

**Piedmont Community College
Distance Education
Executive Summary**

June 15, 2011

The Executive Summary for the Distance Education Program Review is submitted below. The report focuses on strengths, challenges, recommendations, and an action plan. The comprehensive report is complete and attached. Members of the committee were:

Gretchen M. Bell	Dean, Learning Resources Centers/Distance Education
Libbie McPhaul-Moore	Instructor/Coordinator, Distance Education
Randy Reynolds	Director, Business Development Center
LaToya Smith	Instructor, Office Systems Technology
Sherry Stout-Stewart	Dean, Business Studies and Emerging Technology
Patricia Warren	Instructor/Instructional Coordinator, Adult Basic Skills

STRENGTHS

Strengths identified by committee and external sources, such as advisory committees, staff, faculty, and students.

- Accessibility of programs to students
- Course Checklist
- Course Development Proposal Form
- Workshops, training, and PTOI course
- BlackBoard Certification (for faculty who say that they are already trained to teach online courses and do not need to go through the PTOI (Principles and Techniques for Online Instruction course))
- SmarterMeasurers (self-assessment that students can do before taking an online course) and SmarterSurveys (course evaluation)
- DE Orientation (offered on both campuses)
- 24/7 Help Desk - Presidium (also offer staff assistance for students)
- Smart Thinking (online tutoring)
- DE and NCIH classrooms are equipped with technology
- 90% of all classrooms are equipped with technology
- CIS 070 and the computer skills placement tests
- DE web site and brochures along with listing of faculty resources
- DL Student Handbook
- DL Faculty Handbook (will be a part of the College's Faculty Handbook)
- SafeAssign Software (building block in Blackboard that is designed to check for plagiarism)
- Acxiom Software (a request for a trial version to be used during the summer for student identity authentication)
- Offer proctoring services to distance learning students from other colleges and universities for a fee (do not charge other North Carolina community colleges for this service)

- Participate in the North Carolina Distance Learning Alliance, VLC, and national conferences
- Provide faculty with an opportunity to see the latest technology demonstrated through the annual LRC Book Vendor/Equipment Showcase.
- Ability to conduct lecture (video) capture.

CHALLENGES

- COM 231 is not offered online-places the College in a non-compliance state
- BIO 112 is not offered online as well as other courses that have been developed by the VLC
- 24/7 Help Desk (need an in-house version as well) to meet the needs of students' technology problems
- Faculty teaching online courses need training on copyright issues
- Providing basic support services to distance learners through Student Development (i.e., advising, counseling, and providing transcripts)
- Courses are not ADA (Americans with Disability Act) compliant
- Due to the College being located in a rural area, many DL students lack access to high speed Internet connections

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to improve the program:

- Offer COM 231 (Public Speaking) in an online or telecourse format for degree completion requirements.
- Take more advantage of online courses that have been developed by the NC Virtual learning Community.
- Increase the amount of rigor in distance learning courses—both hybrid and online—by utilizing the Quality Matters rubric and best practices.
- Continue to improve accessibility and ADA compliance in online and hybrid courses.
- Increase mandatory training offered to all faculty regarding Quality Matters and online instruction.
- Provide faculty mandatory training on copyright and other legal issues related to online instruction.
- Increase assistance for faculty by employing an instructional designer.
- Increase access for online students to support services.
- Increase marketing of courses available through the NCIH classroom and provide training for faculty.
- Programs to meet the needs of distance learners.
- Develop or modify procedures for providing support services to distance learners in areas such as testing, admissions, registration, counseling, library services, financial aid, and advising using such means as e-mail, telephone, web pages, and mail.
- Support and encourage the internal development of the distance learning program by promoting and providing guidelines for:

- training
 - technical support
- Provide strategies for effective delivery alternatives through:
 - the development of policies for consistency in distance learning
 - the study of best practices in distance education
- Identify resources necessary to support the distance learning program including technology, personnel, facilities, marketing, and external partnerships.
- Regularly evaluate the distance learning program to ensure:
 - the quality of instruction and services
 - consistent learning outcomes between students in distance learning courses and traditional courses
 - compatibility between content and delivery systems
 - alignment of the distance learning program with the college’s mission and purpose
 - the effectiveness of assessment tools
 - the quality of material that provides information about the distance learning program such as the web presence and print materials
- Revise and improve programs through the use of:
 - internal formal evaluation of courses and support services
 - informal feedback from students, instructors, staff and administration
 - research from external sources regarding innovative instructional methods and emerging technology
- Research, develop, and recommend policies for intellectual property rights and copyright issues that relate to distance education classes.
- Share experiences and expertise with communities of interest to build a stronger statewide distance learning program.
- Provide better customer service to faculty, students, and staff.

ACTION PLAN

Item	Plan	Responsibility	Timeline
Training (faculty, staff, and students)	Schedule training sessions for all faculty, students, and staff as needed	Libbie McPhaul-Moore, Instructor/Coordinator, Distance Education and support staff	2011 - 2012
Student Support Services	Develop and modify procedures for providing support services to distance learners in areas such as testing, admissions, registration, counseling, library services, financial aid, and advising using such means as e-mail, telephone, web pages, and mail	Libbie McPhaul-Moore, Instructor/Coordinator, Distance Education and Distance Education Institutional Committee	2011 – 2012
Course/Faculty Evaluation	Regularly evaluate the distance learning program to ensure:	Libbie McPhaul-Moore, Instructor/Coordinator, Distance Education, Vice President of Instruction	2011 - 2012

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the quality of instruction and services• consistent learning outcomes between students in distance learning courses and traditional courses	and Student Development, and academic deans	
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