Distance Education Program Meeting  
Tuesday, April 5  2:30 – 3:35

Attending: Marty Nikou, Scotty Rhode, Stefanie Sasaki, Ross Egloria, Ralph Kam, Mike Ferguson, Cynthia Smith, Lianne Nagano, Marcia Roberts-Deutsch, Rob Edmondson, John DeLay, Gregg Grewell

I. Announcements

As follow up to earlier session regarding copyright law, Marty informed the group that Jon used EMC money to purchase campus-based rights to use a very useful white paper by the Magna Group on copyright law. This will be posted up on the website.

II. Student Orientation Materials

There are system discussions by Campus Distance Coordinators about improving student orientation materials for DE students. Cynthia and Lianne will bring back from the April meeting any useful tools or practices. The group discussed what HCC is doing in terms of providing necessary orientation materials to students and what needs to be done.

Technical Information

* There is effort underway to create a standardized orientation or information page for all DE students regarding technical capabilities and resources to help students have necessary technical knowledge and access.

* Perhaps should provide a list of all plug ins/downloads a student would need and give links to these downloads to streamline student access to technical tools needed. Gregg has provided a list of needed downloads for Cable courses; this will be included on the DE internet website.

To Do:
Jon will finish draft of technical help page; will be circulated, revised and then posted
Cynthia will post up list of needed downloads for Cable courses

Cable Course Information

Currently on the public HCC DE website, there is an orientation video for cable students; this video is also shown as part of specific course broadcasts

The first class session for cable courses explicit goes over all necessary information for students, e.g. scholarships available etc.. These topics are presented via slides and are
broken down into modules; cable course instructors choose which modules to use in their course.

To Do: Gregg will look into taking all of the slides used in these televised modules to create a PDF to post online.

Course Based Orientation / Initial Information Provided

Some instructors are concerned about level of student reading and writing preparation. This should be addressed in the prerequisites the instructor has for the class.

In addition, some instructors have students submit preliminary work *early* in the class.

Requiring early assignments can have a couple of benefits:

-- can have instructor and student see level of skills – writing, math etc -which can led to student realize work needed, find help needed or drop early on
-- can use the submission itself to gage student capabilities, e.g. have them submit early assignment that requires them demonstrate skills such as scanning or sending digital photo if that skill is required in course.
-- early assignments also enable instructor to get to know students better early on.

Orientation information for all DE students

HCC's DE page currently links to the system orientation information including self-assessment quiz. We need more than this.

Need to make clear to potential students and enrolled students *right from the start* what is needed to complete/succeed. Need to have standardized language for expectations on the main DE page. Some expectations include:

- Do not procrastinate
- Don’t plagiarize
- Need to be disciplined in getting work done.
- Make clear the time needed for the class
- Make clear - DE learning is not easier than face-to-face class
- Basic skills needed e.g. using Laulima; attaching documents; downloading adobe, making pdf files etc.,
- Fundamental requirements: reliable access to a computer (rather than reliance on work computer or library computers to do work); cable connection (do not rely on ability to check out from library; can only check out one at a time, for one day loan.)
- Basic etiquette in email and discussion postings. (Email and discussion comments can be deemed libelous in extreme cases) It was discussed that one
way to encourage more professional, courteous communication is for the instructor to *consistently* model that kind of communication

Once listing needed skills, should link to resources where they can gain these if not prepared, for example link to Laulima tutorials or in the future, indicate they can go to CSC. CSC is working on developing ability to provide tutoring and skills help for DE students.

It was discussed that resources students are directed to should be clear, accessible and intuitive – this is a generation used to Googling and going to YouTube to learn. Should make use of these online resources when possible.

**How do we make course expectations clear to student?**

One way is to conduct a **more challenging** self-assessment pre-test for DE students. However, concern is if too hard, can scare off students who might succeed. This is the difficult balance to strike – being clear on the demands without unnecessarily scaring off students.

Rob commented that though there was meaningful time dedicated in his cable course to going over tips on how to succeed in a cable course during the first week class broadcasts, not all students seemed to have viewed or absorbed information, or missed them if they enrolled late; some students still unprepared and not ready for class demands.

Marty provides a clear ‘manifesto’ at the start of the class that indicates what they need to do to succeed.

The group discussed the need for structured and standardized orientation materials. It was noted that some institutions have extensive orientation sessions that are weeks long. Cable course orientations deal with many of these points, need something for online students and online components of Cable courses.

One suggestion was to develop and require students attend a mandatory DE orientation in person.

- If done as a standardized orientation across the system, students on neighbor islands, could go to the one at their campus

- For those who are simply not mobile, could film it and post, with downloadable materials. Maybe film a one hour orientation and post it online. And have students required take a quiz to show they understand the information. Maybe structure as part of every class that students take a quiz on orientation material.
As part of this orientation – should have hands-on activities for students to do to show abilities and/or learn through doing, following step by step instructions (e.g. how to attach documents; how to participate in discussion). If they cannot do a task, there is a clear link to tutorial information. For those who do poorly on the quiz – go to CSC for help.

A formal, standardized orientation would enable:

- Students clearly not ready to realize expectations and drop the class early
- Make them more aware of expectations so they commit needed attention and discipline early in the course
- Help them find the training and resources needed to succeed - *early* in the course
- Limit the amount of time the instructor must provide in giving individual help and tutoring in these areas.

Another option – put everything on a DVD (esp. for those who are simply not ready for using online i.e. can’t watch a video on DVD.) Costly but an option.

To Do:
Build a list of needed skills and capabilities required to succeed in a DE course. Create a master list; instructors can use that to create a specific list to give to students for their course. Cynthia will initiate process of compiling a list.

Work on orientation presentation – either as part of system efforts or on campus if that is going to be quicker. Major effort.

**Building Communities Early to Improve Retention**

With the focus on student success, which is the goal of orientation, the group discussed the important factor of building community which directly links to retention. Creating a sense of class community early on is an important goal. Retention is a concern since in many DE classes, there is a pattern that emerges of some that do well and many others fail, fewer in the middle than in a face to face class. One concern is that DE students think DE learning will be easier, they have false expectations; course requirements and expectations need to be made clear early on and tactics to increase student engagement needed.

Instructors shared how they build that community early on, for example have an early first assignment of sharing work with other students. Others have students post up short bios and pictures to create sense of community. It is voluntary, and students do the posting. In-class method of having students interview classmates and present that information could be done for DE classes as well.
Marcia commented that in doing an accreditation visit to Saddleback CC, she noted their strong DE program utilizes the process of instructors having students post up photos and bios which helps create the sense of classroom community; also useful in later creation of student small groups for class activities. They had no reported problem with students misusing shared information or unwanted contacts resulting.

It was discussed that Laulima has the capability of creating communities through sharing profile information on chats, or via Laulima discussion postings. ‘mini Facebook’ capabilities on Laulima enable instructors to pursue building communities in this way.

Marty also stressed the importance of having live sessions, for example via Eluminate. He stated that this dramatically improves the class by creating sense of community. He shared that after live sessions, there is better interchange in class; on student evaluations, they cite Eluminate sessions as the best part of the class.

**Student Conduct Code Issues**

Mike Ferguson, Chair of Student Conduct Committee, asked if there were any issues related to student behavior that needed addressing.

Was affirmed that everyone should have a statement in their course syllabi and links to information about Student Conduct Code expectations. Plagiarism is a major concern in DE student behavior.

There is currently discussion about revising the Student Conduct Code. Will need to make sure that with revision, any particular issues related to DE interactions are addressed, for example regarding harassment of students and instructor. Was noted that student conduct violations of DE students related to instructors primarily have to do with problems resulting from giving out personal cell phone numbers.

The College Catalog contains a great deal of useful information related to expectations of students but current online form is not very accessible since have to scroll down pages. Would be better if could have direct links to specific sections, then instructors could build in these direct links to their online materials and instructions.

**How to structure courses to increase student success**

It was also discussed that instructors should directly confront widespread student attitude that all the work can be done at the end, they ‘gamble’ on their ability to cram it all in at the end of the semester, or skip parts of the course to get to the end. To prevent this failing strategy can build into course design so not possible or students see the problems early on:
• Design as modules, student cannot proceed to next Unit til they pass the current unit
• Don't have all assignments or bulk of graded work at the end of the course (e.g. most of the grade as a final project or final exam)
• Have early, meaningful (e.g. graded) assignments
• Provide them midterm grades/status reports.
• Make clear through Gradebook or even excel spreadsheets their current grades and what is possible in terms of work remaining – give them an early, timely reality check.

Student Self-Assessment

It was noted that the system self-assessment on the UH distance learning page is awkward in that students have to compile their own results. Given student expectations of rapid online tools, would be better to have a survey that tabulates results and provides to students explanation of results and implications (e.g. how well prepared)

Ross volunteered to create a survey for HCC students that is clearer, more explicit and does the computing.

It was also noted that as an interim measure, individual instructors can use the survey tool on Laulima “Tasks, Tests, Surveys” to create their own preliminary assessment survey.

Should make they reflect, why are they taking the class as DE? Some take it even if on campus – do they think it is easier? Do they have the discipline to utilize the convenience without procrastinating? Having them reflect on their goals and capabilities might help them be more self-aware.

Marcia suggested an open ended question in the new iteration of the DE program survey that would ask “what would you have liked to know before taking this class. “ Responses should tell us useful information in determining self-assessment questions to ask as well as orientation materials.

Mike, currently taking a DE course to see from a student perspective, reiterated that it is easy for a student to feel lost and confused, especially if prof. seems to be not on top of things. Need to remember that for a student, it is challenging to learn via DE when one is not in the room with an instructor. Also critical to remember, students in DE classes *really* rely on syllabus for instructions and following structure of the course. Syllabi *must* be explicit and accurate. He also emphasized that it is difficult to feel part of a community and students want to have that feeling.

To Do:
Ross will create a better self-assessment survey that tabulates results for students.
III. Updates

Lianne announced that if there are any changes to the Summer or Fall schedule – let the Division Chairs know and they must contact Lianne. Also announced that second summer session for Cable courses is one day short so will need to juggle broadcast schedule for second session Cable courses.

Anyone thinking of developing a course to be offered as DE for the first time in Spring 2012, there is an early Fall deadline for curriculum review. An announcement will be send to the campus before the end of the semester.