Distance Learning Committee
Friday October 10, 2014
9:30am – 11:30am

Attendees: Gary Abernethy, Ashley Carr, Azzurra Crispino, Gabriel Rodriguez(for Helen Daily), Carolyn deCordova, Marla Dean, Michelle Escudier, Lisa Gelineau, Joann Kroll, Neelam Noorani, Kathleen Park, Donna Pauler, Clark Peterson, Carole Pierce, Al Purcell, Amy Setter, Susan Thomason, Zoe Irene VanSandt, Voncille Wright

Absent: Maria Cisneros-Solis, Nancy Laudenslager, Mary Parker, Nick Sarantakes, Carol Townsend, Becky Villarreal

Introductions
Minutes approval from March 21, 2014 meeting
General DL Information
Enrollment approaching 10,000, largest "campus" of ACC, ACC Student Success Baseline Data showing improvement.
Google Drive shared with committee for communication, documentation, and other meeting protocols.

DL Administrative Rule on Best Practices: (segmented and available in Google Drive)
Who provides the data if SACSCOC or other agencies request it?
To take a proactive approach, DL examining each segment to compare ACC's rule with SACSCOC Best Practices and Protocols and for who is responsible.
ACC has no clear description of minimum standards for courses or review.
In 2013, it was suggested individual departments could post evaluation standards to a centralized website.

Gary announced that Quality Matters would be a new part of the VCT consortium, and he was also looking into biosignature products to enhance security, participation and engagement.

It was noted that faculty were eligible to teach Distance Learning once ACC's DL Faculty Training was completed. Several comments were that there should be more required training. Many departments require additional training and many online schools/programs require a semester's worth of training/certification.
The DLC can make recommendations on the training requirements to ACAC and work on improving what we currently have.
There was a question about some issues with accessibility with the training modules, and it was mentioned that the Accessibility Office has now hired a fulltime captionist that may be able to address these concerns.

Update on Faculty Evaluations: no change. According to Kirk in the Evaluation Office, he was still waiting for the proposed changes to the DL Evaluation to be brought up at ACAC. (changes proposed 2 years ago) The Distance Testing resolution has not been addressed at ACAC in 2 years as well.
This opened a short discussion on the politics of getting a recommendation through the shared governance process: Stress the importance of the DLC making a case of "why ACAC should…"
SACSCOC continually updates guidelines for Distance Learning and those changes should be reflected in ACC's Administrative Rule. The updates to the Standards and Practices are generally yearly or semi-annual.

The Faculty Loading Administrative rule is also available in the Google Drive and will likely need to be addressed at some point as well.

Who is responsible for reporting substantive change?
Any reported changes go through Dr. Kroll (SACSCOC Office).
SACSCOC's thresholds are 25-50% Distance Learning and more than 50% Distance Learning
IPEDS report looks at programs that are offered 100% online
It was noted that Speech, though available 100% through Distance Learning, is not 100% online due to many (HYD) hybrid courses in the degree plan.
The 2 hybrid definitions can create confusion (HYD & HYC), as well as the inconsistency in what is asked to be reported upon.
New possibilities for DL with the new 60-hour rule?
Voncille asked if there were any requirements on the number of programs that should be offered 100% online. Not at this time.
The Provost's vision for Distance Learning may ultimately create a forward plan.

State Authorization: Though the previous requirement from the Department of Education was blocked by the courts, a new rule is expected in 2015 that is much more specific in its requirements for compliance. In anticipation of the new rules, most states are joining SARA (State Authorization & Reciprocity Agreement). By adhering to the standards set forth by SARA states will insulate themselves from potential legal issues with students, faculty, and even servers (as Gary mentioned) in other states.

The new DL website was launched in August along with the upgrades to the IRT sites. The DL link from IRT will take faculty directly to the new *Faculty Guide to DL*. Amy explained how we simplified the pages and removed duplicate information. Literally hundreds of pages were condensed into something much more usable. The web statistics are already showing much improved numbers.

The DL Help Page was created as a one-stop shop for student support, reference and referral. It includes a LiveChat function for synchronous interaction. The monitors have scripted responses to various common questions, but can provided detailed information when needed.

National Distance Learning Week is the second week in November and IRT and Distance Learning are coordinating various events throughout the week. Faculty will be eligible for a giveaway program where we will award 2 passes to SXSW EDU 2015. Student Life will also be involving ACC students who will be eligible for a tablet or laptop as a prize.
Workshops, online modules and webinars will be available. At the Highland Campus on Friday, November 14, there will be a faculty showcase to allow faculty members to show successful techniques they use. There will be a stipend of $100 for participants. Also on that day, various vendors will be available to show new and emerging technologies and how to better support DL students.

An additional meeting of the DLC will be scheduled before the Winter Break.