# Distance Education Committee Meeting Minutes from 10/10/18

Present: Sherie Burgess, Karen Bishop, Ana Ceballos, Sarah Phinney, Elisa Queenan, Sam Aunai

1. **Minutes from the 9/12/18 meeting** - Approved.
2. **Counselor representative** – Senate approved adding a counselor representative to the committee and Ana Ceballos is now representing counseling.
3. **Online Faculty Handbook** – Karen and Sarah shared some of the concerns expressed by the Senate regarding the revisions to the handbook. They wanted more time to look it over and requested a copy that included highlights on the revised sections. There was some concern about the required training of faculty who are assigned a DE course. In light of this last concern, Sarah gathered information from other colleges to see if they have requirements for their DE faculty. The responses were shared with the committee: 39 respondents said their colleges do have training or competency requirements, 6 respondents said they do not, and 2 respondents said that it varies by department. Sarah also shared the latest changes to state policies regarding DE. One of those changes states DE instructors need to be prepared to teach in a DE modality in accordance with local policy. No faculty members from the DE Committee are able to attend this Friday’s Senate meeting. Karen will contact Jeff to see if they want to postpone their discussion until a DE Committee member is able to attend.
4. **DE classes not using Canvas** – Sam shared with the committee the fact that it came to light during the recent accreditation visit that a few DE courses do not use Canvas at all. This is a problem because first of all, board policy stipulates a minimum level of usage of the adopted CMS. Second, it has the potential to create confusion for students who are expecting that all of their courses use the same system. Third, it makes it difficult to document faculty-student interaction. Fourth, as we are pilot testing an evaluation tool for online courses this term, this tool requires that the courses use Canvas in order for it to work. Fifth, student authentication is compromised when students are using an outside system to participate in course activities. Sixth, other systems have not been vetted for meeting accessibility standards. Since there is policy currently in place to prevent this, it is not a matter for the Committee to tackle, but it is something the committee should be aware is happening. Sam will bring up the issue with the division chairs.
5. **Regular and effective contact (REC)** – The accrediting team indicated that they had a difficult time determining if REC was happening in the online classes they observed. Sarah also shared that new state policy language has added “student-to-student” contact as part of the criteria for regular and effective contact. The Committee will discuss at a future meeting, whether or not our existing REC policy needs to be updated, and what can be done to ensure that faculty understand their responsibilities for REC as well as practical tips for how to document it.
6. **Cranium Café** – Cranium Café or ConexED is the tool that student support services is beginning to use to provide counseling to students at a distance. The DRC Office was the first to begin using it, and now it is being used more extensively by other counselors and advisors. Students have been slow to adopt its use, even though it is being promoted extensively. It was suggested that we could add a counseling/advising section to the “PC Student Resources” Canvas site. Within that section we could include any number of things including the ConexED cards for the counselors, although this is not currently an option since they cannot schedule their appointments through ConexED for the time being. We could also add a pop-up message to Canvas advertising online counseling. Ana will discuss the ideas with her peers and follow up with Sarah. Ana asked if there was interest in pursuing the use of Cranium Café for faculty virtual-meetings with students. Because that use is not covered by the OEI, there was some hesitancy. However, it could be beneficial to students if both faculty and counselors used the same platform. Ana will inquire as to the cost of using Cranium Café for faculty student meetings.
7. **Student Support Services promotion to online students** – Ana asked how student support services are currently being promoted to online students. Right now there is no coordinated effort, aside from the “PC Student Resources” site in Canvas. Individual DE faculty, it is assumed, do share information about support services through a variety of methods in their courses. One suggestion was that we might consider creating a recommended or required syllabus format, so that these important services outside of the classroom are communicated effectively and consistently to students.
8. **Spring Flex** – The DE Committee has been asked to give a presentation during spring flex day. One thought was to combine tips on humanizing online courses with reminders of state and local policies. This will need to be discussed further in future meetings.
9. **Next Meeting** – Wednesday, November 14, 2018 (1:00-2:00)