Distance Education Committee MINUTES
September 19, 2025; 1:00 to 2:30 pm (Zoom)

Committee Charge: The Distance Education Committee advises the Vice President of Instruction regarding all modalities of Distance Education offered at the College and identifies methods of access, resources, and support systems that create an inclusive and equitable learning environment and eliminate barriers for all students. The committee functions as a visionary body, as a conduit for information between faculty, administration and students, and as a technology advisory on matters related to distance education. (9/20/2024)

Committee Members Present

☒ Al-Husseini, Maha

☒ Coats, Cherishea

☒ Cisneros, Maribel

☒ Galindo, Kadir

☐ Lewis, Stephanie **(Co-Chair)**

☒ Lillard, Sheri **(Faculty Chair)**

☐ Lopez, Maria

☒ Navarrete, Jesse

☐ Parker, Garry

☒ Pave, Adam

☒ Recinos, Jose

☒ Sogomonian, Nori

☐ Torrez, Michael (F2025 Sabbatical)

☒ Wang, Wei-Chung

Call to order: 1:04 pm

Approval of the agenda: 1st: Nori, 2nd: Jesse; **Approval of 9/5/2025 minutes:** 1st: Nori, 2nd: Jesse

Meeting Structure and Context

The committee addressed three critical agenda items requiring approval before the October 1st Academic Senate meeting. Sheri Lillard established a SharePoint system for document sharing and noted the tight timeline due to the collegial consultation pathway requiring completion by October 21st for Spring 2026 implementation.

Agenda Item: DE Certification Training Cycle

Background and Problem

The existing 3-year DE training currency policy from 2017 (reaffirmed 2023) requires enforcement. Faculty who completed initial training in 2020-2021 need refresher training, with 343 names identified as potentially non-compliant.

Policy Approved

Initial Qualification:

- Complete DE Level 1 training

Ongoing Currency (3-year cycle):

- Option 1: Refresher training (2-3 hours)

- Option 2: Retake complete Level 1 training

- Faculty may choose either option

Implementation Details

- **Current challenge:** 343 faculty identified as needing refresher (pending HR verification to remove inactive faculty - expect ~200 remaining)

- **Spring 2025 refresher sessions:**

    o In-service day session (mandatory workday for full-time faculty)

    o Adjunct orientation session

    o Potential December 22-23 workday sessions

- **July 1st administrative cutoff** to accommodate spring training schedule

Discussion Points

Wei-Chung Wang raised practical questions about:

- Multiple refresher training opportunities for scheduling flexibility

- Implementation logistics for large numbers

Maha sought clarification on differences between refresher training versus full Level 1 retake. Sheri explained refresher focuses on highlights (accessibility, RSI) rather than foundational skills like welcome letter writing.

Motion: Wei-Chung Wang moved to approve; Adam Pave seconded. Approved unanimously.

Agenda Item: DE Addendum Revision

Rationale for Major Overhaul

Sheri reviewed 20-25 recent DE addenda and found insufficient guidance led to:

- Inconsistent faculty responses

- Repetitive feedback requirements

- Unclear expectations

Major Revisions Approved

New Framework Section:

- Added compliance context: Title V, Department of Education, ACCJC, ADA Title II accessibility rule (effective April 24, 2026)

- Positioned after initial checkboxes to frame remaining content

Enhanced Guidance Throughout:

1. **Course Type Clarifications:**

   o Partially Online: Scheduled in-person components (Wei-Chung's hybrid economics courses with weekly meetings)

   o Online with Proctored Assessments: Specific assessment locations/times (automotive certifications, nursing skills)

2. **Office Hours Requirements:**

   o Technology platform specification

   o Communication method to students

   o Frequency of availability

   o Must be regular, scheduled, and academically focused

3. **Sample Syllabus Statements:**

   o Frequency and manner of instructor-initiated contact

   o Expected response time to student inquiries

   o Timeframe for assignment feedback

   o Focus on RSI and regular effective contact

4. **Student Activities Section:**

   o Explicit instruction: "Please do not copy and paste typical assignments from other curriculum sections"

   o Request for specific weekly activity descriptions

   o Examples of meaningful engagement activities

5. **Enhanced Support for Disproportionately Impacted Students:**

   o Mobile-friendly content (later revised to "low-bandwidth content" after Maha's technical concerns)

   o Sensitivity to limitations in online access (Adam's suggestion, revised from "differences")

   o Flexible deadlines and personal outreach

   o Culturally responsive messaging

   o OER/ZTC materials consideration

6. **Comprehensive Accessibility Section:**
    - Accessibility checker usage requirement
    - Canvas pages and web content standards
    - Multimedia requirements (instructor-created vs. third-party content)
    - Document accessibility (PDFs, presentations, spreadsheets)
    - Text formatting standards

Key Discussion Points

Course Classification: Wei-Chung sought clarification on intensive hybrid courses with weekly in-person meetings for exams. Confirmed as "Partially Online."

Content Delivery Concerns: Adam raised emergency situation considerations (power outages, fires) affecting student access. Led to "sensitivity to limitations in online access" language.

Mobile Access Debate: Maha pointed out technical limitations of mobile devices for specialized software. Committee revised from "mobile-friendly" to "low-bandwidth content."

Examples vs. Copy-Paste Risk: Adam noted concern that providing specific examples might lead to verbatim copying. Sheri kept examples general while providing necessary guidance.

COVID-Era Cleanup: Final section about objective changes identified as COVID carryover. Pending approval from Katie and Thomas for deletion.

Motion: Adam Pave moved to approve (including deletion of final section pending administrative approval); Wei-Chung Wang seconded. Approved unanimously.

Agenda Item: Regular Substantive Interaction (RSI) Policy

Critical Context

- ACCJC allows institutions to define RSI, then evaluates based on institutional standards
- Random sampling of courses with 85% compliance threshold required
- Non-compliance could affect accreditation status

RSI Definition Approved

Frequency Requirements:

- **12+ week courses:** Minimum once per week instructor-initiated interaction
- **Under 12 weeks:** More than once per week

Substantive Interaction Categories (must meet 2 of 3):

1. **Assessment and Feedback**
2. **Provides Information/Responses to Questions**
3. **Facilitates Group Discussions**

Detailed RSI Components

What Qualifies:

Regular Office Hours:

- Scheduled, regular, communicated to students
- Academic dialogue opportunity (not social chat)
- By-appointment hours do NOT count

Regular Announcements:

- Must contain substantive content about course progress/content
- "Module 2 is open" does NOT count
- Academic guidance and framing required

Proactive Outreach:

- Instructor-initiated contact beyond logistics
- Academic guidance included
- Canvas gradebook messaging, targeted communications

Feedback on Student Work:

- Must be timely (students can apply to next assignment)
- Instructor-initiated (not automated quiz results)
- Personalized to individual student

Instructor-Initiated Content Delivery:

- Teaching presence demonstration
- Created instructional materials
- Academic commentary on external resources

Instructor-Led Discussions:

- Active instructor participation required
- Passive observation/grading does NOT count
- Must involve instructor commenting, questioning, facilitating

Response to Student Questions:

- Substantive academic responses count

- Simple logistics ("Quiz due Tuesday") do NOT count

- Educational explanations and guidance qualify

ACCJC Assessment Tool

Sheri shared the official ACCJC assessment spreadsheet showing:

- **Regular components:** Both "regular and predictable engagement" AND "monitor success and engage students" required

- **Substantive components:** Two of three categories must be met

- **Direct instruction:** Only counts for synchronous courses (most asynchronous courses excluded)

Implementation Concerns

Adam questioned how many components faculty must meet. Sheri clarified using the ACCJC tool that most faculty need two substantive categories plus regular requirements - achievable through assessment/feedback plus announcements/outreach.

Motion: Wei-Chung Wang moved to approve; Adam Pave seconded. Approved unanimously.

Timeline and Next Steps

Immediate Actions:

1. **October 1:** RSI policy to Academic Senate for motion of support

2. **October 15:** College Council presentation

3. **October 21:** President's Executive Council final approval

Future Development:

- Communication strategy and faculty support resources

- Accessibility implementation planning (next meeting focus)

- Training materials development for Spring 2025 rollout

Meeting Management

The committee extended 15 minutes beyond the scheduled 2:30 PM end time to complete all three critical agenda items. Sheri promised the next meeting would end early to compensate for the overtime.

The meeting represented substantial policy development affecting all online and hybrid instruction at SBVC, with emphasis on compliance requirements, faculty support, and maintaining educational quality while meeting regulatory standards.

Meeting adjourned: 2:47 pm