PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Department or Program: Distance Learning Center

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In providing responses in the following areas, **please utilize the quantitative data available in the Program Review Enrollment Data Document and the Budget Document.** For the purposes of the Program Review, both departments and programs will be referred to as "program."

I.   **Description and Mission of the Program**

Please check which area this program considerably falls under:

___ Basic Skills   __X_ Transfer __X_Career / Technical   ___Other (describe)

The Distance Learning Center (DLC) offers technology mediated learning in the areas of Transfer and Career / Technical.

A**.** Provide a brief description of the program including any services provided and the program's mission.

Distance learning provides educational opportunities that are not limited to the time and space constraints of traditional classes. By offering technology mediated educational opportunities to students the campus expands the population of students that are served.

Recently the Distance Learning Center has expanded its support to hybrid and traditional courses by making the instructional designer and course management system, Catalyst, available to all instructors. Allowing for more flexibility through hybrid offerings can increase enrollment in courses. Traditional courses are enhanced in access and efficiency by providing course content, student activities and assessment online according to the instructors' needs.

Specific services include:
- Offer customer service to students and faculty
- Support faculty in all distance learning related administrative duties
- Manage technology systems and resources
- Provide instructional design for technology mediated learning courses
- Provide training in Catalyst and online pedagogy

Numbers of students served and growth figures reflect distance learning students only. Currently, there is no mechanism in the student information system for tracking hybrid students that are also served by DLC.

B. Provide a summary of the program's main strengths.

Over the last decade, online (technology mediated) teaching and learning has become an integral part of the educational experience at De Anza college and most other colleges around the country. It prepares the students for real life work environment where online communication and group work is essential for their success. Being in the Bay Area further requires this competency, without which they cannot function in future jobs.

People working full-time, especially those in single parent homes, are frequently unable to attend traditional classes. The Distance Learning Center serves these students through courses that are not bound by the traditional restraints of time and space.

Distance and hybrid courses are the green alternative to traditional courses saving both the campus and the student money and reducing the carbon imprint on the environment. Distance learning requires very little space to operate and eliminates the resources necessary for maintaining the buildings. Common supplies associated with classes, such as paper, are no longer necessary and students do not need transportation to attend classes.

Technology mediated learning makes it relatively simple to deliver concepts in a variety of ways including text, video and multimedia. This flexibility assists students with diverse learning styles.

Enrollments in Distance Learning have grown over the last three years.
2005-06   9,434
2006-07   9,590
2007-08   10,709

Additionally, over the past two years productivity has increased from 533 in 2005-06 to 652 in 2007-08.

By providing distance learning courses the college supports non-traditional students in meeting their educational goals, provides green and budget conscious alternatives to traditional classes and offers ways to meet learning styles that might not be accommodated through oral presentation.

DLC staff are professional, innovative, come from diverse backgrounds and possess a wide variety of skill sets that are important in supporting our college instructional goals. The diversity in our staff enables us to accomplish our administrative, technical and strategic tasks. We strive to constantly improve our technology, process and service to better support the campus.

C. Provide a summary of the program's main areas for improvement.

The lack of degree offerings negatively affect the ability of the DLC to attract students to the program. Stronger support from leadership, as well as support from the faculty involved with certain disciplines, is needed for further growth. The ability to track students registered in hybrid courses would give a more realistic picture of the students served. As of Fall 2008, distance learning courses reached maximum enrollment. Unless additional distance learning sections are offered we will not be able to continue to grow.

As with all departments, the staff and budgets have been significantly reduced over the past few years. The impact of these reductions has adversely affected the ability of the DLC to expand services and innovate further.

The decision of the college to limit the number of distance learning courses an instructor can teach has negatively affected the ability of the DLC to offer more courses.

D. What are your expected outcomes (including student learning outcomes, transfer, career goals, certificate and degrees) for students in your program?

The majority of courses offered through the DLC are General Education courses required for students whose goals are to transfer or obtain a degree. A number of vocational courses are offered, particularly in ARTS, CAOS, CIS and BUS. A Certificate of Achievement in Business Administration is available. Many distance learning students attend on-campus classes at De Anza or classes at other institutions to meet their goals.

As the DLC has expanded beyond supporting only distance learning courses to embrace hybrid and traditional web-enhanced classes, as well, it is an appropriate time to investigate a new name for the DLC that better reflects its new campus role.

II.   **Retention and Growth**

A. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention?

DL courses have consistently grown in number of students and sections, which contributes to the institutional goal of increased access and growth. Student demand for more online courses (including supplements and hybrids) has been high.

Retention in Distance Learning classes has increased over the last three years from 73% in 2005-06 to 81% in 2007-08.

Distance Learning students acquire important skills and capabilities in the following areas which benefit them in future learning and working environments:
- Computer/technical skills
- Independent learning
- Online communication and networking

This in turn contributes to retention as well as the improvement of their overall educational experience.

Faculty with retention concerns can meet with the instructional designer for assistance with pedagogy. Distance Learning faculty participate in the new Early Alert system available through the Counseling Center.

The Computer Applications and Office Systems department, with the support of the DLC, developed CAOS 198Y and 195Y, Technology Supported Learning and Retention course. The courses teach good pedagogy practices in technology mediated learning which assist in the retention of students in distance learning courses.

In February 2008, the Distance Learning Center participated in a survey sponsored by the CCC Systems Office on retention of distance learning students. The results are not yet available.

B. In what ways does your program address the basic skills needs of students? In what ways does your program rely on students having basic skills?

Distance Learning provides an environment that supports students for whom English is a second language. Video lessons are captioned and lessons can be reviewed as many times as needed. Students who would not normally speak up in a face-to-face course "speak" freely in online forums. While raising your hand or being called on in class requires and instant answer, online forums or discussions

allow students the time to think through a question and answer when they have formulated a response. Also, students have to read and write a lot more in distance learning classes because they receive their instruction in the form of written text.

Both MATH 114 Intermediate Algebra and EWRT/LRNA 097 Introduction to Peer Tutoring in Writing courses are offered online. MATH 114 is a distance learning course and EWRT LRNA 097 is a hybrid.

Having basic skills helps students in distance learning courses succeed.

C. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention <u>specifically for the identified targeted populations of African Ancestry, Latino/a, and Filipino/a students</u>? (Suggestion: List the number and percentage of the program's enrollment that was made up of the targeted populations over the last three years.)

The numbers and percentages of targeted populations within distance learning has remained relatively static.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
African Ancestry	5%	4%	4%
Latino	11%	10%	11%
Filipino	7%	6%	5%

The number of Intercultural Studies courses have increased over the past few years. Added to the DLC course offerings are ICS 8/WMST 8, Women of Color in the USA and ICS 10, An Introduction to African American Studies.

It is difficult to target specific ethnic populations in distance learning courses as many students remain anonymous in terms of race, sexual orientation and often gender. This, for the most part, has a positive effect as students can participate in courses freely with no concern about being judged by how they look. A student's value is determined soley by his/her contribution to the course.

III. **Student Equity**

A. What progress or achievement has the program made towards decreasing the student equity gap? (Suggestion: Include student success rates by ethnicity over the last three years.)

The 2007 Distance Learning Student Survey showed that there were more female students and older students taking distance learning courses than the overall De Anza College student population.

	DL Student	De Anza Total Population
Female	61%	51%
Over 25	51%	36%

Statistic show that while the number of black students enrolled in distance learning courses stayed the same, retention increased. As an example, among black student, the success rate is up 7% over the past three years.

As mentioned in II B, distance learning courses help ESL students read and review course materials, and communicate in alternative ways that traditional classroom does not provide.

In technology and service selection and provision, we have consistently advocated for access and equity even when some other colleges do not put them as their priorities:

- The DLC uses Moodle/Catalyst as our Learning Management System which is one of the most Section 508 conforming LMS's and is open source
- The DLC provides close captioning for videos, and whenever video is provided online, we provide small and full screen as 2 options
- The DLC encourages faculty to adopt low bandwidth content requirements
- Our diverse staff have a deep understanding and full commitment to supporting access and equity

Distance learning courses cannot only be accessed from home, but from labs, libraries and internet cafes. The Occupational Training Institute refurbishes computers for students. Students can apply for a computer through Financial Aid. Some communities, including Cupertino, offer free wireless internet access to residents.

Often targeted populations do not have reliable transportation and distance learning eliminates or reduces the need for a student to drive to campus. With gas prices soaring in the not too distant past, eliminating the need to drive to campus would be a considerable cost saving.

B. In what ways will the program continue working toward achieving these goals?

The DLC continues to work toward improving the percentages of success in targeted populations. Currently we are investigating the possibility of offering faculty training in equity and distance learning. Creating a sense of community, which helps underserved populations succeed, is also a "best practices" when developing distance learning courses. As a result of faculty participating in this type of training all students learning at a distance would benefit.

C. What challenges exist in the program in reaching such goals?

Identifying students by ethnicity will remain a challenge in distance learning courses because in the absence of F2F meetings students are not necessarily identified by their ethnicity.

IV. **Strategic Planning Initiatives (Community Collaborations, Cultural Competency, Outreach, and Individualized Attention for Retention)**

Other than what was mentioned in II and III above, what other Strategic Planning Initiatives has the program addressed and in what ways?

There is a district-wide movement to create an online student evaluation that can be administered in fully online classes. An evaluation would assist instructors in revises courses for better student success.

Counseling 100, Orientation to College, is currently being offered as an online course and we are currently working with a faculty member on a new Counseling 100 course.

Three to four ICS courses are offered through the DLC each quarter.

V.   **Budget Limitations** (Please be specific in your responses.)

A. Identify any limitations placed on the program based on limited funding. What increases in resources are critical to the program and what are the consequences of continued limited funding on the program?

With the current budget, the Distance Learning Center will be able to maintain, but not thrive. Distance Learning programs are very competitive nationwide since they do not require students to be in close proximity to the campus. As a college, we are not meeting the demand for growth.

For this academic year, the DLC has lost VTEA funding which provided for student assistants and equipment in support of online courses. Also effected this year is the lottery money which was being used to pay for the licensing and student fees for the highly enrolled video courses. The elimination or reduction of this money has negatively impacted the B budget.

The 24/7 Help Desk for online students could also be in jeopardy because of the reduction in lottery funding. The failure of the campus to hire a technology trainer means that potential new distance learning faculty are not receiving the proper training to gain the confidence to explore technology mediated learning.

While the cost of commercial video courses remains high, so are enrollments, A single section of a video course has an enrollment cap of 125 students, which is often met. Additionally, De Anza has the resources to produce video-based courses for faculty who are interested in teaching using this medium.

From 2003 to 2008, the Distance Learning Center lost six positions. Two positions were added during the same time making the net loss four full-time positions. Included with this report are statistics of personnel and enrollments over this period of time .

The Instructional Designer position was never moved to the Distance Learning Center budget and is currently not reflected there.

B. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated. Please be specific.

If the distance learning program were eliminated, the college would be rejecting the portion of its population that depends on distance learning courses to augment a full-time schedule or allow busy working adults to attend part-time. Distance Learning, as a sector of education, is growing and the campus would be turning away a segment of the population served by distance learning. These students can easily go elsewhere for their courses since distance learning courses are not space and time bound. Faculty who expand their skills by offering distance learning courses would also not have the opportunities to teach using mediated learning technologies offered through distance learning.

As mentioned in I and II A, online learning improves students' computer skills, independent learning capability, and online group working skills, all of which in turn benefit the students in their future learning and working. In the Bay Area these skills and competencies are particularly important for students in their real life endeavors. If Distance Learning programs were cut, De Anza College would significantly decrease our competitiveness among peers, and do our student population a disservice.

With more distance learning offerings, the anticipated 7% decrease in enrollment from the loss of Job Corp could be recouped. Offering distance learning courses does not require the facilities that F2F classes do. Thus, the growth restrictions that traditional classes face do not apply to distance learning.

Additional Comments (optional): What additional information is important to consider when reviewing the budget of your program for possible reductions? You may include any or all of the following, or other information.

The Distance Learning Center has been unable to commit to licensing software that would assist faculty in the development of online courses including learning resources. While one-time money assists in the purchasing of equipment, such as servers, which need to be refreshed about every five years, it does not help with on going expenses or growing the program.

Relationships with Other Programs: Describe any partnerships or collaborations that the program is actively engaged in, which reduce costs and/or improve service delivery.
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The DLC crosses the entire campus with our course offerings and support for students and faculty.

The Distance Learning Center works most closely with the Technology Resources Group, which supports the servers and software, broadcasts video courses, produces video classes and supports distance learning program in a variety of ways. We are in daily contact with this area. Distance Learning is also supported by the Learning Resources Center which provides online resources for distance learning students and the Open Media Lab, which checks out DVD's of the distance learning courses to students who prefer this method of deliver or do not have cable television or a high speed internet connection. All distance learning courses and now hybrid courses need to be approved by the Distance Learning Center. We are also involved in the approval of courses through the Curriculum Committee.

In addition, the DLC works with Scheduling for room assignments, Marketing for the Schedule of Classes, Academic Services for our Catalogue pages and the Bookstore for student textbooks.

- **State and Federal Mandates:** Describe any State or Federal mandates that directly impact the program.

All courses offered through the Distance Learning Center are conforming to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Videos are closed captioned and online content is developed to be accessible. Our current course management system was selected because it was rated high for conforming to section 508 standards. ,

A new federal mandate is the authentication of students registered in distance learning courses. For now, the agreement is that a login will suffice for authentication purposes, but as technology advances and becomes more affordable, fingerprint or other recognition systems may be required.

The State is now requiring that any course replacing seat time with technology mediated learning must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. These courses will be reviewed and signed off by the DLC.

- **Trends (may include but not be limited to enrollment trends):** Describe any positive and/or negative trends in the program.

Nationally, distance learning programs continue to grow. Since 2005/2006, growth in De Anza's distance learning program has been steady and by adding new course sections to the program, distance learning will continue to grow. Hybrid courses help fill the needs of many students free up facilities on campus. Instructors have increased class size by transforming a course from traditional F2F to hybrid or distance learning.

Demographical changes; Recent statistics from the Census Bureau and the US Department of Education show that adult students are the fastest growing educational demographic growing 35 % from 1970 to 2000. Research indicates that by 2010, 50% of all college students will be adults. As economies change, it is necessary for people to keep their skills advanced and relevant.

Older students:
- behave more like customers take more responsibility for what they want, and will shop where they can get the most for their money
- expect flexibility and are interested more in courses that will render them more capable as employees

Specific technology trends:
- Media libraries and distance learning working more closely together to manage the distribution of media rich course content
- More application of social networking and student contributed content
- Open Educational Resources

- **Comparable Programs at other Institutions:** Provide any information that you have that would allow for a comparison of the program to similar programs at other institutions in the State.
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Many distance learning programs have abandoned video based classes in favor of online classes. De Anza College is a leader in a consortium of Bay Area schools, organized as the Community College Network, which cablecasts classes to areas in the South Bay. These schools, De Anza, Evergreen Valley, Mission and West Valley Colleges have maintained their video-based distance learning programs. Once again, De Anza College stands out among these colleges for being one of the first community colleges to offer videostreamed courses to students.