HCC DE Policy  Draft Aug 30 2013

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Part 1  Introduction

Honolulu Community College’s (HCC) approach to distance education is guided by its mission and goals, the relevant parts of which call for “flexible educational delivery systems” and “diverse educational opportunities” for learners. As such, the core goal for DE at HCC is to expand opportunities for students who faces challenges due to their location, work schedule, or circumstances that prevent them from enrolling in traditional courses. This focus on accessibility means that HCC sees DE as one component of a larger effort to ensure that its instructional opportunities are

HCC’s mission and goals are as follows:
Honolulu Community College serves our community, the city, the state of Hawai‘i, and the Pacific region as an affordable, flexible, learning-centered, open- door, comprehensive community college. We meet the post-secondary educational needs of individuals, businesses, and the state by:

- Offering high quality courses and programs in the liberal arts and career and technical fields;
- Maintaining unique educational partnerships with state-registered apprenticeship programs in diverse career fields;
- Supporting our Native Hawaiian community and its language, history, and culture;
- Delivering continuing education and training to meet the demand for a competitive workforce; and
- Providing diverse educational opportunities for personal enrichment.

As a learning-centered, open-door college, Honolulu Community College is committed to providing the academic and student support to assist students as they progress through their respective courses and programs, and to facility the important work of our faculty and staff. The college will acknowledge, promote, and maintain a multicultural environment where gender diversity and other aspects of personal identity are appreciated and respected.

To accomplish this mission, the goals of Honolulu Community College are to:
Provide two-year transfer educational programs that offer students the general educational component of the Baccalaureate Degree;

Provide two-year, four-year, short-term and apprenticeship occupational-technical curricula for employment, skill-upgrading and career advancement, and transfer to four-year technical programs;

Ensure general education competency in communication, problem-solving, ethical deliberation, cultural diversity and global awareness;

Provide developmental instruction to build skills necessary to pursue educational objectives;

Maintain flexible educational delivery systems to enhance student access by providing affordable education when and where it is needed;

Establish a systemic institutional effectiveness program that regularly assesses expected student and program learning outcomes to ensure the highest quality education;

Develop activities to increase resources for programs and operations;

Provide co-curricular programs and activities to promote student learning and development and to prepare students for leadership roles and responsibilities in a global community;

Contribute to the support of the community’s economic and social growth;

Maintain a multicultural environment where ethnic and gender diversity is appreciated, respected and promoted; and

Provide an opportunity for students to gain an understanding and knowledge of the host culture of Hawai`i, and the Native Hawaiian language, culture and values.

HCC’s approach to DE is aligned with, and supported by, the University of Hawai`i system (UH) policy on distance learning. The UH policy on distance education is contained in Executive Policy E5-204 (revised 1998). This policy states that the primary goal of DE for the UH system is increased access:

_The primary goal for distance learning at the University of Hawai`i is to provide a window of opportunity to the rich array of quality instructional resources available to on-campus students to students anywhere in the state who are committed to higher education but are unable to attend the UH campus offering their program of choice. The primary purpose of our distance learning effort is to provide increased access to higher educational opportunity for the people of Hawai`i._

To maintain quality distance education at Honolulu Community College and align with the University of Hawai'i system policy on distance learning, the following policies are outlined for Honolulu Community College Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administrators.

In its August 2012 Guide to Evaluate Distance Education and Correspondence Education, the ACCJC/WASC defines distance education as

...a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless...
communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

Hybrid courses, with a combination of on-campus face-to-face and online interaction, are covered by this policy. Correspondence education, of which there is a definition in the Guide to Evaluate Distance Education and Correspondence Education, is not a part of distance education at Honolulu Community College.
Part 2. Quality of DE courses relation to traditionally delivered courses and programs

The Honolulu Community College Distance Education policies ensure that DE courses are efficiently and effectively designed, created, and executed. They are also in place to ensure consistency from one DE course to the next so that students have an easier time adjusting to and succeeding in DE courses.

Quality of Distance Education (UH System Policy) III C

Quality. Distance learning is first and foremost an academic endeavor. The quality and standards of distance learning instruction (whether involving synchronous or asynchronous interaction) must be comparable to those of other instructional programs of the University. Regardless of collaborative arrangements, the responsibility for quality assurance resides with the campus conferring the credit and/or credential. Faculty are responsible for program coherence, course content, and appropriate pedagogy. The campus awarding the UH credit/credential is responsible for assembling needed faculty in accordance with established campus academic personnel policies and procedures.

To ensure quality of DE courses at HCC, all courses must undergo an approval and review process.

The campus will define an authoritative body to oversee, approve and review DE courses. This body will be responsible for establishing the processes, procedures and practices required for ensuring that DE delivered instruction is equivalent in substance and rigor to traditionally face to face delivered instruction.
Part 3 Policies on DE course development, approval and continued evaluation of quality and effectiveness.

Campus Evaluation of DE
Distance education at Honolulu Community College will be evaluated and assessed on an annual basis. Any deficiencies found will be address and corrected within a reasonable timeframe.

Course Evaluation
Every three years the entire course must be reviewed for quality and effectiveness by the approved HCC reviewing authority. Upon completion of the review process, any necessary changes and/or recommendations need to be addressed within a year by the faculty member to maintain approved status for the course.

In addition to the committee review, two other reviews should occur on a regular basis:
1) DE courses must be peer-reviewed by other faculty members every two years.
2) Every semester students in the DE course must review the course

Distance education courses must be comparable to traditional campus-based courses in terms of: syllabi, textbooks, grading, methods of evaluation, and learning outcomes.

Course Development and Requirements
All courses must have a syllabus posted in Laulima that contains:
1) Student Learning Outcomes
2) Grading
3) Technology Requirements
4) Class Assignments
5) Class Readings
6) Methods of Evaluation/Assessment
7) Testing/Proctoring
8) Accessibility/ACCESS
9) Attendance
10) No Show Policy
11) Withdrawal Process
12) Honesty Policy
13) Support Services for Students
14) Interaction/Contact Method

Faculty must provide an orientation to the course, its policies, and the technologies that will be used to fulfill the course requirements within the first week of the course before the 100% refund date passes.

Statement of Technology Requirements
Each instructor must specifically state what technology is required beyond what is required for Laulima at the beginning of the course and have a method for students to test the requirements before the no penalty withdrawal date. For example, most current adobe flash player, adobe reader, speakers, or microphone, etc. access to a computer with high speed internet and internet access, Oceanic cable access.
Part 4  Policy Relating to course delivery, assessment, contact and interaction

Learning Management System

To ensure consistency from one DE course to the next, all faculty and instructors teaching a DE course, including Cable Courses, must use the University of Hawaii System’s learning management system, (currently Laulima). This must be used as the main source of communication for the students as a place where they can go to find the syllabus, course announcements, information on assignments, resources, and communicate with the instructor and other students.

Faculty are expected to make use of the following Laulima tools:

a. Forums or Discussions: DE faculty are highly encouraged to use Laulima as the main tool for collecting assignments and for encouraging discussions among students through one of the Laulima tools such as Forums or Discussion.

b. Gradebook
c. Announcements
d. Mailtool
e. Resources

Faculty are highly encouraged to make use of the other tool options in Laulima.

ADA Requirements

Distance education faculty are expected to work with the Student ACCESS office to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Regular and Effective Contact

All DE courses offered by Honolulu Community College, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact.

This Policy covers the instructional programs component of ACCJC Standard II, “Learning Programs and Services” with a focus on delivery of DE courses over the Internet.

The policy emphasizes the use of Laulima as a Learning Management System (LMS) to achieve regular and effective contact in the distance education environment. The term “Regular and Effective Contact”, “Regular and Substantive Interaction”, “Regular, Timely and Effective Student/Faculty Contact” are terms used by various regulating bodies, accreditation authorities and professional organizations to describe the student instructor experience that is required for a successful Distance Education course.[1]

Distance Education (DE) courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” of face-to-face courses. Therefore, the duration and frequency of instructor contact should be the equivalent of what would be established in a regular, face-to-face course. As face-to-face courses are scheduled on a weekly basis, DE courses should also establish a schedule of instructor contact and interaction on a weekly basis. At the very least, the number of instructor contact or interaction hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students,
should also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the DE format. Given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular and effective contact is maintained over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course.

Regular and effective contact stresses the responsibility of the instructor in a DE course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status. The use of the term “regular effective contact” in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record.

Regular effective contact shall be defined as weekly communication/interaction between student and instructor through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, threaded discussion forums, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, e-lectures or other activities.

Instructors will initiate interaction with students on a regular basis to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. Providing students with an open ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor initiated interaction.

Following are some examples of how this contact may occur using current technology:

1. (Laulima) Real Time Chat: Real time interactive discussions between teacher and students.
2. (Laulima) Email: Individual conferences, questions, clarification of assignments, submission of assignments and other communications.
3. (Laulima) : Online discussions between students and instructor.
4. (Laulima Announcements) Announce class activities for the week, which require specific measurable actions by all students.
5. Telephone: Arrange regularly scheduled hours convenient for students to contact faculty to ask questions and clarify assignments.

A policy describing the frequency and type of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback will be published in the syllabus or other course documentation that is made available to students when the course officially begins.

A course delivery technical plan, with the method of regular effective contact specified, must be submitted as part of the DE course approval process. Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all HCC DE courses, instructors will, at a minimum, use the following resources to initiate contact with students on a weekly basis:

• Laulima Announcement
• Laulima Mail Tool
• Laulima Discussion

Threaded discussion forums within the Laulima system, with appropriate instructor participation. (“Questions for the instructor” forums are good but should be used in conjunction with other forums.) In addition the following Laulima features are recommended as methods to achieve regular contact throughout the semester.
• Laulima Chat Room
• Laulima Tasks Tests and Surveys
• Laulima Resources
• Laulima Announcements (weekly)
• Laulima Drop Box
• Laulima Discussions and Private Messages

Regular contact should also include:
- Timely feedback for student work.
- Instructor prepared e-lectures or instructor introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, on-line etc.) that, combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face class.

It is suggested that Instructors should have a threaded discussion that is set aside for general questions about the methods and effectiveness of the course delivery.

Regular and Effective Contact - Measurement
Instructors must add the Site Stats tool to all DE course sites in order to gather evidence of regular and effective contact. This evidence can be used as part of the evaluations of SLO’s for the course as well as a tool for course improvement.

[1] The need for regular and effective contact as a requirement for DE courses is specified in the ACCJC “Guide for Evaluating DE Courses” – ACCJC – Aug 2012: questions that should be asked:

“Is there a policy that defines “regular and substantive interactions” for DE courses?” Standard II A.1.a
Part 5 Policies on faculty training, support and evaluation

IV. Faculty/Lecturers
   A. Mandatory Orientation
      All faculty scheduled to teach a DE course must participate in a mandatory distance education orientation at the beginning of every semester. Faculty planning to teach a DE course in the near future are highly encouraged to attend the orientation.

   B. Workload and Intellectual Property are addressed in the UH System (revised Executive Policy E5. 204 IV F).

   C. The campus will provide faculty development opportunities for faculty teaching or planning to teach distance education courses.

   D. EMC will provide assistance to DE instructors for creating media content and support...

   E. The Distance Education Advisory Committee will periodically review the college’s distance education policies and procedures, making appropriate recommendations to the Distance Education Coordinator. The committee consists of current faculty and staff of Honolulu Community College. (Adopted from Bishop State Community College)
Part 6 Policies on student support services and technology requirements

A. All Honolulu Community College student support services included in the list below, but not limited to, will provide the same services to distance learners and faculty as to their on campus counterparts.

- Admissions Office
- Bookstore
- Business Office
- Career and Employment
- Counseling/Advising
- Distance Education Office
- Financial Aid
- Health Office
- ITC
- Library
- Math Lab
- Mental Health and Wellness
- Native Hawaiian Center
- PRIDE
- Records Office
- Registration Office
- Student ACCESS
- Student Life and Development
- Student Success Center
- Testing Center/Tutoring
- TRIO-SSS
- Writing Center