



Distance Education Committee MINUTES April 17, 2026; 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

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| ☒ Adams, Paul | ☐ Lewis, Stephanie (Co-Chair) | ☒ Pave, Adam |
| ☒ Adler, Dawn | ☒ Lillard, Sheri (Faculty Chair) | ☐ Recinos, Jose |
| ☒ Al-Husseini, Maha | ☐ Lopez, Maria | ☒ Torrez, Michael |
| ☒ Coats, Cherishea | ☐ Navarrete, Jesse | ☐ Wang, Wei-Chung |
| ☐ Cisneros, Maribel | ☒ Parker, Garry | |

Note: This was the second of two April meetings. One meeting remains this academic year: May 1, 2026, which is Sheri Lillard's final meeting as chair.

Agenda Item 1: Agenda Approval

Motion: Michael Torrez. **Second:** Gary Parker. Approved by consensus.

Sheri noted the agenda is relatively light, with the bulk of the meeting dedicated to reviewing the draft structure for the upcoming mandatory RSI training.

Agenda Item 2: Approval of Minutes – April 3, 2026

Motion: Dawn Adler. **Second:** Maha. Approved unanimously with no objections or abstentions.

Sheri apologized for posting the minutes the morning of the meeting, noting she had been consumed with RSI-related work. She acknowledged that the minutes were lengthy and credited Wei-Chung and AI for capturing them thoroughly.

Agenda Item 3: District DE Update (Cherishea Coats)

Accessibility Maturity Model (ACMM)

The district has enrolled in the Accessibility Maturity Model (ACMM) program, with onboarding scheduled to begin in August 2026.

Title II Accessibility Deadline Extension

Cherishea shared breaking news from a meeting she had just left: the California Chancellor's Office is expected to extend the Title II accessibility compliance deadline by one year. An official announcement is anticipated the following Monday. This is distinct from the district's separately completed external consultant accessibility audit. The committee received the news positively, as the existing deadline had created some urgency on campus.

Quizzing and Math Tool Evaluation

The quizzing needs survey has been completed, with enough responses to proceed despite a lower-than-hoped response rate. The district recently demoed a tool specializing in STEM content rendering (including LaTeX and chemistry notation), and has another demo scheduled the following week for Atomic Jolt. These evaluations are aimed at identifying a better solution for accessible math and science content in Canvas, a need that was flagged through the accessibility audit.

Michael Torrez asked about a tool called Comply Bot, which had been promoted at a recent California Community College AI presentation as a way to convert policy documents into Canvas-ready code. Cherishea confirmed she has access to it but has not yet evaluated it in depth. She committed to reviewing it and reporting back at the next meeting.

LibraTech and The Forge

LibraTech (which includes The Forge) is available to the district: LibraTech at no cost for five years, and The Forge for one year. The Forge functions similarly to Turnitin Clarity. Cherishea plans to ramp up training and outreach around LibraTech, particularly for its OER content creation features. She will provide a full overview at a future meeting.

Canvas Updates

Several Canvas product updates were shared:

- Customizable student dashboard: Beginning the following day, students will be able to rearrange their Canvas dashboard using a widget-based interface. Canvas plans to extend this feature to other user roles in the future.
- Accessibility reporting enhancements: The built-in Canvas Accessibility Checker has been expanded to cover announcements and other pages it previously did not check. Combined with the district's Pope Tech integration, accessibility reporting is now more comprehensive.
- Rich Content Editor captioning: When recording video directly within Canvas's Rich Content Editor (available in announcements, pages, etc.), captions are now automatically generated. Cherishea noted this as a significant improvement for accessibility compliance.

GoReact

GoReact, a video feedback tool for students, continues to be available campus-wide. Crafton holds 5,000 licenses and has used approximately 1,000. Valley College can access the remainder. Cherishea will pursue additional training outreach to help Valley faculty take advantage of the tool.

Course Cross-Listing Reinstated

Cross-listing of Canvas course sections — which had been suspended after a FERPA compliance concern — will resume. The district's technology committee has approved a process that addresses the FERPA issue through a faculty training requirement. Faculty who wish to cross-list their sections will need to complete a short how-to module before doing so. Stacked courses and courses with labs had continued to be cross-listed throughout the pause; this reinstatement covers same-content multi-section courses. Sheri and Cherishea noted that cross-listing saves significant faculty time across the semester.

Document Remediation

Cherishea indicated she is actively researching document remediation solutions — tools that can help make existing course documents accessible in bulk — and will report back as that work develops.

Agenda Item 4: Standing Item Updates

DE Committee Structure Document (Academic Senate)

Sheri confirmed the Word version of the committee structure document is now available. She has not yet had time to incorporate the committee's edits from the April 3 meeting due to the demands of the RSI work. She committed to completing and distributing the revised draft by Monday morning and requesting an email vote from the committee by Wednesday or Thursday, to meet Senate President Tatiana's timeline ahead of the April 15 Senate meeting.

DE Refresher Redesign

Sheri acknowledged that this project has been further delayed due to her focus on the RSI training rollout. She plans to outline the scope of the redesign work by Monday or Tuesday and loop in Adam Pave, who had volunteered to assist. She expressed her intention to still pilot the asynchronous refresher in May if the scope proves manageable.

Agenda Item 5: Mandatory RSI Training – Draft Structure Review (Action Item)

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to reviewing and providing feedback on Sheri's draft structure for the upcoming mandatory, 4-hour RSI training sessions. The training is required for all faculty teaching 100% online courses in Fall 2026.

Background and Accreditation Context

ACCJC will evaluate a random selection of approximately 50 fully online courses from Fall 2026, then review 20–30 of those in detail. Reviewers will go through each selected course week by week, assessing RSI against the ACCJC rubric. The campus must achieve 85% or better compliance across reviewed courses. Falling to the "Initial" level on the rubric carries the risk of an 18-month recommendation from ACCJC. The training is therefore aimed at ensuring all fully online faculty are operating at minimum at the "Emerging" level, with the communication plan template designed to support "Developed" or "Highly Developed" performance.

Crafton Hills College is running parallel training sessions on the same schedule (with one exception due to graduation), though each college designs its own training structure.

Training Scope and Logistics

- Required for: All faculty teaching 100% online courses in Fall 2026. Hybrid and in-person faculty are not required to attend the 4-hour session (though all full-time faculty are required to attend a 30-minute division meeting preview).
- Format: 8 sessions offered across approximately 3–4 weeks, each 4 hours. Faculty attend one session.
- Compensation: Adjunct faculty will receive 4 hours of pay above and beyond their standard professional development compensation. The union is preparing an MOU. Full-

time faculty are not separately compensated, as the training falls on or around in-service workdays.

- Registration: A registration form (name, division, department, courses taught fully online, and preferred session date) will go out the afternoon of the meeting. Sheri will group registrants by session and send Outlook calendar invitations. The Excel rubric will be sent both with the calendar invitation and again as a reminder the day before (committee recommendation: send both).
- Rooms: The Instruction Office is securing room assignments; some sessions will be in B100 and some in a computer lab. Faculty are instructed to bring their own laptops. Fall Canvas shells are already available; faculty are encouraged to import their prior course content before attending.
- Documentation: Faculty will complete an Excel rubric (drop-down/yes-no format, one tab per online course, up to 5 courses) and upload it via a Microsoft Form at the end of their session. The timestamp of upload serves as attendance documentation. Leticia requires completion during the session. Non-attendance is a matter for deans and the VPI.

Division Meeting Preview Tour

Sheri is conducting 30-minute RSI preview sessions at division meetings for all full-time faculty. Completed divisions as of this meeting: Science, Arts and Humanities, Library, Social Sciences, and Applied Technology. Remaining: Counseling (the following week). The preview focuses on the communication plan template and how it connects to RSI requirements.

Training Content – Committee Feedback on Draft Structure

Sheri walked the committee through her draft session plan. Elements highlighted in yellow represent required faculty deliverables within the session; elements in blue represent facilitator spot-checks (required by VPI Leticia). The following summarizes the proposed structure and committee feedback.

Deliverable 1: Create or Revise the Communication Plan

Faculty will create or update their communication plan for each fully online Fall 2026 course. Faculty who already have a plan in an alternate format may keep it, provided the plan includes the key language and components discussed in the division tour (particularly the synchronous office hours language, which must unambiguously state day, time, modality, and purpose).

Maha confirmed she has maintained her own communication plan for some time and asked whether her format was acceptable. Sheri confirmed that any format is acceptable as long as the key RSI elements are present and clearly stated. The point of the template is to help faculty who are starting from scratch, not to standardize the look of every faculty member's plan. She also noted that the ACCJC is looking at what happens week by week during the course, not at whether plans look alike.

Spot check: Facilitators will open the intro/orientation module of each faculty member's course and verify the communication plan is present, complete, and that synchronous office hours language meets the standard.

Deliverable 2: Draft Weekly Announcements

Faculty will draft weekly announcements for their Fall 2026 online courses during the session. The key technical guidance: announcements should be set to publish December 18, 2025 (a placeholder date), so they are written and housed but not yet deployed. Before each

announcement goes live, the faculty member must either (a) open the announcement, edit it with at least one current, course-responsive sentence, and update the publish date, or (b) copy and paste the text into a brand new announcement, which resets the creation timestamp.

The reason for this guidance: Canvas now records three timestamps for announcements — created date, last edited date, and posted date. If an announcement has a creation date from months prior and no recent edit date, ACCJC reviewers may classify it as static content rather than responsive interaction, even if the text is substantive. Sheri noted this timestamp behavior appears to be a relatively recent Canvas feature and may be one reason some colleges are receiving accreditation findings despite believing their RSI was compliant.

Maha suggested that the session include a practice exercise where faculty write one logistical announcement and one substantive announcement side by side, so they can see and feel the difference firsthand. The committee strongly supported this idea. Sheri confirmed she will incorporate it: faculty will write a logistical announcement first, be told it does not count as RSI on its own, and then add academic framing to it to make it substantive.

Maha also suggested using “module number” rather than “week number” in subject lines, since some courses span multiple weeks per module. Sheri accepted this and will revise the guidance accordingly.

Spot check: Facilitators will review 2–3 announcements to confirm they are substantive.

Deliverable 3: Set Up Instructor-Facilitated Discussions

Faculty who use instructor-facilitated discussions are asked to ensure those discussions are set up in their Fall shells. Faculty who do not use discussions at all are not required to add them, provided their other RSI elements are strong. However, Sheri noted that facilitated discussions are both ACCJC-favored and relatively easy RSI to demonstrate, and she encouraged their use.

Discussions imported from prior semesters are acceptable. The creation timestamp on the discussion itself is less of a concern than it is for announcements, because RSI from discussions comes from the instructor’s live participation during the course (replies to individual students, general posts to the thread), not from the existence of the discussion prompt. Sheri noted that going in to edit assignment dates during setup will generate a recent edit timestamp on the discussion, which is sufficient.

Maha noted that for large classes she provides graded feedback to every student on every discussion post, and asked whether replying to only 3 students in a discussion thread would meet RSI. Sheri confirmed it does: the instructor’s substantive public replies to a subset of students, combined with a general class-wide post, constitutes instructor presence. Faculty can rotate which students they respond to across discussions to distribute engagement throughout the class.

Sheri also clarified a prior point: ACCJC reviewers with instructor-level Canvas access can see assignment rubric comments and SpeedGrader feedback. Only inbox messages are invisible to reviewers. This was reassuring to Dawn Adler, who provides written feedback to every student on every assignment weekly and had been concerned about visibility.

Spot check: Facilitators will verify that instructor-facilitated discussions are present where the faculty member has indicated they use them.

Deliverable 4: Identify Feedback Weeks

Faculty will review their course schedule and identify which weeks they will provide instructor-generated assignment feedback, then mark those weeks on the Excel rubric. The approach is flexible: some faculty (e.g., Dawn Adler) provide feedback on every assignment every week; others provide detailed feedback on major assignments only. The rubric asks faculty to mark the week they provided feedback, not the week the assignment is due.

The committee discussed whether automated feedback generated by third-party platforms (such as coding or programming tools that push individualized step-by-step feedback directly into Canvas) counts as RSI. Sheri indicated she will seek clarification from ACCJC before the training launches. The concern is twofold: (1) whether automated feedback counts as instructor-generated interaction, and (2) whether ACCJC reviewers can even see it if it originates outside Canvas. Michael Torrez added the concern that reviewers might not be able to see correct-answer feedback from Canvas's own quiz tool. Sheri will investigate both scenarios and provide a definitive answer to the committee.

Dawn Adler clarified her own practice: she uses a detailed rubric with comments for students who need improvement but provides minimal comment for students who are on track. Sheri noted that positive feedback also counts as RSI, and encouraged faculty to include brief affirmative comments for students who are performing well, not only constructive feedback for those who are struggling.

Optional Element: Proactive Outreach and Midweek Announcements

Sheri proposed making proactive outreach planning optional rather than a required session deliverable, since proactive outreach is by nature responsive to what is happening in the live course and difficult to plan months in advance. Some faculty do set predictable proactive outreach cycles (e.g., after every major assessment); others send outreach on the fly. Both approaches are valid.

The committee discussed the visibility problem: proactive outreach sent via Canvas's "Message Students Who" feature lands in student inboxes, which ACCJC reviewers cannot see. Maha asked whether this means the outreach does not count. Sheri confirmed it counts as RSI, but the faculty member should make it visible by referencing it in a midweek announcement (e.g., "I have sent individual messages to students who have not yet submitted Module 3. Please check your Canvas inbox."). This approach preserves the RSI while making the evidence visible to a reviewer.

Maha also noted that Starfish early alert outreach faces the same visibility limitation. Sheri agreed and suggested addressing Starfish outreach similarly — with a public announcement acknowledging that individual alerts have been sent.

Similarly, midweek announcements are encouraged but left optional. Sheri noted that one Applied Technology faculty member produces a brief weekly video in response to what he has observed from student work that week; this is an excellent example of responsive RSI that would be immediately visible to a reviewer.

Meeting adjourned: 2:33 PM

Next meeting: May 1, 2026 (final meeting of the academic year)