NVC Distance Education Plan Draft

Introduction

Distance education is viewed as a premier option for increasing access to college for students who might not be able to travel to campus to attend classes. Online offerings help meet the educational needs of students who work full- time, have other needs or responsibilities that prevent them from attending on-site classes, and who might not be able to travel to campus due to distance or lack of transportation. Distance education allows students to fulfill course requirements largely at their own pace and according to their own schedules, within reasonable parameters. They also help meet student demand for popular courses including those in English, Mathematics, Social Sciences, and within the General Education pattern.

Purpose

As stated in the Napa Valley College Institutional Strategic Plan, 2018-21, two of the five institutional goals at NVC are:
2. Engage NVC students and assist in their progress towards educational and job training goals
3. Increase NVC student achievement and completion of educational and job training goals

Therefore, the DE Plan ~~will~~ focuses on all objectives and initiatives towards improving student achievement and completion of educational and job training courses online and/or hybrid.

The purpose of this document is to increase access and success for online students by providing a cohesive Distance Education Plan. The DE Plan will be evaluated yearly by the Distance Education Workgroup to inform annual and long-term planning.

Napa Valley College Mission Statement

The current college mission, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees in November 2012, states:

"Napa Valley College prepares students for evolving roles in a diverse, dynamic, and interdependent world. The college is an accredited open-access, degree- and certificate-granting institution that is committed to student achievement through high-quality programs and services that are continuously evaluated and improved. The college serves students and the community in the following areas: transfer courses, career-technical education and training, basic skills, and self-supporting contract education and community education classes."

The degrees and certificates that are offered through distance education directly support the transfer and career-technical education components of the institutional mission. These online offerings provide access to students who might not otherwise be able to attend. Students can still attain achievement, completion, and educational goals via multiple delivery methods.

Enrollment Growth

Student enrollment in distance education across California Community Colleges is growing. Learners have become more mobile and technologically skilled, increasing demand for online courses that provide access to education anytime and anywhere:

As students become more comfortable with — and more successful at — distance education courses, California community colleges continue to expand and improve their offerings. Faculty members are creating and converting courses to meet the growing demand. More colleges are integrating student support services to boost distance education student success. Distance education is an effective instructional delivery method that will help fulfill the goals of the Strategic Vision for the California community colleges. Namely:
• Increasing student attainment of associate degrees, certificates or job-related credentials by 20 percent through the flexibility of asynchronous learning. Setting targets for expanding the Online Course Exchange.
• Increasing transfer by 35 percent through seamless enrollment and sharing of student information in the Online Course Exchange.
• Decrease the average number of units accumulated (to the goal of 79 units) through improving distance education retention and success.
• Increasing the percent of Career Education (CE) students working in their field of study to 69 percent through increasing the number of CE courses and certificates available online
Reducing regional and equity gaps to zero within 10 years through improved preparation for students taking distance education, better trained faculty and improved design of distance education courses. Targeted efforts will be directed towards increasing the overall success rates to exceed 70 percent and to closing the equity gap by focusing on improvement in success rates of African-American and Hispanic students taking distance courses and programs. (CCC 2017 Distance Education Report).

Insert local data from Robyn

Challenges to Distance Education

Distance Education courses maintain the same academic standards as traditional face-to-face courses. While increasing numbers of students seek distance education opportunities for flexibility and convenience, they often underestimate the work and the self-discipine required to succeed in an online and/or hybrid course. Technology is

continually evolving. Together, these factors present a number of challenges for students and faculty, including the following:

- Adequate training for faculty, including online course quality standards for design and instruction
- Complying with legal requirements regarding Section 508 accessibility, FERPA, and copyright
- Sufficient training for students in digital literacy
- Addressing the achievement gap for targeted groups in online courses
- Availability of adequate student services for online students

Distance Education Platform

In Fall 2015, the Distance Education Committee recommended Canvas for adoption to the Napa Valley College Academic Senate, and upon approval, developed a migration and training plan the following Spring to support faculty in the transition from Blackboard to Canvas. Beginning Fall 2017, all online and hybrid classes have been offered through the Canvas course management system.

Organizational Structure

To provide appropriate support for both students and faculty, responsibilities associated with distance education were folded into four existing positions. The four positions and their respective responsibilities are:

- The Dean of Language Arts, Library and Social Sciences Educational Support, and Learning Technologies Career Technical Education serves as the Administrative oversight for online education at the College.
- A full-time faculty member who serves as the faculty trainer. The faculty trainer provides faculty with training and mentoring on the use of Canvas and effective practices and pedagogy for online instruction.
- A Distance Education Technician who provides technical, administrative and software support for instructors and students participating in Distance Learning courses.
- Support technicians within the Institutional Technology department that address technology needs for both faculty and students. Their responsibilities include managing the link between Canvas and Datatel, uploading student enrollments from Datatel to Canvas, generating usernames and passwords for students enrolled in online classes, and providing support to students who experience technical issues.

Shared Governance

The Academic Senate established a standing Distance Education Committee in 2015, comprised of 4-5 faculty, and one dean. During a pilot reorganization of the senate structure in Fall 2017-Spring 2019, the Distance Education Workgroup was established

as a sub-committee of the Faculty Business Committee. The Distance Education Workgroup is charged with considering all matters related to online instruction, identifying effective practices and recommending implementation of those practices to the Office of Academic Affairs and appropriate Academic Senate committees, as well as coordinating the ongoing training of faculty involved in online instruction. The Workgroup meets regularly to provide input on resources needed to improve the delivery and quality of distance education.

Role of the Curriculum Committee

New distance education courses or course revisions are submitted through the curriculum process that includes the Curriculum Committee. Through this process, the proposed revision is reviewed by division deans, division chairs, and faculty member representatives from each division. As part of the curriculum submission process, the faculty member proposing the change is required to assess whether or not this new online course or a course revised to allow for presentation online results in 50% or more of the courses in a degree or certificate program to be authorized for presentation online. This information is on the Course Outline of Record within CurricUNET as part of the proposal. If the Curriculum Committee approves the course, it is sent on for review and approval by the Academic Senate and Board of Trustees.

Courses with the addition of Distance Education, either hybrid or 100% online, are approved *first* by the Curriculum Committee for appropriateness and rigor and *second*, for Distance Education. The second approval allows for verification that the college can provide adequate support for online students, including students with disabilities.

DE Development Goals (2019-2021)

In addition to aligning with the Napa Valley College Institutional Strategic Plan, the Distance Education Plan seeks to promote a unified vision for online courses, programs, and services, in response to ACCJC's feedback on the college's 2015 Self-Evaluation Report:

"Recommendation 3
In order to increase effectiveness the team recommends the College strengthen its procedures and coordination of the delivery and assessment of Distance Education courses, programs and services. (Standards II.A.3, II.A.7; USDE Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education, 607.12(g)"

GOALS:

1. Support faculty development of online courses
   - Provide compensation for the creation of new online materials.

- Offer ongoing training opportunities in compliance with requirements for accessibility, regular and effective contact, student authentication, documentation of attendance, FERPA, and fair use.
- Create and implement a formal ~~mentorship~~ process to improve course quality using the Online Education Initiative Rubric to promote standards.
- Develop a library of rich media resources for faculty to use and share.

2. Increase support for online students
   - Improve DE students' access to counseling and tutoring services comparable to FTF students through the development of online environments.
   - Develop recommendations for early interventions and other actions to increase online student retention and success, and to reduce achievement gaps.

3. Promote a campus culture of distance learning to ensure that distance education is integral to curriculum, program review, budget and administrative processes at NVC.

4. Assess DE staffing annually and recommendation positions as needed.

Success Rates

In Fall 2018, The Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) report on Retention and Successful Course Completion Rates, By Course Delivery Mode, examines differences and trends in retention and successful course completion rates based on delivery modes. Rates are reported among three types of course delivery modes – in-person, online, and hybrid – for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018. To provide some control for factors such as prerequisite requirements, rigor, and course type (college-level, basic skills), only courses that were offered through multiple delivery modes within the same academic year were included in the analysis. Courses that were offered through only one delivery mode within an academic year were excluded. Therefore, the analysis does not compare rates among all courses offered in-person, online, and as hybrids.

The table below reports the retention rates over the past three years for the three delivery modes, along with the three-year total. Tests of statistical significance were conducted among the three-year rates for three comparisons: in-person vs. online, in-person vs. hybrid, and online vs. hybrid.

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	Three-Year Total
In-Person	88.9%	88.4%	90.9%	**89.4%**
Online	85.7%	85.3%	84.3%	**85.1%**
Hybrid	85.3%	86.8%	89.6%	**87.1%**
Source: NVC Enrollment Files (SQL)				

Appendix
    A.   Distance Education Guidelines
    B.   Napa Valley College Clearance to Teach Online Courses