

Los Angeles Harbor College
2014-2017 Distance Education Plan

Introduction

The Distance Education (DE) Plan is designed to improve the effectiveness of all online programs and services provided by Los Angeles Harbor College. It was drafted by the DE Coordinator and the D/L Committee, and then reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, the Academic Affairs Cluster and the College Planning Committee.

The Plan is aligned with the Los Angeles Community College District Goals as presented in the College's Educational Master Plan. The College Mission Statement commitment to student success and to offering comprehensive programs that meet the educational needs of the community serves as its foundation. The Plan is also aligned with other major plans, including:

- College Enrollment Plan
 - Student access and success are priorities of enrollment management.
 - ensure that the college is as effective as possible in meeting educational needs of the community and serving all of its diverse populations
- College Technology Plan
 - **Technology Vision Statement:** Los Angeles Harbor College will use information technology to enhance access, learning, retention, and success.
 - our technology vision statement can be summed up as follows: we are here to serve our diversely constructed community and our diversely skilled students by providing a universally successful learning environment.

And of course, it is based on the DE program review and unit plan.

Like the College's Information Technology Program, the Distance Education Program is a support program and much of its activities are driven by other college programs, especially the academic divisions. In addition, the DE program must work in concert with Student Services and Administrative Services to implement the components of its plan.

II. History

Online classes first appeared as a separate area in the College schedule in Spring 1998. The classes were offered through a combination of instructors' personal websites and webCT. There were approximately 15 sections serving approximately 300-400 students.

Efforts to provide College support to online faculty and students began in Fall 2001 through the Office of Academic Affairs. This support included an add process for online students, requesting sites for faculty and a help line for online students.

After trying a number of LMSs, including WebCT, Blackboard, Etudes and Etudes.ng, the College entered a long-term relationship with Etudes in 2005-6.

Since 1998, the program has grown to over 215 sites with a duplicated enrollment near 10,000 each semester.

III. Planning Assumptions

Our Students:

Data from the 2014 College Factbook:

- The number of students enrolled in online classes continues to increase. In fall 2013, 21% of the College's students were enrolled in online classes.
- Ten percent of the College's students are enrolled in only online classes.
- Retention rates are lower in online classes: 77% compared to 85.5% for the College as a whole.
- Success rates are lower in online classes: 60% compared to 66% for the College as a whole.
- In fall 2013, the average class size in online classes was equal to that of the College as a whole: 37.5.

Data from the fall 2013 Etudes student enrollment file:

- The majority of enrollments in the Etudes sites are **not** for fully online classes: 58% are in sites for hybrid or enhanced classes.

Data from the 2012 student survey at Los Angeles Harbor College (it should be noted that students enrolled in only online classes were not included in the survey):

- Ninety-one percent (91%) of our students often or sometimes use a computer at home to do school work.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) often or sometimes use the Internet for an assignment.
- Over 90% utilized the Internet to apply, register, check grades, and add or drop classes.

Excerpts from the National Education Technology Plan (2004):

- 90 percent of children between ages 5 and 17 use computers
- 94 percent of online teens use the Internet for school-related research.
- The largest group of new users of the Internet from 2000-2002 were 2-5 year olds

- About 25 percent of all K–12 public schools now offer some form of e-learning or virtual school instruction. Within the next decade every state and most schools will be doing so.
- Today's students are very technology-savvy, feel strongly about the positive value of technology and rely upon technology as an essential and preferred component of every aspect of their lives.
- Students are not just using technology differently today but are approaching their lives and their daily activities differently because of the technology.
- As students get older, their use of technology becomes more sophisticated, but, comparatively, the younger students are on a fast track to becoming greater technology users and advocates.
- The access point for technology use, particularly for older students is home-focused, not school focused.

Our Faculty:

From the 2014 College factbook:

- The full-time faculty are becoming equally divided between "digital natives" (51.5% are under age 55) and "digital immigrants" (48.5 are over age 54).
- By headcount, 80% of the faculty is adjunct.

Our Culture:

The culture of Los Angeles Harbor College has been one of reluctance to change. This, however, is little different than the culture at many other colleges and universities. The faculty and staff would distribute along a nearly perfect bell curve, with 15-20% of employees leading the way toward increasingly sophisticated use of technology. On the other end, there are 15-20% of employees who actively resist any move to include technology in their daily activities. Those in the middle are reluctant to move toward change, but will slowly adapt to a changing work world if shown how advances in technology will improve their work lives.

This may be changing as the "digital natives" begin to outnumber the "digital immigrants" and press for more technology and a greater virtual presence.

Competition in Virtual Space:

From the 2011 External Scan:

- Online classes and degrees are the fastest growing part of higher education (and soon, K-12 education)
- Our students see online programs as a viable choice in continuing their educations.
- There will be increasing pressure to move from "online classes" to a "virtual campus".

It is expected that the next Scan will show increased pressure for all classes to have a virtual component.

IV. Access and Preparation for Success

- DE Activities
 - Best Practices (things that faculty can be encouraged to do, but not required to do). Encourage faculty to:
 - Send out textbook information at least a month before the start of the class to allow students time to purchase the text online.
 - Send out the course syllabus at least a week before the class begins with a “welcome” message.
 - Respond to students’ emails, phone calls, even if the answer is “no”.
 - Check their Etudes sites before the semester begins to ensure that students are loading into the site.
 - Staff Development—Address accessibility and access issues by:
 - Requesting a review of the College’s online class sites by the High Tech. Center Training Unit. See: <http://www.htctu.net/divisions/webaccess/main.htm>. Offering staff development based upon the review.
 - Tutoring/Support from the DE area:
 - 24/7 help desk
 - Expand online tutorials for students using Etudes
 - Establish a physical location and hours of operation for DE coordinator.
 - Other
 - Work w/ Etudes to automatically add lahc_support to sites
- Work with others
 - Admin. Services. (bookstore, webmaster)
 - Support Academic Senate efforts to develop bookstore policy
 - Encourage faculty to facilitate bookstore publication of Textbook list
 - Work with the College Webmaster to maintain the DE website and make it more accessible.
 - Student Services. (Counseling, Admissions)
 - Support Staff Development for faculty in using the new SIS system.
 - For discussion—should “at risk” students be limited in the number of DE units they enroll in?
 - Assist and encourage moving systems online: Advising, EOPS, DSPS, etc.
 - Provide staff development and better communication with offices that provide in person assistance to students, such as the Academic Affairs Office, Admissions and Records, and the information Center.
 - Academic Affairs (Division Chairs, Catalogs and Scheduling)

- Integrate site requests w/ schedule development
- Improve communication re. schedule changes that involve sections with an online component.
- Improve communication between Division Chairs and the DE coordinator in terms of class changes.
- LLRC
 - Revise the Etudes site template to include a link to online library services.
 - Add an Etudes resources folder to LLRC PCs.

V. Teaching and Learning for Success

- DE Activities
 - Best Practices
 - Encourage faculty to conform with Add deadlines
 - Encourage faculty to not exclude students until the second week of the class.
 - Staff Development
 - Offer Quality Matters or OEI standards workshops.
 - Offer workshops on using CCC Confer.
 - Tutoring
 - Expand online tutoring to make it available for all classes.
- Work w/ others
 - Admin. Svcs. (bookstore, website)
 - Student Svcs. (Counseling, Admissions)
 - Academic Affairs (Chairs, Scheduling)

VI. Organizational Effectiveness

- DE Activities
 - Best Practices
 - Ensure that faculty make sure their students are loading before semester starts
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 - Tutoring
 - Work with other colleges to pursue districtwide contracts and sharing of resources
 - Continue to monitor the activities and support from the statewide Online Education Initiative.
- Work w/ others
 - Admin. Svcs.
 - Ensure that contracts related to Distance Education are processed in a timely fashion to avoid late charges.
 - Pursue multi-year contracts when feasible.
 - Student Svcs. (Counseling, Admissions)

- Academic Affairs (Chairs, Scheduling)

VII. Resources and Collaboration

- DE Activities
 - Best Practices
 - Tutoring
 - Etc.
- Work w/ others
 - Admin. Svcs. (bookstore, website)
 - Student Svcs. (Counseling, Admissions)
 - Academic Affairs (Chairs, Scheduling)