

# Letter of Interest: Distance Education Faculty Lead

Elections Committee and Colleagues,

With excited anticipation, I submit my letter of interest to serve as the Distance Education Faculty Lead in support of the mission, values, and Valley Up Initiative of San Bernardino Valley College, our faculty, and our students. While many may know the work I have done in distance education here at San Bernardino Valley College, I want to take this opportunity to share my “why” and outline an experience record that not only meets but exceeds the expectations listed in the position announcement.

## My Why

To put it simply, my why is for the students. My commitment to online education began as a faculty member looking to eliminate access barriers by offering American Sign Language courses in online formats. At the time, this process was cumbersome; it required students to submit thumb drives and CDs of their work through the mail or to a division office. I would then return these items with physical feedback packets. This was required for a visual language to be taught online, but it was far from seamless.

I have watched distance education develop through the years and witnessed its massive positive impact on student access. With more than 50% of our course sections now offered online and an upward trend in DE enrollments of nearly 28% over the past five years (2025 Fact Book), distance education remains central to our programming. What started as a desire to remove barriers became a career trajectory for which I have a deep passion. I believe in the equity of distance education and thoroughly understand the challenges of ensuring successful instruction for our diverse student population. I have witnessed our online success rates steadily increase from an average of 60% in 2015 to approximately 67% in 2025, a direct result of professional development, responsiveness to student needs, and maintaining currency with regulations.

## Proven Leadership and Expertise

During my six years of service as Distance Education Faculty Lead and Co-Lead (2018–2024), I supported faculty through:

- Regulation changes requiring student-to-student and faculty-to-student engagement.

- Curricular updates to DE Addenda and the transition to required training for online instruction.
- The pivot to 100% online instruction during the pandemic shutdown.
- Finalizing membership to the California Virtual Campus (CVC) Consortium and earning Teaching College status through the Course Exchange.
- The initial planning for implementation of accreditation standards related to Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI).

Through these years of service, I have acquired a thorough and working understanding of Title 5 requirements, the California State Online Education Initiative, and the Canvas LMS. I have a long-standing track record of planning workshops, interpreting federal guidelines for the Academic Senate and the Office of Instruction, and maintaining the detailed records necessary for institutional reporting.

## Future-Focused Governance

I recognize effective leadership requires more than vision; it requires disciplined governance. I am fully prepared to Chair the Distance Education Committee, ensuring policy recommendations are data-driven and student-focused. My goal is to maintain a transparent feedback loop with the Academic Senate by providing comprehensive reports that distill complex DE trends into actionable insights. I am committed to ensuring our DE website, FAQs, and faculty resources remain accessible, jargon-free tools for success.

While I stepped away from the Faculty Lead position in Spring of 2025 to serve as the Interim Dean for Arts and Humanities, I never left distance education behind. During my time in administration, I continued to attend CVC Consortium and DE Coordinator meetings, as well as the Online Teaching Conference. I recently completed four courses with the CVC to refresh my certification and ensure my currency regarding current training standards. I have actively monitored emerging issues, including the ethical use of AI in course design and the expansion of OER.

Furthermore, I am eager to evolve our digital landscape through intentional collaboration. I look forward to partnering closely with the IDEAA Faculty Lead and the Faculty Learning and Innovation Lead to ensure our 'Valley Up' initiatives move beyond basic compliance toward true belonging for our diverse students. Additionally, I welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Vice President of Instruction to align our pedagogical goals with operational coordination.

I submit this letter and attest that I am ready and willing to serve as your Distance Education Faculty Lead with integrity, knowledge, and experience. It would be my honor to build upon the foundation we have created together.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davena Burns-Peters', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Davena Burns-Peters