

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject: Distance Education Reference: B-XVII

Source: Vice President, Instruction Eff. Date: November 11, 2004

Approval Auth.: President Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: Replaces previous policy dated February 5, 2004.

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The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) requires each public institution of higher education that intends to offer distance education courses and programs to submit an Institutional Plan for Distance Education for review and approval. The MCC Institutional Plan for Distance Education is kept on file in the Office of the Vice President, Instruction. To supplement the MCC Institutional Plan for Distance Education, this Distance Education Policy has been developed according to the guidelines for distance education as defined by Chapter 5, Subchapter H of the THECB's Rules and Regulations.

Distance Education is defined as instruction in which the majority of the instruction occurs when the student and instructor are not in the same physical setting. A class is considered a distance education class if students receive more than one-half of the instruction at a distance. Distance education can be delivered synchronously or asynchronously to any single or multiple location(s) within or outside the boundaries of the taxing authority of the McLennan Community College District via instructional telecommunications including electronic delivery of all types.

### **Standards and Criteria for Distance Education Instruction**

#### A. Institutional Issues

1. The quality of distance education instruction must meet the same standards as on-campus instruction. Online and hybrid classes must be approved by the Vice President, Instruction before development. The faculty member will submit a "Distance Education Credit Course Proposal and Approval Procedure" form through administrative channels. After the course has been developed, the faculty member must complete the "Principles of Good Practice" form,

which is subsequently verified by the Coordinator, Center for Professional Development and Training. Verification is then forwarded to the Vice President of Instruction for approval to go online with the course. Distance education courses and instructors are evaluated according to guidelines outlined in the Faculty Evaluation Policy, B-XII.

2. All distance education courses that offer either semester credit hours or Continuing Education Units shall do so in accordance with the standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
3. Students who enroll in distance education courses must satisfy the same requirements for admission to MCC, to the program of which the course is a part, and to the class/section itself as are required of on-campus students.
4. All instruction shall be administered by the same department/division administering the corresponding on-campus instruction. The supervision, monitoring, and evaluation process for distance education instructors shall be comparable to those for on-campus instruction. All subject content decisions will be the responsibility of the instructor and will be coordinated through the appropriate MCC academic structure no matter the delivery system. All MCC policies and procedures related to admission, withdrawals, and attendance will be the same no matter what delivery system is utilized. MCC maintains an "open door" admissions policy. However, admission to the college does not automatically admit students to a specific distance education program or course. Texas Higher Education Assessment requirements must be met before a student is admitted to a course that might require proficiency in related study skills. In addition, there are individual course prerequisites that must be met.

#### B. Faculty

1. Faculty shall be selected and evaluated by the same standards, review, and approval procedures used by the institution to select and evaluate faculty responsible for on-campus instruction. Faculty selection follows the same procedure at MCC no matter what delivery system for the course is used.
2. The Center for Professional Development and Training and the Network Services Department shall provide training and support to enhance the added skills required of faculty teaching classes at a distance via electronic delivery.
3. The instructor of record shall bear responsibility for

the delivery of instruction and for evaluation of student progress.

4. The load value for a distance education course shall be the same as its equivalent on-campus course. The total number of students allowed to enroll in any distance education course shall be set by the appropriate division director in consultation with the dean and the instructor. However, the total number of enrolled students in a distance education course should not exceed the maximum limit of the on-campus course.
5. The College encourages faculty members to develop courses to be delivered through distance education technology. Faculty members who create distance education courses are subject to the College's Intellectual Property Policy (E-VII). A distance education course is considered to be a product comprised of the course materials and the course framework. In general, faculty members who author and develop course materials to be utilized in a distance education course own these materials. The College owns the course framework (e.g. license for Blackboard® on-line course software). If a faculty member is paid a stipend for the development of a distance education course and at a later date the course or course materials are commercialized by someone other than the College, the College reserves the right to get a percentage of any royalties up to the total amount of the stipend paid the faculty member.
6. Faculty compensation for teaching distance education courses shall be the same as for the equivalent on-campus courses.
7. The College, through the Center for Professional Development and Training, shall provide information regarding the most current copyright laws to all faculty members, and faculty members shall adhere to those guidelines.
8. Faculty members from other regionally accredited institutions who teach "imported" distance education courses for MCC shall be considered to hold appropriate credentials for teaching the course. The appropriate Division Director or his/her representative shall certify the credentials of any faculty member teaching an imported distance education course before the course is taught.

#### C. Academic and Student Support Services

1. All advertising, recruiting, and scheduling information provided in campus publications or online regarding any distance education class or program shall include the prerequisite level of knowledge and skill necessary to complete the course successfully and clear and specific information on the technology needed to participate in

the course. Where necessary, these publications shall include information on resources available to assist the student in using the required technology.

2. Students shall be provided academic and student support services—including academic advising, counseling, library and other learning resources, tutoring services, and financial aid—comparable to those available for on-campus students. Distance education students are provided academic support services by a variety of delivery methods, including, but not limited to, orientations, on-site conferences, links on Web pages within Internet-based courses, the MCC Web site, e-mail, fax, and telephone.
3. MCC shall provide access to the Library's online catalog and electronic resources. The online catalog may be accessed by users of the Library's computers and by dial-up users from the Library Web page. MCC shall furnish access to appropriate library resources beyond the local collection through its participation in several resource-sharing programs, such as the Direct Loan program, the Area Waco Library Administrators Web site, and the TexShare Library Card Program. In addition, the College, through the Interlibrary Loan service of the Texas State Library, shall provide MCC students access to books and articles both state- and nation-wide.

D. Distance Education Facilities and Support Services:

1. Distance education facilities (other than homes as distance education reception sites) shall be comparable in quality to those for on-campus instruction. Distance education students shall receive access to technology comparable to that provided to on-campus students.
2. The College shall support student and faculty access to on-line courses and on-line support services through a dial-up Internet connection or through access provided in computer labs on campus. A 24-hour help desk shall be provided by the Network Services Department.
3. The College shall maintain Instructional Telecommunications Labs for the purpose of delivering and receiving two-way interactive video instruction. The College will not maintain equipment at non-MCC remote sites unless agreed upon in a signed contract among all entities involved.