SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

DISTANCE EDUCATION

PLAN

2020-2023

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Approved by the Academic Senate 10/27/20

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About the Plan

In response to significant and ongoing changes in the distance education mode of instructional delivery, the Distance Education Task Force ad hoc committee was formed as a sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee in 2013 to develop a comprehensive Distance Education Plan, Handbook, and curriculum processing procedure to meet instructional needs. The Distance Education Plan is reviewed annually and issued on a 3-year cycle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When the Curriculum Committee was asked to update the college policy and procedure for distance education, an ad hoc task force was formed and worked tirelessly on behalf of the college. We owe a debt of gratitude to the original authors--Patricia Flores-Charter, Elisa Hedrick, Tom Luibel, Gail Stockin Ph.D., Leslie Yoder, and Susan Yonker—as well as the current task force members who have documented our progress and outlined our future: Luke Cuddy, Kristin Hargrove, Tom Luibel, Mia McClellan, Somer Meade, Eun Jung Park, and Tracy Schaelen.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

The first DE Plan was approved by the Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate in Spring 2014 and has been updated on a three-year cycle. The current edition sets forth goals for academic years 2020-2023. It was approved by the Academic Senate on October 27, 2020.

Southwestern College Mission Statement

Southwestern Community College District is the premier public institution of higher education in Southern San Diego County that serves a diverse community of students by providing quality academic programs, comprehensive student support services that ensure equitable access and clear pathways to student success.

Southwestern Community College District promotes learning and success to prepare students to become critical thinkers and engaged life-long learners/global citizens. The District is committed to continuous improvements through the use of data-informed planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Southwestern Community College District utilizes a variety of instructional modalities to provide educational and career opportunities in the following areas: Associate degree and certificate programs, transfer, professional, technical and career advancement, foundational skills, personal enrichment, and continuing education.

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

Southwestern College supports faculty and staff in developing and delivering quality online learning experiences for successful student outcomes.

About the Distance Education Plan

The Distance Education (DE) Plan reflects the Southwestern College Mission, Strategic Plan, and Educational Master Plan. The purpose is to establish common goals and criteria for quality online instruction, identify infrastructure and application needs, set standards for training faculty and students, and make recommendations for continued improvement. This plan will guide online instruction over the course of the next three academic years, 2020-2023. It is available to the Southwestern College community on SharePoint and the DE Policies, Procedures & Guidelines page of the college website.

The DE plan is evaluated annually by the Distance Education Task Force. Updates are available on SharePoint.

The Distance Education Task Force is responsible for evaluating the DE Plan at the end of its three-year span and creating--in consultation with the DE Coordinator, Online Learning Center, Academic Technology Committee, and Academic Senate--a plan for the following three years.

Developing the DE Plan is a three-step process:

1. **Planning:** The current plan is presented at a DE Task Force meeting, where participants determine plan sections to be deleted, updated, or added. Suggestions for changes are documented. The DE Task Force chair establishes a timeline and guides preparation of the first draft of the plan by the group.
2. **Review:** The first comprehensive draft is presented to the Online Learning Center team and Academic Technology Committee for review and feedback.
3. **Final Revision & Approval:** The DE Task Force prepares the final draft of the plan based on the feedback collected during the review process. The final draft is then submitted for approval to the Academic Senate.

Distance Education in California

"People expect to be able to work, learn, and study whenever and wherever they want to. Life in an increasingly busy world where learners must balance demands from home, work, school, and family poses a host of logistical challenges with which today's ever more mobile students must cope" (*Horizon Report*, Higher Education Edition, 2012, p. 4).

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Distance education is an important and growing part of California higher education. Of the state's three public higher education systems, the California Community Colleges are the largest provider of distance education offerings (Steenhausen & Boilard, 2010, p.3). According to the Chancellor's Office 2017 *Distance Education Report*, "the number of students taking distance

education courses nearly tripled" from 2005 to 2017, with 28% of CCC students taking one or more distance education courses in 2016-2017 (p.18).

Table 1: Total student headcount in all DE and traditional education course classes in California Community Colleges 2005-2017

Fiscal year	Distance Education	Traditional education	Total	Percent of total headcount
2005-06	328,372	2,630,207	2,958,579	11%
2006-07	392,355	2,694,149	3,086,504	13%
2007-08	483,884	2,810,572	3, 294,456	15%
2008-09	611,689	2,923,137	3,534,826	17%
2009-10	649,518	2,758,831	3,408,349	19%
2010-11	675,760	2,570,688	3,246,448	21%
2011-12	643,255	2,388,913	3,032,168	21%
2012-13	633,058	2,257,177	2,890,235	22%
2013-14	687,935	2,256,020	2,943,955	23%
2014-15	732,577	2,244,158	2,976,735	25%
2015-16	796,000	2,251,790	3,048,390	26%
2016-17	860,283	2,242,618	3,102,901	28%

Source: 2017 *Distance Education Report* (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2017)

Growth is fueled by demand. Students with ubiquitous access to web and mobile technologies value, and expect, the convenience of access to course content anywhere, anytime. This expectation has been met by the adoption of asynchronous communication methods for course delivery. According to the Chancellor's Office, "Online instruction using asynchronous time based delivery is by the far the most widely used method of conducting distance education because it offers students the greatest flexibility in taking courses. Currently 94 percent of all distance education courses are internet-based courses (87 percent asynchronous, 7 percent synchronous)" (*Distance Education Report,* 2017, p.37). Growth of DE course sections has far

outpaced traditional sections in the last decade. In fact, DE sections as a percentage of total CCC credit course sections tripled from 4% in 2005-06 to 13% in 2016-17.

Table 2: Total number of DE and traditional education course sessions/classes offered in California Community Colleges

Fiscal year	Distance Education	Traditional education	Percentage
2005-06	21,407	456,644	4%
2006-07	26,121	465,680	5%
2007-08	32,380	486,866	6%
2008-09	39,178	482,756	8%
2009-10	39,974	440,933	8%
2010-11	43,561	419,466	9%
2011-12	41,246	391,191	10%
2012-13	42,053	376,289	10%
2013-14	48,087	396,407	11%
2014-15	54,477	407,662	11%
2015-16	57,749	415,687	12%
2016-17	63,091	418,789	13%

Source: 2017 *Distance Education Report* (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2017)


State survey results show that California higher education students choose distance education because internet-based courses facilitate access to a college education and integrate more easily with other aspects of their lives. Flexible learning schedules permit students to arrange work, family, and other personal obligations to suit their individual needs. According to the 2017 Chancellor's report on Distance Education, distance education student survey data indicates that the top reason CCC students choose distance education is "convenience with their work schedule" (*Distance Education Report,* 2017, p.31). Students take distance education courses

because they provide a more convenient way to manage both a heavy work schedule and personal and/or family needs.

SUCCESS RATES

Distance education success rates have steadily increased statewide. As seen in the figure below, the gap between traditional and distance education success has narrowed from 17% in 2006-07 to 4% in 2016-17.
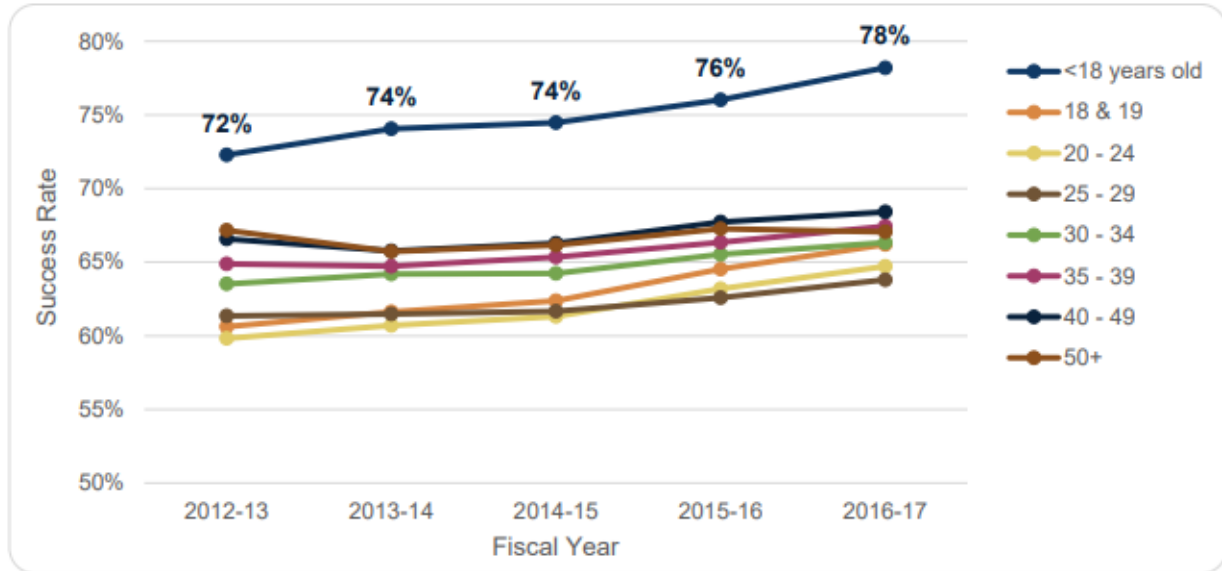
Figure 1: Success Rates of DE and Traditional Face-to-Face Courses (Credit and Noncredit), 2005-16
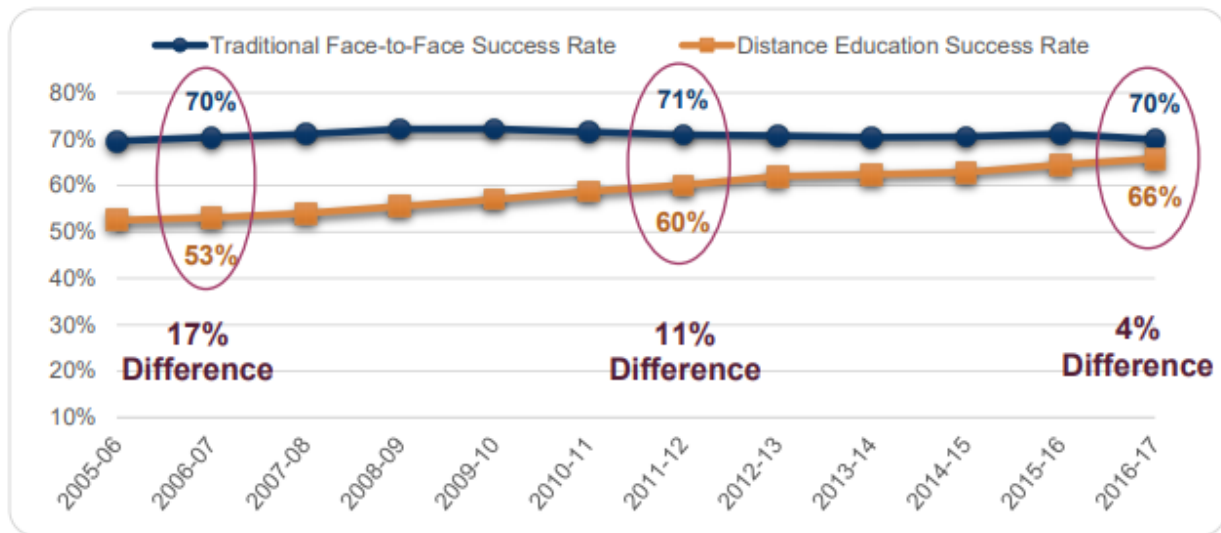
Source: 2017 *Distance Education Report* (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2017)

Disaggregated data reveals that students under 18 years old have the highest success rate (78%), significantly higher than all other age groups.
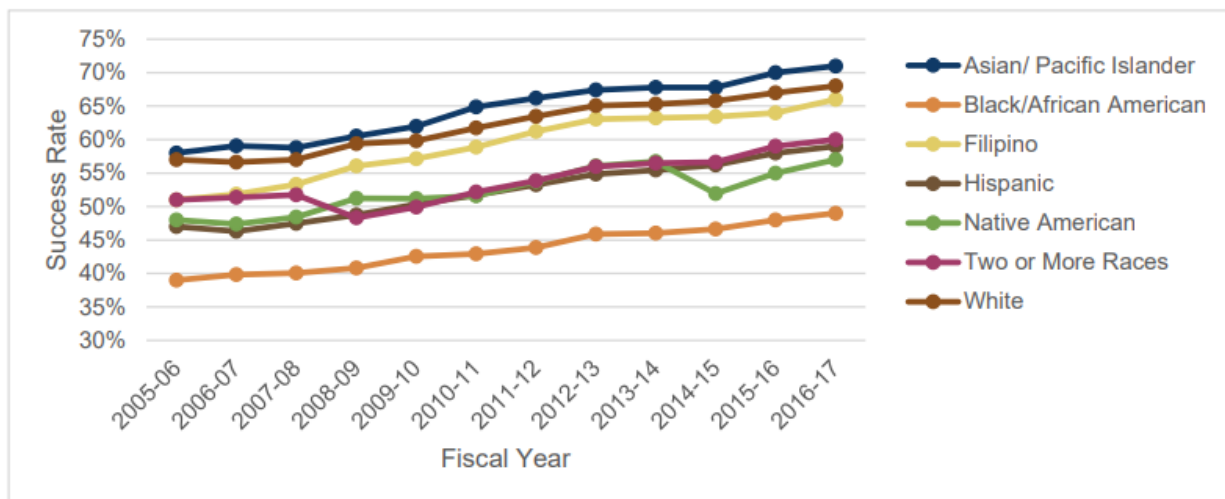
Figure 2: Success Rates in Distance Education by Age, 2012-2017

Source: 2017 *Distance Education Report* (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2017)

Data disaggregated by ethnicity shows improvement in success rates across all ethnicities between 2005-06 and 2016-17, but it also reveals persistent gaps, particularly for Black/African-American students.

Figure 3: Success Rates in Distance Education by Ethnicity, 2012-2017

Source: 2017 *Distance Education Report* (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2017)

CHALLENGES TO DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education courses are required to maintain the same academic standards as face-to-face courses and have many of the same challenges, especially as technology is increasingly infused in traditionally delivered instruction. The 2017 *Distance Education Report*, yearly Instructional Technology Council (ITC) survey which looks primarily at public community colleges across the United States, the *Horizon Report* Higher Education Edition and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (Johnson et al., 2012-2016) all reiterate common challenges to post-secondary distance education, including:

- Success and retention rates
- Student support services online
- Section 508 accessibility compliance
- Training of faculty, including quality course design, delivery, evaluation of teaching and learning, and professional development
- Training of students for online learning and digital literacy
- Effective evaluation of instruction and student learning, including student learning outcomes

Distance Education at Southwestern College

Distance education is an established and popular option for instructional delivery at Southwestern College. The motivations (Howell, Williams, & Lindsay, 2003) to create and expand distance education offerings are strong across all levels of the college community.

- **Institutional Benefits:** The institutional and administrative motivators for offering Distance Education classes include the efficient use of physical space and the need to offer an alternative delivery method for those who cannot come to campus. Special populations served by distance education include students with children, working students, military students, and students with disabilities.
- **Program Benefits:** Southwestern College programs have implemented distance education for a variety of reasons, including improved access for students and efficient

capacity utilization. Many programs are expanding options and developing fully online pathways to degrees and certificates.

- **Student Benefits:** Student reasons for taking distance education classes include a flexible academic schedule, reduction of commuting time and transportation expenses, and, for students with physical disabilities, accessibility. Mixing DE courses with in-person courses can empower students to take more classes and finish degrees faster.

- **Faculty Benefits:** Faculty members decide to teach distance education courses for a variety of reasons, including enhancement of instructional methods, promotion of student success, growth of programs through increased access, and increased opportunities for flexibility and creativity.

Definitions

Distance Education at Southwestern College primarily refers to the delivery of online and hybrid courses. The College-adopted course management system is also widely used for web-enhancement of traditional in-person classes.

CCC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE DEFINITION AND REQUIREMENTS

Title 5 § 55200 of the California Code of Regulations defines distance education as follows:

> Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by time and/or distance and interact through the assistance of technology. All distance education is subject to the general requirements of this chapter as well as the specific requirements of this article. In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794d).

It is important to note that section 55206 also includes specific curriculum procedures for hybrid as well as online classes:

If any portion of the instruction in a new or existing course is to be provided through distance education, an addendum to the official course outline of record shall be required. In addition to addressing how course outcomes will be achieved in a distance education mode, the addendum shall at a minimum specify how the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets:

(a) Regular and effective contact between instructors and students and among students as referenced in title 5, section 55204(a), and

(b) Requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. § 749d)

The addendum shall be separately approved according to the district's adopted curriculum approval procedures.

ACCREDITING COMMISSION DEFINITION

In its document, *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) includes the federal definition of distance education for accreditation purposes as follows:

"Distance education is defined, for the purpose of accreditation review, 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" (*ACCJC Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review*, 2020, p. 114).

APPLICATION OF DEFINITIONS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AT SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

Southwestern College Distance Education is defined as instruction where students and faculty are separated by distance and interact using a variety of technologies. There are three types of courses supported by the Distance Education Program.

Online Class

An online class at Southwestern College is instructed entirely online. The class meets online using the college adopted Course Management System (CMS), with no in-person instruction or meetings. Instructional time follows the Carnegie Unit. This means the faculty must plan an approximate 1:2 ratio of instruction time to homework and study.

Definition for students in the College Catalog: These courses are 100% online. Online courses are taught through the college's CMS with no face-to-face meetings; instruction, interaction, and assignment submission all take place online.

Hybrid Class

A hybrid class at Southwestern College is a class that offers instruction both online and face-to-face on campus. Required in-person meetings are included in the schedule of classes following a predictable pattern (on the same day[s] of the week and at the same time). Online instruction uses the college-adopted CMS and also follows a predictable pattern. Instructional time follows the Carnegie Unit. This means the faculty must plan an approximate 1:2 ratio of instruction time to homework and study.

Definition for students in the College Catalog: Hybrid courses offer a mix of both online and on-campus instruction. Required face-to-face meetings are included in the schedule of classes and follow a predictable pattern. The online portion of the course uses the college's CMS and also follows a predictable pattern.

Web-Enhanced Class

Web-enhanced classes at Southwestern College are face-to-face instructional courses that offer students access to class materials, grades, and resources online using the college-adopted CMS. Web enhanced courses may offer supplemental activities and homework online, and they may include online communication and electronic submission of coursework. Web enhanced courses may **not** use Internet-based resources or activities to replace required on-campus face-to-face instruction or in-seat contact hours.

Definition for students in the College Catalog: These are traditional, face-to-face courses that meet 100% on campus but use the college's course management system to give students access to class materials, grades, activities, and/or resources.

Distance Education Academic Attendance

For distance education auditing purposes academic attendance includes, but is not limited to:

1. Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
2. Submitting an academic assignment;
3. Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;
4. Attending a study group that is assigned by the institution;
5. Participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and
6. Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; (DOE, 2010, 66952)

SYLLABUS REQUIREMENT FOR ATTENDANCE

A distance education attendance statement, in accordance with the College's attendance policy and Department of Education regulations, must appear in each course syllabus specifying how absences are managed. Details and sample statements are provided in the Distance Education Handbook.

LAST DATE OF ATTENDANCE (LDA)

The last date of academic attendance, commonly known as the Last Day of Attendance (LDA), is the date the college uses to determine the amount of financial aid, if any, that must be returned to the Department of Education due to student withdrawal. The Department of Education specifically requires "using a last date of attendance at an academically-related activity as a withdrawal date" and states that "it is up to the institution to ensure that accurate records are

kept for purposes of identifying a student's last date of academic attendance or last date of attendance at an academically-related activity." (Dept. of Education, Reg. 66898).

Activities where students may be present but exhibit no evidence of academic engagement are excluded from determining First Date of Attendance and Last Day of Attendance, for example, "(3) Logging into an online class without active participation; or (4) Participating in academic counseling or advisement" (DOE, 2010, Reg. 66952).

LAST DAY OF ATTENDANCE DOCUMENTATION

Faculty members must document student academic engagement via the CMS and record student withdrawals in WebAdvisor. This documentation must be stored with grades and other official course records following Southwestern College record keeping policy. Documenting engagement and recording withdrawals ensures that Southwestern College is in compliance with Title 5, Section 58004: "Districts shall, according to procedures adopted by the governing board, clear the rolls of inactive enrollment." Inactive enrollment is defined as a "no show" or a "student no longer participating in the course."

Regular Effective Contact

Instruction for distance education must comply with all applicable federal and state regulations. Title 5 section 55204(c) states, "Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact correspondence, voice mail, email, or other activities. Regular and effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq." (*California Education Code,* Section 55204). Furthermore, any portion of a course provided through distance education must follow the guidelines issued by the Chancellor's Office pursuant to Section 409 of the *Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors*.

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges specifically defines a distance education course as featuring "regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor" (*ACCJC Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review*, 2020, p. 114). This requirement for regular instructor contact with students is affirmed in Southwestern College's Procedure No. 4105, which states, "Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students, either synchronously or asynchronously." Southwestern College's Policy and Procedure 4115: Distance Education Regular and Effective Contact, details federal and state regulation as well as education code requirements. The procedure includes course standards, definitions of contact, documentation of regular effective contact required, instructor-initiated contact, frequency, expectations and instructor absences, examples of types of contact, and suggestions for instructors.

REGULAR EFFECTIVE CONTACT DOCUMENTATION

The College must be able to demonstrate how regular and effective contact is achieved and documented, per Southwestern College's AP 4115. This documentation should be maintained in the Course Management System and must demonstrate that instructors are interacting with their students at least as frequently as they would in the equivalent face-to-face course to ensure that students are "accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities of the course" (*Southwestern Community College District Procedure No. 4115*, p. 2).

Distance Education Enrollment at Southwestern College

Southwestern College offers students both online and hybrid courses. As seen in Table 3, enrollment for Southwestern College Distance Education has been relatively steady for the last three years, with online course offerings comprising the larger part of DE enrollments.

TABLE 3: DISTANCE EDUCATION FTES

FTES Scheduled	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Online FTES	2,296	2,272	1,747	1,969	1,811
Hybrid FTES	1,019	1,061	757	720	772
Total FTES	3,315	3,333	2,502	2,689	2,583

Source: Cummings Report at census, prepared by ISS Supervisor Brian Ebalo, Sept. 2020

Distance Education Success and Retention

STUDENT SUCCESS

Successful student completion of a course is defined as performance with a passing grade or a grade of "C" or better (A, B, C, Credit, or pass).

According to the SWC's *Distance Education at Southwestern College, 2014-15 to 2018-19* report, success rates for online courses continue to grow, increasing each of the last five years. The success rate for online courses in 2014-2015 was 60.7%, and by 2018-2019 it was 67.8%. The success rate gains for hybrid courses were more modest but also positive, growing from 68.1% in 2014-2015 to 71.5% in 2018-2019. Face-to-face success rates rose as well during this period, but a slower pace: 70.2% to 72.4%. Although DE rates for DE did improve, we continue to aim for stronger gains as we work to narrow the gap between online and face-to-face success rates.

Table 4: SWC Student Success Rates, 2014-2019

Academic Year	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Online	60.7%	61.8%	62.1%	66.6%	67.8%
Face-to-Face	70.2%	69.8%	70.2%	70.9%	72.4%
Hybrid	68.1%	64.6%	65.3%	69.1%	71.5%
Overall	*68.8%*	*68.5%*	*68.8%*	*70.1%*	*71.6%*

Source: *Distance Education at Southwestern College, 2014-15 to 2018-19 (Institutional Research, 2019)*

## Figure 4: SWC Student Success Rates, 2014-2019
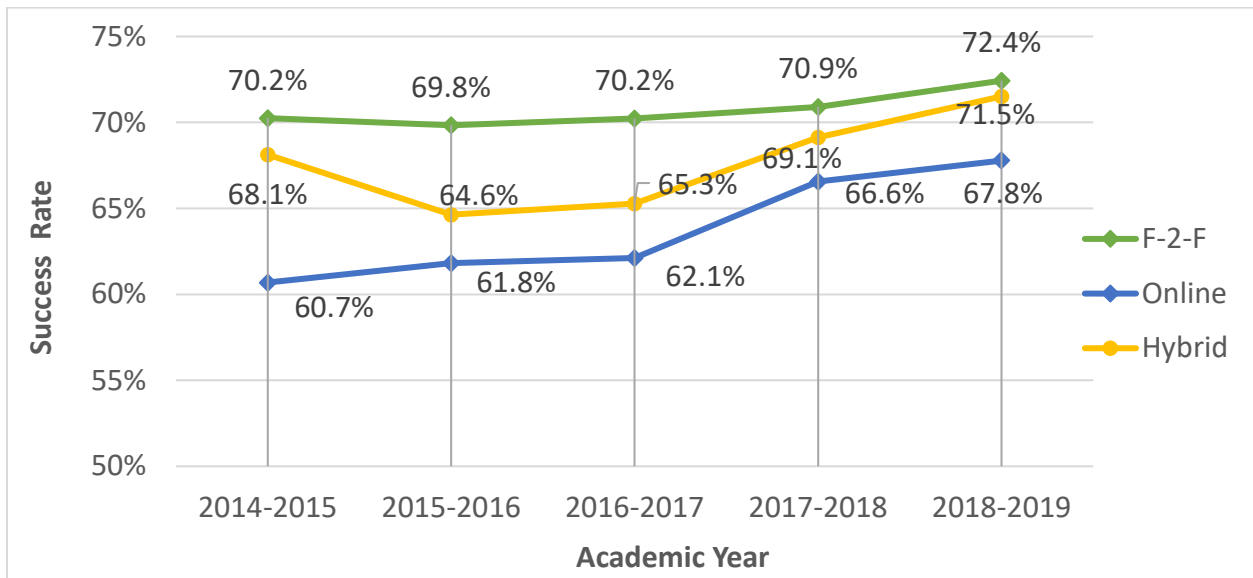
RETENTION

Retention rates are calculated based on student drops. Students who drop a course with a "W" grade are counted as not having been retained. The retention rate for online courses has improved steadily since 2015-16, but it trails face-to-face retention by almost 3%. Hybrid courses have enjoyed the strongest retention rates for several years, registering at close to 1.5% higher than face-to-face in 2018-19.

Table 5: SWC Student Retention Rates, 2014-2019

Academic Year	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Online	78.7%	78.5%	79.5%	81.6%	82.1%
Face-to-Face	86.0%	84.3%	84.7%	84.6%	85.2%
Hybrid	86.4%	84.2%	84.7%	85.3%	86.6%
Overall	*84.9%*	*83.5%*	*83.9%*	*84.2%*	*84.8%*

Source: *Distance Education at Southwestern College, 2014-15 to 2018-19 (Institutional Research, 2019)*

Figure 5: SWC Student Retention Rates, 2014-2019
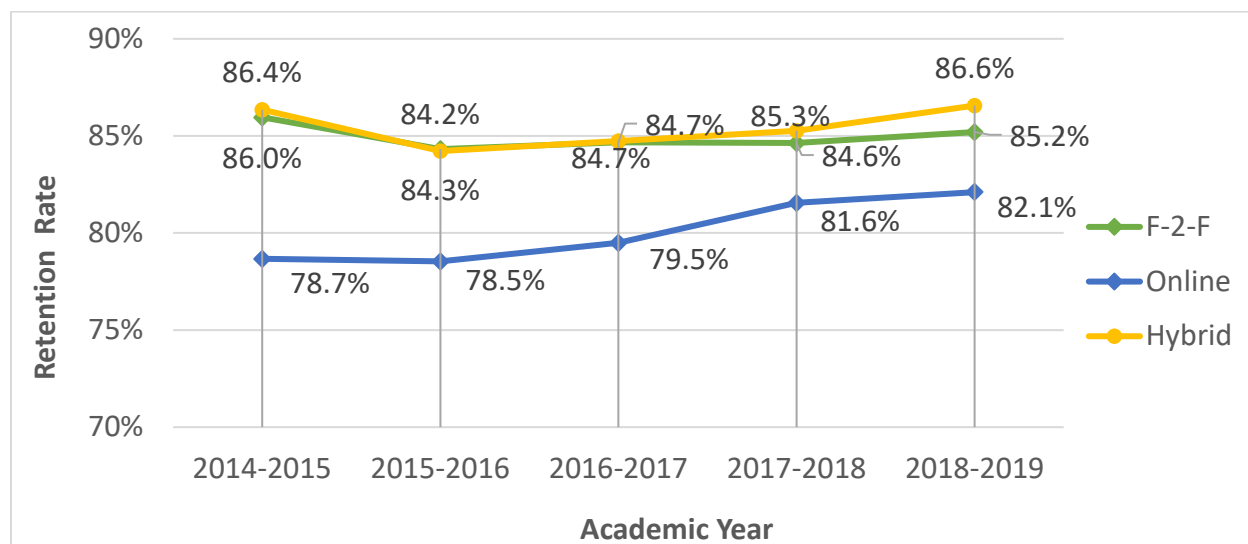
PROGRAM PLANNING FOR RETENTION AND SUCCESS

While the data shows student success rates in traditional lecture courses are slightly higher than in online courses at Southwestern College and across the state, it is important to acknowledge both the improved success in DE courses and the decrease in the disparity between DE and traditional courses, especially in the hybrid delivery format. For planning purposes, it is also crucial to target the root causes of this disparity in order to find best practices that will improve success and retention.

There are many reasons that retention and persistence remain a challenge for distance education. Students tend to withdraw from their online/hybrid courses for a range of reasons, including personal and professional issues (California State Chancellor's Office, 2013). In fact, DE students tend to have more personal and professional obligations than traditional students, which may cause them to drop classes at higher rates than others (Steenhausen, et al., 2010). While work schedules and "personal circumstances" were the top two reasons 4-year students gave for taking online courses, they were also the top two reasons students gave for dropping a DE course (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011, p. 35).

The highest percentage of DE withdrawal calculations were for personal problems including family, health, job, and childcare. Secondary reasons were inability to combine study and work

responsibilities and the course was too difficult. Tertiary reasons were student course load mismanagement, inability to devote time and attention to the online class requirements, and lack of instructor feedback (California State Chancellor's Office, 2011).

In a widely cited study, Carolyn Hart's *Factors Associated With Student Persistence in an Online Program of Study*, 2012, identifies the following factors as significant in motivating students to persist in online education:

- satisfaction with online learning
- a sense of belonging to a community
- peer and family support
- time management skills
- increased communication with the instructor

Hart's review of recent literature speaks to the importance of regular effective contact, and it has been a foundation of this college's approach to faculty training, both for certification to teach online and for ongoing professional development.

It is also important to ensure that DE students have access to online student services, which include counseling, personal instructor feedback, academic advising, and career services (Pullan, 2011). Student services play a direct, vital role in success, including academic performance, psychological growth and program or certificate completion (Pullan, 2011). Southwestern College offers all core student services online, and in 2020 these services expanded dramatically due to the COVID-19 college closure. Online library and tutoring services have been especially lauded by faculty and students alike.

Research has also shown a correlation between retention, student orientation, and the effective use of learning strategies in postsecondary education (Weng, Cheong & Cheong, 2009). Quest for Online Success, a self-paced student introduction to online learning success skills, was adopted at SWC to support student retention and success; indeed, it was an objective in the 2013-2017 Distance Education plan. This Canvas mini-course can be accessed from the college website, and it is often provided by faculty as a Week 1 assignment; the certificate of

completion emailed to students can be submitted for credit or extra credit. Quest includes SmarterMeasure, an assessment instrument that helps students identify strengths and areas for improvement and provides strategies and resources to support growth.

Distance Education Management and Support at Southwestern College

Canvas, the CCC system's Common Course Management System, was adopted by Southwestern College in April of 2016. All distance education and web-enhanced courses offered at Southwestern College have a course shell in Canvas.

By definition and according to the official designation in the curriculum process, web-enhanced courses are considered traditional courses rather than Distance Education, and yet they represent a growing area of training and responsibility for the Distance Education program.

COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THROUGH MANAGED HOSTING

Southwestern College Board Policy No. 4105 requires that DE courses be conducted in the college's official course management system. System maintenance, monitoring, upgrades, technical support, and systems administration assistance are all part of the contract for Canvas, which is managed through the Chancellor's Office.

Canvas was thoroughly vetted by a statewide committee of CMS administrators, faculty, and students. Before being selected, Canvas was rigorously reviewed for compliance with federal regulations, including Section 508 compliance. The state contract with Canvas includes 24/7 access to Canvas experts for system admins, faculty, and students. In addition, managed hosting safeguards against network outages through the use of redundant servers and industry standard safeguards from threats to physical and data security. Remotely hosting the system also protects against data loss through natural disasters.

Information Technology provides automated transfers of student enrollment information from Colleague to Canvas.
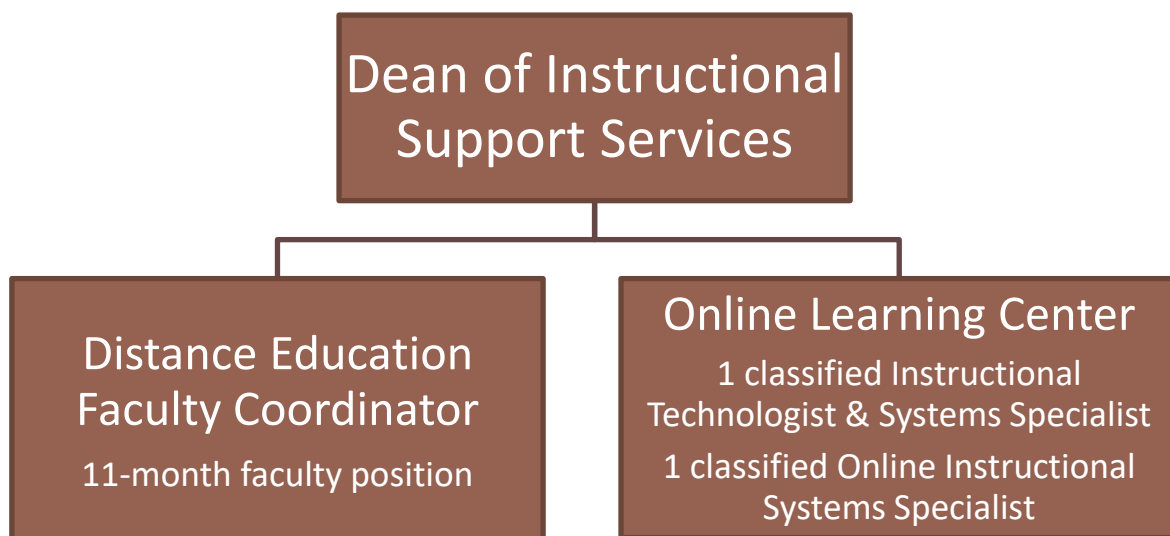
SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE SUPPORT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Distance Education program requires current and stable infrastructure, which is reliant upon funding allocation and assignment of sufficient personnel to manage the program and technological upgrades and changes. The personnel in the Online Learning Center are responsible for maintaining the course management system, providing stable access, continually monitoring all technical systems related to online program delivery, and supporting faculty, staff, and students in use of the CMS. Currently, two classified employees provide Online Learning Center support for students and faculty.

Instructional support is provided to faculty by the Distance Education Faculty Coordinator in the form of webinars, the HOW TO Academy, custom training, and presentations. The DE Faculty Coordinator also administers the Distance Education Faculty Training Program, which provides training and feedback to DE faculty through a 5-week, 40-hour online course taught in Canvas. Faculty support is also provided through the DE Mentor Program, also administered by the DE Faculty Coordinator.

Canvas training is also offered to all college employees. Workshops, webinars, open labs, and one-on-one training are offered through the Online Learning Center and the DE Coordinator's office. In addition to local training, employees can take @ONE's Introduction to Teaching with Canvas and other training courses no cost or low cost.

Figure 6: Distance Education Organizational Chart

Dean of Instructional Support Services

Distance Education Faculty Coordinator
11-month faculty position

Online Learning Center
1 classified Instructional Technologist & Systems Specialist
1 classified Online Instructional Systems Specialist

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SENATE

The Education Code recognizes the right of Academic Senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards (California Code of Regulations Title 5. Education Division 6. California Community Colleges Chapter 4. Employees Subchapter 2. Certificated Positions Article 2. Academic Senates § 53200. Definitions. 5 CA ADC § 53200, 2009). Title 5 further defines these areas to include "curriculum ... standards or policies regarding student preparation and success, ... policies for faculty professional development activities ... [and] processes for program review." This Distance Education Plan recognizes the role of the Academic Senate in these areas, and the DE Program works with the Academic Senate to ensure that goals, objectives, and final outcomes in these matters receive the Senate's approval.

Distance Education Program Level Learning Outcomes

The Distance Education program-level learning outcomes address student technical competency and academic support awareness:

1. Distance Education students will use the basic features of the Southwestern College CMS at a proficiency level sufficient to access course materials, interact with the instructor and fellow students, complete course assignments and assessments, and monitor learning and grades during the semester.
2. Distance Education students will be aware of student academic and support services as a result of direct access to links to those services available on Southwestern College CMS course sites or the Online Learning area of the college website.

A NOTE ON COURSE-LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOS)

Southwestern College instructional programs incorporate student learning outcomes into each course during the curriculum approval process. Distance Education course SLO assessment occurs as part of a department's established course-level SLO assessment process. The process of instructional assessment is not part of the Distance Education program review or this plan.

Program Goals and Objectives

Distance Education goals and objectives direct the program's development and improvement process during each 3-year period. The DE Program is committed to offering only those new products and services that can be supported and funded with adequate technical, financial, and staffing resources.

GOAL 1: STUDENT SUPPORT & SERVICES

Provide the support and services necessary to support students in online learning.

1.1 Objective: Include a front-page link on the SWC website to Online Learning support pages to provide enhanced and equitable access for all students.

- ✧ 1.1.a Person(s) responsible: DE Task Force, Office of Communications, Institutional Technology
- ✧ 1.1.b Timeframe: Fall 2020-Spring 2021
- ✧ 1.1.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

1.2 Objective: Create an online student services portal to showcase essential services and provide easy access from within Canvas.

- ✧ 1.2.a Person(s) responsible: Online Learning Center, Academic Success Center, Library, and possibly other service offices
- ✧ 1.2.b Timeframe: Fall 2020-Spring 2021
- ✧ 1.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

1.3 Objective: Expand Quest for Online Success visibility, outreach, and materials, including incorporating local campus resources and services such as SWC Cares, the Online Learning Center, and the Academic Success Center.

- ✧ 1.3.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, DE Task Force, Online Learning Center
- ✧ 1.3.b Timeframe: Spring 2021-Fall 2021
- ✧ 1.3.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

1.4 Objective: Create a process for analyzing Smarter Measure data from Quest for Online Success to inform planning of student and faculty training and resources.

- ✧ 1.4.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, Distance Education/Online Learning Center
- ✧ 1.4.b Timeframe: Spring 2021-Fall 2022
- ✧ 1.4.c Additional fiscal resources needed: None

1.5 Objective: Join the California Virtual Campus-Online Education Initiative's CVC Exchange as a home college and/or teaching college so that SWC students have access to a wider range of online CCC courses, and (if a teaching college) so that students throughout the CCC system can enroll in SWC online courses.

- ✧ 1.5.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, Academic Senate, Financial Aid, Online Learning Center
- ✧ 1.5.b Timeframe: Fall 2020-Fall 2021
- ✧ 1.5.c Additional fiscal resources needed: If SWC becomes a teaching college, funding for faculty registration in @ONE courses will be needed.

GOAL 2: FACULTY SUPPORT & SERVICES
Provide the support and services necessary to faculty for successful distance instruction.

2.1 Objective: Expand training and resources (videos, how-to guides, etc.) to support faculty teaching in new delivery formats, including synchronous remote instruction.

- ✧ 2.1.a Person(s) responsible: Distance Education/Online Learning Center
- ✧ 2.1.b Timeframe: Fall 2020-Spring 2021
- ✧ 2.1.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: Temporary faculty positions in DE/OLC

2.2. Objective: Create one or more training programs/certificates tailored to synchronous remote instruction.

- ✧ 2.2.a Person(s) responsible: Distance Education/Online Learning Center
- ✧ 2.2.b Timeframe: Fall 2020-Spring 2021
- ✧ 2.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Temporary one-year faculty positions in DE/OLC, possibly stipends for program completion

2.3. Objective: Expand the DE Mentor Program to provide individual and small-group mentoring for faculty teaching online, preparing to teach online, or using Canvas to support non-DE instruction. Increase awareness of the program through departmental outreach, global email, and increased integration into current training.

- ✧ 2.3.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator
- ✧ 2.3.b Timeframe: Fall 2020-Spring 2021
- ✧ 2.3.c Additional fiscal resources needed: funding for mentor training and compensation

2.4 Objective: Institutionalize Peer Online Course Review (POCR) to support the development of excellent online courses aligned to the CVC-OEI Course Design Rubric, which can then be offered in the CVC Exchange (see 1.4 Objective).

- ✧ 2.4.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator, Dean of ISS, Online Learning Center
- ✧ 2.4.b Timeframe: Spring 2021-Spring 2023
- ✧ 2.4.c Additional Fiscal resources needed: Funding for course reviews and training

2.5. Objective: Create an advanced training course or program for faculty who have completed DEFT and are ready to advance or refresh their skills.

- ✧ 2.5.a Person(s) responsible: DE Coordinator
- ✧ 2.5.b Timeframe: Fall 2021-Spring 2022
- ✧ 2.5.c Additional fiscal resources needed: possibly stipends for program completion

GOAL 3: LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Continually monitor and revise program requirements to meet state and federal laws and guidelines that apply to distance education in California higher education.

3.1 Objective: Adopt and train faculty in the use of Pope Tech, a Canvas application that reviews page accessibility and assists in fixing errors.

- ✧ 3.1.a Person(s) responsible: Distance Education, Online Learning Center, Technology Specialist for Accessibility and Compliance
- ✧ 3.1.c Timeframe: Fall 2020-Spring 2021
- ✧ 3.1.d Additional fiscal resources needed: None; product is currently no cost

GOAL 4: PROGRAM QUALITY

Maintain a quality program through continuous program improvement based on the evaluation of instruction, procedures, practices, and accessibility.

4.1 Objective: Evaluate facilities, tools, equity issues, and support needs related to online proctoring. Explore options and guidance provided by the CCC Chancellor's Office, the Online Education Initiative, and available research.

- ✧ 4.1.a Person(s) responsible: Dean of ISS, Learning Assistance Services Coordinator, DE Coordinator, Distance Education/Online Learning Center
- ✧ 4.1.b Timeframe: Fall 2021-Spring 2022
- ✧ 4.1.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Unknown--potential contract with online proctoring service

4.2 Objective: Create a process for capturing data from students withdrawing from online and hybrid courses. By determining the reasons students withdraw, the College can better target support and assistance to address these reasons, and faculty training can incorporate this data as well.

- ✧ 4.2.a Person(s) responsible: Dean of ISS, Online Learning Center, DE Coordinator
- ✧ 4.2.b Timeframe: Fall 2022-Spring 2023
- ✧ 4.2.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Unknown

4.3 Objective: Explore innovative new delivery modes, such as virtualization and remote activities, as ways to provide more equity-minded and inclusive access and success.

- ✧ 4.3.a Person(s) responsible: DE Task Force, Distance Education/Online Learning Center, Curriculum Committee, Institutional Technology
- ✧ 4.3.b Timeframe: Fall 2021-Spring 2022
- ✧ 4.3.c Additional fiscal resources needed: Unknown