific purpose of developing online courses.
18. **Financial Accountability:** The district undergoes an annual external audit by a firm of certified public accountants. The accountants present and explain the audit at a Board of Trustees meeting. Las Positas College is included in the audit as a sub-unit. The audit covers both the cost and income generated by online courses.
19. **Institutional Planning and Evaluation:** Las Positas College has both an operational planning and evaluation process and a strategic/future planning and evaluation process. Operational planning occurs in the program review process. This occurs across the campus within instruction and student services, and is in the process of being implemented in institutional programs that either offer services or that integrate into the other planning processes.

The college began its educational master plan process in 2003. In 2005, a revised master plan was created for 2005-2015 with updates to the plan in 2006 and in 2007. The educational master plan incorporated both an internal and external scan that was conducted after the 2003 accreditation site visit. External and internal scans, along with a comprehensive consultant college-wide forum schedule, created the current educational master plan model. Recommendations from program review have become a part of the educational master plan and are used as a part of the institutional budget and planning outcomes process. Areas of responsibility for Institutional Planning and Evaluation lie across the campus. Several shared governance committees participate in the recommendation process, including the Planning and Budget Committee, the Staff Development Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Facilities Committee, the Academic Senate, the College Council and the Distance Education and Technology Committees. Assessment of planning begins at the program review level with ultimate oversight of the planning and evaluation process lying within the College Council and its review. The program review cycle is a four year cycle and the educational master plan cycle is a ten year cycle with a yearly review and update. Online offerings are included in the program review process.

20. **Public Information:** The Las Positas College Catalog is available in print, on the web, and on CD. The catalog contains all of the following information in precise, accurate, and current entries:

- Official name, address, telephone number, and web site address of the college
- Educational mission
- Course, program and degree offerings
- Academic calendar and program length
- Academic freedom statement
- Available financial aid
- Available Learning Resources
- Names and degrees of administrators and faculty
- Requirements for:
 - Admissions
 - Student fees and other financial obligations
 - Degree, certificates, graduation, and transfer
- Major policies affecting students, including:
 - Academic regulations, including academic honesty
 - Nondiscrimination
 - Acceptance of transfer credits
 - Grievance and complaint procedures
 - Sexual harassment
 - Refund of fees

Many of these and other policies and procedures are to be found in the Schedule of Classes, the Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, and District Rules and Regulations.

21. **Relations with the Accrediting Commission:** Las Positas College adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards of the Commission and describes itself in identical terms to all agencies. The college communicates any changes in its accredited status and agrees to disclose all information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. The submission of this Substantive Change Proposal is in accordance with the college's commitment to the Commission.

Evidence That the Accreditation Standards will be Fulfilled

Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

- A. **Mission:** Las Positas College's current mission statement was approved by college constituents in Fall 2008 and by the Board of Trustees on July 23, 2009. The offering of online courses and programs provides our community with additional educational opportunities and aligns with the college's commitment to diversity and to the preparation of students to fully participate in our technologically-oriented society.

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness: The Distance Education Committee meets once a month to discuss the ongoing and future needs of DE faculty and students. Reports are submitted to the Academic Senate, the Vice President of Academic Services, and each division; minutes are also available online. The Distance Education Strategic Plan has ensured that issues of access, diversity, and support are addressed in an ongoing and timely manner. This committee also regularly reviews distance education student survey results, and it uses these results to evaluate student needs and incorporate them into the DE Strategic Plan. One example is the college's measurement of the Program Outcomes for DE. These outcomes were written as part of the DE Strategic Plan and are intended to identify the skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participation in the DE program at LPC. Students are asked to assess their skills in four areas: communication techniques online with instructors and classmates, basic skills within the course management system software, basic technology skills, and successful online study strategies. The results showed that students are meeting the program outcomes (ref. Appendix 49).

Planning for DE is currently being transitioned into the new non-instructional program review process that was described earlier. Since DE responsibilities fall under the Innovation Center, planning will be enveloped into the Innovation Center's program review. However, the DE Committee will remain the primary planning, evaluative and recommendation body for all DE matters.

Moreover, the Open Learning Coordinator submits an annual Distance Education Report to the Board of Trustees, and, again, the college's Distance Education Substantive Change Proposal was approved by the ACCJC's Committee on Substantive Change in March 2007 (ref. Appendix 50). Finally, as stated before, the college's Innovation Center, which oversees distance education, received a commendation as part of the overall Information Technology commendation from the ACCJC in its accreditation evaluation report in January 2010.

Standard 2: Student Learning Programs and Services

A. Instructional Programs:

The use of online delivery methods increases accessibility to education. Online delivery enables the college to provide existing students additional options for access to our high-quality programs, and it provides access for new students who were potentially limited by work schedules, distance, transportation, or other factors. The institution, faculty, and administrators commit significant resources to curriculum review, course and instructor review, and student learning outcomes for online learning. In addition, appropriate resources are available to faculty and students using online delivery systems.

Las Positas College has made a commitment to student access via distance education. As a result of focused efforts, students may now meet more than 50 percent of the requirements online for 12 certificate programs and nine associate degrees in areas of Business, Computing Technology, and Social Sciences. Of the 880 total sections offered at Las Positas in the Fall 2009, 81 sections were offered online, 16 were offered as DE

hybrids (51 percent or more of the class was delivered online), and 3,025 students were enrolled in these sections (ref. Appendix 51). To ensure that systems of delivery and modes of instruction are compatible with the course objectives, every course outline and course proposal form must be vetted and approved by the discipline, division, and Curriculum Committee. For a course that is offered fully or partially online, the DE Course Proposal Form must be submitted and approved by the discipline, division, and Curriculum Committee. Through this process, the institution ensures that differing systems of delivery contain the same course content and meet the same course outcomes.

The institution offers extensive support to instructors designing and teaching distance education courses. Group and one-on-one training for course development and design is offered in the college's Innovation Center by the Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator, with support from the Instructional Technology Support Specialist. In addition to these face-to-face training sessions, the institution offers online resources for instructors, including the Online Course Development Program (OCDP), Blackboard Online Learning Team (BOLT), an Instructional Technology/Blackboard site and an Online Learning Faculty Handbook (ref. Appendix 52, 53, 54).

A number of processes have been established to monitor students' success at meeting course objectives. Student learning outcomes are being developed and stored by all instructors for all courses in the eLumen assessment management system (ref. Appendix 55). Most online instructors have written SLOs for their courses (ref. Appendix 56). Course-level outcomes are being assessed in different ways, including traditional assessments such as written papers, projects, and exams, and alternative assessments such as student web sites and PowerPoint presentations.

Anecdotally, most students seem satisfied with their courses. In a Spring 2009 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Distance Education Student Survey, 83 percent of the 300 respondents said they would take another DE course from Las Positas (ref. Appendix 57).

Regular evaluation of all instructors as described in the faculty contract gives students, instructors, and administrators the opportunity to evaluate delivery systems, modes of instruction, and student needs. Specifically, the Evaluation of Instruction process for online courses in the contract allows faculty and administrators the ability to assess whether or not student needs have been met (ref. Appendix 58). Other ways of assessing satisfaction of the needs are through annual satisfaction surveys given to all online students, Student Services Program Review surveys, and a satisfaction survey completed by students at graduation ceremonies.

Statistical data for completion and success rates is gathered for all courses and analyzed by faculty as part of the Program Review process for their disciplines. This information is used to assess the effectiveness of the online delivery mode at the discipline level. Overall completion and success rates for online courses are compared to rates for face-to-face courses and are analyzed by the DE Committee to determine if improvements need

to be made to the online program as a whole (ref. Appendix 59). Results of the annual satisfaction surveys given to all online students are also analyzed (ref. Appendix 60).

Las Positas meets the requirement in the Higher Education Act of 2008 that stipulates that institutions authenticate the identity of distance education students submitting coursework. This authentication is done through the Blackboard login process. Each student is assigned a randomly generated user identification number, which is used to log into Blackboard. That number is used in lieu of students' Social Security numbers. Students enter their passwords, which are encrypted by Blackboard, and the system is further enhanced by the district taking the additional measure of adding SSL security to the login page. This is explained to students in the college's Blackboard Privacy Statement (ref. Appendix 61). As a secondary measure, students are identified by the default email addresses in Blackboard that are given to them by the district. Each email address is formatted based on students' names. The college also has access to online anti-plagiarism services Turnitin and SafeAssign. Aside from technical measures, Las Positas employs pedagogical measures. For instance, during training in the Online Course Development Program, faculty are encouraged to design multiple alternative assessments to evaluate student work, as opposed to relying strictly on exams (ref. Appendix 62). Furthermore, the college has posted a Reading and Writing Resources web site that, in addition to providing writing help to students, teaches faculty to design writing assignments that help ensure that plagiarism will be minimized (ref. Appendix 63).

B. Student Support Services:

Many of the college's academic resources are available on the web, including the catalog, schedule, course outlines and high school articulation information. The application and enrollment process, including payment, can be made entirely online. All students have access to bookstore services online, and they can also access Las Positas Campus Print Cards, Graphics Cards, Bus Passes, Class Schedules, etc. online. The college has devoted resources to ensuring the accessibility of web sites and courses to students with disabilities. Our home page includes an "Online Learning" link, which provides students with a variety of resources specific to online courses (ref. Appendix 64).

The institution offers additional support to students to help them meet the outcomes of courses taken online. As mentioned before, live face-to-face and virtual Online Learning orientations are offered before and during the first weeks of each semester, as well as an asynchronous orientation offered online that includes a tutorial for success in an online course (ref. Appendix 65, 66). Students can enroll in a study skills course that includes instruction about succeeding as an online learner. In addition, counseling is available to online students via email. Increased counseling, along with online tutoring and other academic support services, are included in the DE Strategic Plan, and work toward those services has begun (ref. Appendix 67).

Technical support for distance education students is made accessible through email, by phone, or in person (ref. Appendix 68). The DE Strategic Plan includes an activity to evaluate the feasibility of providing students 24x7 technical support, and the college is currently configuring helpdesk management software to address this need.

The recent accreditation evaluation report noted: “The team determined that the college assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution” (ref. Appendix 69).

C. Library and Learning Support Services:

In support of the college’s educational programs, the Las Positas College Library provides resources, information services, classes, and facilities that directly contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. To accomplish this, the Las Positas Library selects and maintains educational materials and equipment while providing comfortable facilities to support the varied learning needs of a diverse student population.

The Las Positas Library’s collection is balanced between print, audio-visual, and online materials to support Las Positas curriculum and student needs. Online materials are an increasingly important part of the library resources. These resources are accessible at all times from the library web page, providing convenient access to research materials for both the on- or off-campus student (ref. Appendix 70). The Library web site includes databases, an online catalog, access to faculty course reserves, library guides and tip sheets, a plagiarism tutorial, and a citation generator tool. To access the databases from off-campus, students and faculty log in with their college-assigned ID number and password.

Reference assistance by Las Positas librarians is available in person and by phone whenever the Library is open. The Library also provides an email reference service with a response time of within 24 hours Monday through Friday (ref. Appendix 71).

Library faculty have developed several academic courses, including Library 8 (Introduction to Library Research and Information Literacy), their first online course that debuted in Spring 2009. Library 8 teaches the skills needed to successfully find, evaluate, and document information in print, electronic, and Internet formats. It covers plagiarism, the ethical and legal aspects of information use, and the critical thinking skills necessary for successful college research.

Standard 3: Resources

- A. **Human Resources:** Faculty and staff who are involved with online courses and programs will continue to meet all the minimum qualifications and be held to the same standards as regular faculty and staff, in accordance with applicable state codes. Through the Innovation Center, faculty and staff have access to extensive training opportunities specific to online learning (ref. Appendix 72). These training resources include the ability to access to a wide variety of instructional technologies used in online instruction. Faculty who are interested in teaching online may choose to participate in the Online Course Development Program (OCDP). The purpose of OCDP is to train faculty to design, develop, and teach instructionally sound online courses. Each instructor who

finishes the OCDP provides feedback by completing a survey. Results of the survey are used to determine what, if any, improvements need to be made.

The college's Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator serves as the main faculty trainer, among other roles. This person has a master's degree in Instructional Technology, 11 years of experience, and sits on the statewide Educational Technology Advisory Committee. Assisting the coordinator is the Instructional Technology Support Specialist, a full-time employee responsible for technical support of all instructional technologies, along with training and support in making online materials accessible to students with disabilities. Student technical support is provided by the college's Computer Center staff, which helps students with problems logging in to Blackboard, submitting assignments, etc. That staff consists of three full-time employees, plus part-time help.

- B. **Physical Resources:** Faculty and staff have access to supporting technology in the college's Innovation Center, The Innovation Center is a 1,879-square-foot facility that houses 15 faculty workstations, a studio for digital recording, wireless Internet access, and a host of other innovative technologies. It also includes a Staff Development lounge. Evaluation of the Innovation Center is conducted by surveying faculty and staff who use the center's services. The survey seeks their level of satisfaction and to determine what training can be added and improved (ref. Appendix 73). Results are analyzed in conjunction with the Vice President of Academic Services, who is ultimately responsible for the Innovation Center and for Staff Development.
- C. **Technology Resources:** The District Information Technology Services (ITS) staff and the college computer support staff collaboratively provide support for the management, maintenance, and operation of the technological infrastructure and equipment. Services provided include instructional computing, administrative computing, system design and applications programming, network infrastructure (WAN and LAN), desktop support, Web development and support (Internet and Intranet), hardware and software support, centralized Help Desk, and user training. District ITS provides the system planning, development, operational control, monitoring, and security of services offered via the district's network infrastructure (ref. Appendix 74). With regard to maintaining equipment, the district and the Las Positas Technology Department establish vendor maintenance agreements or warranty terms to ensure service levels are sustained for all standard hardware and software.

The decision to purchase a license to utilize Blackboard was made by a district-wide committee with representatives from various constituencies, including several faculty members. The committee also decided to have Blackboard host, maintain, and support the server. Today, Blackboard hosts a test and development server and the Snapshot Controller function that connects the district's administrative computing system, SCT Banner, to Blackboard. Additionally, it is responsible for ensuring reliability, disaster recovery, and security (ref. Appendix 75). Since beginning Blackboard usage in the 2003-04 academic year, the number of course sections using Blackboard for online, hybrid and web-enhanced courses, and the number of Blackboard enrollments at Las

Positas each year have risen from 168 to 1,055 sections and from 4,426 to 26,143 enrollments, respectively, during 2008-09 (ref. Appendix 76).

Among the other technologies that faculty have access to are two online, anti-plagiarism services and an assessment management system, eLumen, as well as tools for creating streaming videos, podcasts, narrated presentations, and web pages (ref. Appendix 77, 78). The tools for creating such digital content are housed in the college's Innovation Center and are purchased based on faculty needs (ref. Appendix 79). Those needs are expressed informally and also through surveys. Furthermore, because the output of the aforementioned tools are posted online for distance education and non-distance education courses, procurement and usage of those tools are also discussed in the Las Positas Distance Education Committee. Technologies and technology services are detailed in the college's Technology Master Plan, the college's Distance Education Strategic Plan, and the district's Information Technology Services Strategic Plan (ref. Appendix 80, 81, 82).

Las Positas College has the following standing committees and areas that discuss, assess, and evaluate technological needs: Technology Committee, Distance Education Committee, Planning and Budget Committee, Division meetings, technology meetings conducted by the head of Las Positas Technology with individual programs as needed, Program Review reports by discipline and department that include assessment and identification of technology needs and concerns, and the Educational Master Plan. Both the college student and staff institutional surveys of 2007 address the issue of technology on the college campus and allow the responders to submit their personal opinions of Las Positas' progress and status technologically (ref. Appendix 83, 84).

- D. Financial Resources:** The Chabot-Las Positas Community College District contracts with Blackboard, Inc. to provide course management software access to online instruction. Board approval is required for contracts. Purchases and contract policies and procedures adhere to, and are compliant with, the California Education Code, the Government Code, Public Contracts Code, and Civil Code (ref. Appendix 85).

Other online learning technologies used by faculty and staff are purchased through a budget set up specifically for Instructional Technology at Las Positas.

Standard 4: Leadership & Governance

- A. Decision-Making Roles & Processes:** During 2005-2006, Academic Senate and Administration assessed, and in some instances modified, the shared governance structure. One of the beneficial changes was the elevation of the Distance Education Subcommittee, to status as a regular standing shared governance committee. This committee is primarily faculty driven, but includes student representation and administrative participation in an "ex officio" role. In addition to the Distance Education Committee, the Technology Committee also serves a role by making recommendations about technology infrastructure and support. These committees work with administration and the Planning and Budget Committee to ensure that planning documents such as the

Educational Master Plan, the DE Strategic Plan and the Technology Plan reflect adequate resources to effectively support online learning. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for approving courses for distance education delivery.

The Office of Academic Services, specifically the Vice President of Academic Services and Deans, also plays a key role in decision making and planning processes. This group regularly reviews progress, and works with faculty and the Distance Education Committee to plan and make changes as needed. The Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator, who coordinates the college’s online learning efforts, reports directly to the Vice President of Academic Services.

- B. Board and Administrative Organization:** The Board of Trustees for the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District gives final approval to all courses and contracts involving distance education. It also establishes policies, such as those for academic standards and access and use of district property, that affect distance education. The Board selects and evaluates the chief executive officer and confirms the appointment of other major academic and administrative officers, who collectively are ultimately responsible for the execution of distance education courses and programs (ref. Appendix 86).

Other Information for Commission Staff (Considerations for Distance Learning Programs)

Unexpected Growth

There hasn’t been much unexpected growth of distance education at Las Positas. Because of the popularity of online learning that began at the turn of the millennium, much of the growth has been anticipated. To read about the origins of the DE program, please reference the college’s 2007 Substantive Change Proposal (ref. Appendix 87). To read about the recent history of the program, reference the Description of the Planning Process section of this proposal. The chart below illustrates the growth of distance education courses—and the number of enrollments in those courses—over a five-year span.

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Total course sections	134	132	163	171	214
Total disciplines	20	26	25	26	29
Enrollment	4,366	4,744	4,991	5,669	6,795
Online course sections	134	132	163	157	176
Hybrid course sections	0	0	0	14	38

In addition, the number of faculty teaching online and hybrid courses over that same five-year span has increased each year from 27 to 32 to 35 to 39 to 41. Most of those same instructors who

taught online in 2004-05 are still teaching online, and as they become more familiar with online teaching and with the Blackboard system, their support needs tend to decline.

Increasing Expectations

Las Positas College provides the following institutional processes that impact student access and completion of online programs are available to students online.

- **Admissions.** Students can apply for admission online via the Las Positas College CCCApply web site (ref. Appendix 88).
- **Orientation.** A general orientation about Las Positas is being created and will be accessible from the college web site. Live and asynchronous orientations specific to online learning are offered each semester to students who don't want to, or can't, come to campus to attend face-to-face orientations (ref. Appendix 89).
- **Registration.** Students can register for classes using the online CLASS-Web system (ref. Appendix 90).
- **Advising.** As mentioned, a plan to provide intervention counseling services to at-risk online students was temporarily suspended due to budgetary problems at the state level. However, online students can always communicate with counselors via email and telephone (ref. Appendix 91).
- **Financial Aid.** Students can apply for financial aid online (ref. Appendix 92).
- **Course Delivery.** As mentioned, Las Positas offers fully online courses.
- **Communication with Students.** District ITS administers a student email system, which gives every student in the district a free email account. The system, named Zonemail, is hosted by Google (ref. Appendix 93).
- **Tutoring Services.** As mentioned, budget problems have curtailed the college's online tutoring efforts.
- **Graduation Applications.** Students can download the application form from the college's Graduation web site, but they must sign it and return it to the Admissions and Records office on campus. (ref. Appendix 94).
- **Transcript Requests.** Students can download a Transcript Request form from the college's Admissions and Records web site, but they must sign it and can either mail it or fax it back to the college (ref. Appendix 95).
- **Student Survey Collection and Analysis.** The college uses the online surveying tool Zoomerang and a survey function within CLASS-Web to deliver a multitude of surveys to students. Among the surveys delivered to online students are the DE Outcomes survey, the DE Preferences survey, and the Student Response to Instruction Form that is part of the official Evaluation of Instruction process for online courses (ref. Appendix 96, 97, 98). Results are automatically tabulated. An Institutional Planning and Research web site is being constructed, and it is anticipated that results and analysis will be posted there (ref. Appendix 99).

Student Success/Student Achievement Data

Although most research shows that online classes operate more optimally with fewer students, the district's faculty contract stipulates that there shall be no difference in class size whether the

class is online or face-to-face (ref. Appendix 100). By contract, the maximum number of students for many Math and English courses is 27. Other class maximums are 30, 35 and 45.

Like most California Community colleges, Las Positas has seen lower retention rates in its distance education courses than in its face-to-face courses. The chart below shows the comparison over the past two calendar years (ref. Appendix 101).

Spring 2008		Summer 2008		Fall 2008		
DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	
78%	85%	76%	88%	75%	85%	Retained
22%	15%	24%	12%	25%	15%	Not Retained

Spring 2009		Summer 2009		Fall 2009		
DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	
75%	84%	75%	85%	75%	84%	Retained
25%	16%	25%	15%	25%	16%	Not Retained

Source: Institutional Research and Planning Office

The college's most recent study of non-retained students came as part of the state Chancellor's Office DE retention study of Fall 2008 students. Results showed that these students dropped their courses primarily because of personal problems, such as family, health, job or child care issues (ref. Appendix 102).

The following chart shows a comparison of success rates (grades of C or above) for distance education versus face-to-face students over the past two calendar years.

Spring 2008		Summer 2008		Fall 2008		
DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	
60%	71%	66%	75%	57%	70%	Success
18%	15%	10%	13%	18%	14%	Non-Success
22%	15%	24%	12%	25%	15%	Withdrew

Spring 2009		Summer 2009		Fall 2009		
DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	DE	OTHER	
58%	70%	67%	80%	58%	70%	Success
17%	14%	14%	8%	17%	14%	Non-Success
25%	16%	19%	12%	25%	16%	Withdrew

Source: Institutional Research and Planning Office

Program Review and the Evaluation of Instruction process are the main vehicles for faculty to determine whether any changes need to be made to their courses. The Distance Education Committee reviews the overall data to determine if improvements are needed to the program as a whole.

All of the above data is gathered after each semester by the college's Institutional Planning and Research office. It is posted on the Distance Education Committee web site (ref. Appendix 103), and it is anticipated that it will be posted on the Institutional Planning and Research web site, as well.

Quality Assurances

Academic integrity in all courses at Las Positas is guided by the Faculty Senate's Academic Honesty Statement (ref. Appendix 104). For online courses, faculty are trained in techniques that minimize potential cheating, including plagiarism. Examples are randomizing exam questions, timing exams and forcing students to complete exams—kicking them out of the exam if they click anywhere else in Blackboard or on the Internet. Faculty are also trained to use anti-plagiarism services Turnitin and/or SafeAssign. Students are informed of these instructor options during optional orientations.

The college makes no distinction between course content in online courses versus face-to-face courses. This is reflected in the course outline of record for each course (ref. Appendix 105). The Curriculum Committee discourages making this type of distinction.

Although more faculty who have online teaching experience are being hired, the college trains all faculty who are interested in teaching online courses. The Online Course Development Program (OCDP), as noted earlier, trains faculty in both the pedagogical and technical skills needed to design and teach online. Training is conducted by the Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator, who has vast experience in this arena not only at Las Positas, but also working on behalf of statewide faculty training organization @ONE. He is currently completing his third year on the statewide Educational Technology Advisory Committee and was selected to participate in a statewide task force that is updating the system's DE Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities.

The college also does not require students to have prior experience before registering for online courses. Instead, it offers on-campus, virtual, and asynchronous orientations. Many instructors include an initial learning module in their courses that allow students to become comfortable with online learning before actual course content is presented. Furthermore, students have the option of enrolling in an online study skills course (Psychology Counseling 15) that teaches study skills for online learners.

The Innovation Center staff, which includes two full-time positions—the Instructional Technology/Open Learning Coordinator and the Instructional Technology Support Specialist—provide support to all online instructors. All faculty have access to the center, a 1,879-square-foot facility that houses 15 faculty workstations, a studio for digital recording, wireless Internet access, and a host of other innovative technologies. Training for the OCDP and workshops on all instructional technology topics take place in the center.

Student technical support is provided by the college's Computer Center staff, which helps students with problems logging into Blackboard, submitting assignments, etc. This helpdesk is

available by phone, email, or in person. All academic support services are available in person, and most are available by phone or email. The college's online counseling and tutoring programs have been temporarily suspended due to budgetary problems at the state level.

The college continues to make progress with its student learning outcomes endeavors. Outcomes at the course level for all courses are measured, and results are entered into the eLumen assessment management system. Program-level and institutional outcomes are also entered into, and assessed in, eLumen.

The mission of Las Positas College is to "provide educational opportunities that meet the academic, intellectual, career-technical, creative, and personal development goals of its diverse students. Students develop the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities to become engaged and contributing members of the community." Distance education integrates with this institutional mission by providing students who might not otherwise be able to come to campus the opportunity to fulfill their educational goals. The college's Vision Statement is even more clear in its commitment to distance education: "Las Positas College meets our students and community where they are and creates experiences for them that build their capacity, speak to their potential, and transform their lives." Several of the college's 10 Institutional Strategic Goals also pertain to distance education as they mention providing "excellence in teaching, student learning," offering "cutting edge educational opportunities," expanding "professional development for all employees," and expanding "an environment of accessibility." Finally, the first bullet point in the college's Values Statement says that Las Positas will "promote and celebrate lifelong learning" (ref. Appendix 106). Distance education, by its nature, allows people of any age to continue learning. The college's Strategic Planning process will ensure the continued integration into the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Institutional Strategic Goals, and Values Statement.

Las Positas meets the requirement in the Higher Education Act of 2008 that stipulates that institutions authenticate the identity of distance education students submitting coursework. This authentication is done through the Blackboard login process. Each student is assigned a randomly generated user identification number, which is used to log into Blackboard. That number is used in lieu of students' Social Security numbers. Students enter their passwords, which are encrypted by Blackboard, and the system is further enhanced by the district taking the additional measure of adding SSL security to the login page. This is explained to students in the college's Blackboard Privacy Statement (ref. Appendix 107). Moreover, students are identified by the default email addresses in Blackboard that are given to them by the district. Each email address is formatted based on students' names. Therefore, when a student emails an assignment to an instructor with the default address, the instructor can be reasonably sure that the assignment came from that student. Aside from technical measures, Las Positas employs pedagogical measures. For instance, during training in the Online Course Development Program, faculty are encouraged to design multiple alternative assessments to evaluate student work, as opposed to relying strictly on exams (ref. Appendix 108). Furthermore, the college has posted a Reading and Writing Resources web site that, in addition to providing writing help to students, teaches faculty to design writing assignments that help ensure that plagiarism will be minimized (ref. Appendix 109).

One final note to consider in this proposal: If there are further issues regarding Substantive Change, please understand that the Innovation Center is being renamed in Spring 2010 to the Teaching and Learning Center. Hence, future documents will reference the Teaching and Learning Center instead of the Innovation Center.

Appendix

Please note that if you are viewing this proposal electronically in either Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF, you can simply Control-click (Word) or single-click (PDF) any of the links below to view the corresponding document.

You can also access the Appendix via your web browser by going to <http://www.laspositascollege.edu/accreditation2009>, and clicking Substantive Change Proposal 2010 Appendix. To go directly to the Appendix, which resides on the college's Accreditation Document Repository, type the following into the address bar of your web browser:

[http://acclpc.laspositascollege.edu/lpcaccred.html#\[\[Substantive%20Change%202010%20Appendix\]\]](http://acclpc.laspositascollege.edu/lpcaccred.html#[[Substantive%20Change%202010%20Appendix]])

If you have any questions or problems with accessing the Appendix, contact Scott Vigallon at 925-424-1654 or svigallon@laspositascollege.edu.

Description of the Planning Process

Appendix 1 - [Enrollment Management Committee web site](#)

Appendix 2 - [Planning and Budget Committee web site](#)

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Appendix 6 - [2007 Substantive Change Proposal](#)

Appendix 7 - [Example lecture capture](#)

Appendix 8 - [Digital video and digital image repositories](#)

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