

(DRAFT COPY)

Guam Community College

Distance Education Plan

Scope of Work

OVERVIEW

Distance Education or DE is defined as the practice of offering educational services – either instruction or support services – for college credit to students who are not physically co-located with the institution providing the service. DE includes the use of computer and Internet-based educational services as well as video and audio services. Internet technologies bring students educational programming in either synchronous (students and the service provider are interacting on line at the same time) or asynchronous modes (students and the service provider not interacting on line at the same time). Educational interactions delivered through these means may occur on campus as well as off campus.

DE is a convenient, flexible, and effective means of providing education. Nearly half of all the college students in the country are of the age group once thought of as nontraditional. They are working adults or adults seeking first educational credentials or retraining. Many working adult students with multiple demands on their time find DE to meet their needs better than campus-based education.

DE is an opportunity for Guam Community College (GCC) and its students to contribute to environmentally friendly practices. Courses that run through DE reduce the use of paper and copying, as resources are available digitally. In addition, students commute to campus less frequently than traditional courses, lessening the use of gas and related emissions into the environment.

In addition to working adults, the traditional-aged college students come to campus with extensive experience using digital technologies in their personal and school lives. For these students, DE that involves the use of Internet, web casts, text messaging, and other digital media is comfortable and familiar. As technology continues to expand world-wide, participation in DE assists students in preparing for the workforce.

At GCC, many of our students have access to the internet through personal devices such as computers (desktop, laptop) and mobile devices (smart phones, tablets, etc.). Students have asked that more on-line courses be made available and some departments are interested in offering DE courses albeit with support and training being a key to such efforts.

In a recent evaluation report tied into GCC's successful accreditation efforts, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) made the following statements and recommendation:

General Observations

Distance education is in its infancy at the College, with only three sections offered in the 2011-12 catalog. The College plans to use the same processes for the planning, approval, evaluation, and review of courses offered in the distance education mode. Similarly, fiscal, technical and human resources required for teaching distance education learning programs are identified, integrated, and assessed within the same planning processes. The Office of Assessment Institutional Effectiveness and Research plans to provide student admission, retention, assessment and satisfaction data related to distance education using the same procedures as in face-to-face courses and programs.

Findings and Evidence

Distance education (DE) classes were pioneered at the College by faculty in the Education

department who received a grant to do so. The ongoing fiscal and human resources for DE have not been fully identified or integrated into the College's overall planning process. Board Policy 340: Distance Education Policy, was approved to support this work; the policy states that evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and evidence of institutional and program performance in distance education classes feed into the balance of the College's strategic planning and assessment process. (I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5)* However, the Institutional Self Evaluation Report notes a failed attempt to incorporate the evaluation of DE classes with the new tool used for face-to-face courses. The College does not separate DE data for success and retention.

Technical resources required for distance education are discussed in the Information Technology Strategic Plan, which reports that GCC has adequate broadband for the current online courses, but expresses the need for a thorough assessment of technical resources if DE offerings are to grow. The self evaluation update reports a new program specialist was assigned in January 2012 to handle a program of emergent technology training that includes distance education. (I.B.4)* Continuing Education distance education classes target a broader group of students including career track training, applied computer skills, workplace soft skills, leadership, and others. These courses are offered through commercial vendors who are reputed for the quality and content of the courses. GCC has selected four vendors (ed2go Instructor Led courses; ed2go career Training programs; LERN; and JER Online)all of which are held in high regard. There is no evidence however that the College has monitored the success of these students, or that data collected from the vendors have been used to affect future plans by assessing the quality of the content of these courses. Currently there are fewer than 15 students participating in on-line Continuing Education courses.

Recommendation

In order to improve, the team recommends that the College develop a plan for distance education, including continuing education offered through distance education, and implement appropriate support services and procedures to deliver instruction online.

In line with the ACCJC recommendations, the college's awareness of federal and ACCJC requirements for distance education raises many questions on how the college will proceed in the future with distance education. GCC has determined that it needs a strategic plan to provide a map of how distance education will be offered currently and in the future.

SCOPE OF WORK

As we move into an age of technology in which the education model will be highly affected, it becomes imperative on GCC's part to implement a distance education strategy that will carry into the future. To this extent, GCC needs to immediately put into place a *DE Strategic Plan* and a *DE Manual of Standard Operating Procedures*.

Prior to the development of a DE strategic plan, two assessment reports need to be accomplished. A *DE Needs Assessment Report* is to be completed in order to understand the market for DE among students from Guam and the Micronesian region, if necessary and appropriate. A *DE Capabilities Assessment Report* is also needed to determine GCC's capacity to deliver DE courses from a personnel, services, and infrastructure approach. Reports should cover the current situation and projections over the next five years.

Both reports will form the nucleus from which GCC's *DE Strategic Plan* and *DE Manual of Standard Operating Procedures* will be based.

Deliverables

Phase 1

- Transmit two final reports: *DE Needs Assessment Report* and a *DE Capabilities Assessment Report* by July 31, 2014.

- Transmit one final document: *DE Strategic Plan* by July 31, 2014.

Phase 2

- Transmit one final document: *DE Manual of Standard Operating Procedures* by October 31, 2014.

Payment will be released upon acceptance of report by GCC. Liquidation charges may apply for delivery beyond stated date.

Project scope

All documents will be developed in coordination with a planned task force group made up of select GCC personnel as well as with input from GCC's students, faculty, administrators and staff. These plans must also be in line with federal and ACCJC requirements and must meet GCC's educational goals and priorities.

Acceptance is determined as follows:

The task force will ensure that all documents:

- 1.) meet GCC's needs and requirements
- 2.) go through the governance process for approval
- 3.) be reviewed and approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs
- 4.) be reviewed and approved by the President.

Resources

Time, effort and financial resources have been allocated to ensure completion of this project. A soon to be created office, Academic Technologies, will coordinate activities and monitor the project's timeline to ensure that the project is finished by the completion date.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

Phase 1

GCC DE Needs Assessment Report

GCC needs to determine what the level of need is for the existence of DE programs for students in Guam and Micronesia.

Tasks include:

- Gather information on potential numbers, characteristics, attitudes and the underlying reasons for participation in DE programs from:
 - a.) Guam-based students
 - b.) Micronesia-based students
- Assess the technological capabilities of potential students of DE courses from:
 - a.) Guam-based students
 - b.) Micronesia-based students
- Gather information on actual or perceived roadblocks that would prevent students from participating and solutions to overcome these barriers from:
 - a.) Guam-based students
 - b.) Micronesia-based students
- Other related issues that may impact GCC's abilities to implement DE

GCC DE Capabilities Assessment Report

GCC requires an assessment of the college's capacity in supporting distance education currently and over the next five years. It should include both external and internal issues.

External tasks include:

- List all federal rules/regulations/public laws on DE and provide solutions on how GCC will comply with each one
- List all ACCJC rules on DE and specify how GCC will provide solutions on how GCC will comply with each one
- List all local rules/regulations/public laws on DE and provide solution on how GCC will comply with each one.
- List all Joint Educational Board rules on DE and specify how GCC will provide solutions on how GCC will comply with each one
- Other related issues that may impact GCC's abilities to implement DE

Internal tasks include:

- Make an existing resources inventory
 - hardware
 - software
 - distance delivery technologies
 - technical support staff
 - faculty support staff
 - instructional development support staff
 - related projects already started/being maintained
- Assess GCC's current services capabilities for DE in the following areas:
 - infrastructure (power, network, security, etc.)
 - student validation/authorization
 - faculty capability
 - instructional technology
 - faculty training and support requirements
 - student training and support requirements
 - Support services (counseling, library, health services, registration, etc.)
- Gather information on GCC's current and future roles in DE in the following areas:
 - Conduct an assessment of GCC's DE history and its current state of affairs and history
 - Conduct an assessment of how widespread academic roles or philosophy may need to change across campus
 - Conduct an assessment of campus policies, regulations, rules, etc. and changes that will need to be made
 - Conduct surveys on current DE awareness
- Other related issues that may impact GCC's abilities to implement DE

GCC DE Strategic Plan

GCC requests that a five-year plan, aligned to its mission and vision statements, be developed for the implementation of DE with the primary goal of achieving student success. It will include the following:

- DE Mission
- DE Vision
- DE Strategic Planning (How it aligns with GCC's strategic plans)
- DE Plan Development Process
- GCC's DE Priorities
- GCC's DE current state
- Curriculum
- Learning Management System
- Faculty Training & Support

- Student Training & Support
- On-line Student Services
- Communication
- Staffing and Funding for DE Program
- DE Research
- DE Program Assessment
- DE Curriculum Assessment
- Five Year DE Initiatives with goals and measurable objectives (GCC driven)

This plan must be based on the GCC DE Needs Assessment and GCC DE Capabilities Assessment reports and connected to GCC's priorities and ACCJC standards.

It must follow the outline above and include step-by-step descriptions to develop courses, training, support, etc. as well as the upgrading of classroom, instructional technology and infrastructure needs. It must also take into account current and future technology including mobile devices.

Throughout the development of the plan, it is imperative that GCC stakeholders (students, faculty, staff and administrators, community, GCC boards, etc.) be a part of the process.

Using the outline above, tasks, at a minimum, should address the following:

- Integration of DE learning initiatives with the institutional mission
- Infrastructure, functional needs and solutions across every academic program and related departments, current and future
- Procedural changes needed for campus policies, regulations, rules, etc. (student handbook, Code of Conduct, student fees, etc.)
- DE focus being curriculum dependent and not technology dependent
- Replication of student support services on-line (Registration,/Admissions, Advising, Counseling, Financial Aid, Tutoring, Computer support [account setup, portal use], Library support and other related activities)
- ADA compliancy
- Web based DE program description and instructions for students and faculty
- Technical support services for faculty and students
- Training of students, faculty and staff support
- Student authorization and validation
- DE curriculum approval process
- Recommended LMS system
- Other on-line support systems (grading, quizzes, chat rooms, etc.)
- Awareness of DE among faculty, students, staff, and the campus community
- Funding needs and funding sources
- Evaluation of the DE program (both summative and formative)
- Evaluation tool(s) for assessing students and faculty
- Impact of learning between DE and face-to-face classes
- Other related issues that may impact GCC's abilities to implement DE

Phase 2

GCC DE Manual of Standard Operating Procedures

GCC requires that a manual be drawn up detailing Standard Operating Procedures for several areas: Academic Programs; Registration; Advising; Counseling; Health Center; Technical support; Library support, etc. These procedures speak to the importance of consistency in GCC' As an example of how a section would look like, here is an example:

Academic Support Standard Operating Procedures

A Standard Operating Procedures is to be developed for departments with DE components in their programs and courses. Each requirement must be connected to ACCJC and Federal rules. Faculty involvement is paramount and must be included and absorbed into every step of this process.

Tasks include the development of procedures for the following:

- DE course definitions
- Department/faculty compensation for curriculum development
- Course guide requirements
- Course development
- Instructional technology training
- Classroom requirements
- Faculty requirements
- Faculty training
- Support Staff training
- Student training
- Other related issues

Other areas have differing procedures that must all be addressed and spelled out. It is imperative that his manual be the bible from which all DE procedures be outlined and upgraded on an biennial basis.

GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Guam Community College is to be a leader in career and technical workforce development by providing the highest quality education and job training in Micronesia.
(Board of Trustees Policy 100)

GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE VISION STATEMENT

GCC will continue to pioneer labor force development within the Western Pacific, best understanding and meeting the educational, career and technical training needs of the economy. It will be Guam's premier career and technical institution and finest secondary and post secondary basic educational institution serving the island's adult community. Its excellence will continue to be recognized because of its service to employers, employees and the community at large.

DRAFT

Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education

*(Adopted June 2001, Edited August 2004, Revised June 2005, Revised January 2010,
Revised June 2011)*

Background

Recognizing that most accredited institutions are making use of the growing range of modalities for delivery of instructional and educational programs and services, including various electronic means, the Commission has adopted a policy based on principles of good practice to help ensure that distance learning is characterized by the same expectations for quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to more traditional modes of instruction.

This policy reflects the federal regulatory requirements regarding distance education and correspondence education.

Definition of Distance Education

Distance Education means [34 CFR §602.3]:

Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

- (1) the internet;
- (2) one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- (3) audioconferencing; or
- (4) video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3).

Definition of Correspondence Education

Correspondence education means [34 CFR §602.3]:

- (1) education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
- (2) interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
- (3) correspondence courses are typically self-paced.
- (4) correspondence education is not distance education.

Policy

Commission policy specifies that all learning opportunities provided by accredited institutions must have equivalent quality, accountability, and focus on student outcomes, regardless of mode of delivery. This policy provides a framework that allows institutions the flexibility to adapt their delivery modes to the emerging needs of students and society while maintaining quality. Any institution offering courses and programs through distance education or correspondence education is expected to meet the requirements of accreditation in each of its courses and programs and at each of its sites.

Policy Elements

- development, implementation, and evaluation of all courses and programs, including those offered via distance education or correspondence education, must take place within the institution's total educational mission.
- institutions are expected to control development, implementation, and evaluation of all courses and programs offered in their names, including those offered via distance education or correspondence education.
- institutions are expected to have clearly defined and appropriate student learning outcomes for all courses and programs, including those delivered through distance education or correspondence education.
- institutions are expected to provide the resources and structure needed to accomplish these outcomes and to demonstrate that their students achieve these outcomes through application of appropriate assessment.
- institutions are expected to provide the Commission advance notice of intent to initiate a new delivery mode, such as distance education or correspondence education, through the Substantive Change process.
- institutions are expected to provide the Commission advance notice of intent to offer a program, degree or certificate in which 50% or more of the courses are via distance education or correspondence education, through the Substantive Change process. For purposes of this requirement, the institution is responsible for calculating the percentage of courses that may be offered through distance or correspondence education.
- institutions which offer distance education or correspondence education must have processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence course or program is the same person who participates every time in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit². This requirement will be met if the institution verifies the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the institution's discretion, such methods as a secure log-in and password, proctored examinations, other technologies and/or practices that are developed and effective in verifying each student's identification. The institution must also publish policies that ensure the protection of student privacy and will notify students at the time of class registration of any charges associated with verification of student identity [34 CFR§602.17g].

² See Addendum: WCET Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education Version 2.0, June 2009.