

Sam Aunai

From: Jeff Keele
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2019 5:22 PM
To: pc_faculty; pc_adjunct
Cc: Bill Henry; Sam Aunai; Primavera Arvizu; Arlitha Williams-Harmon; James Thompson; Kailani Knutson; Kim Behrens
Subject: URGENT: accreditation issue for online courses -- faculty action required.
Importance: High

Hello Faculty Colleagues,

If you teach online at PC this is an URGENT message that needs your immediate attention.

We received our official accreditation report early this week. It turns out that the ACCJC Commission concluded that the recommendation in our Evaluation Report about faculty/student interaction in online classes constituted a legal compliance violation, not simply an area for improvement. We remain accredited, but we are required to address the compliance issue and report back to the commission right away. We will have another visit to check on this one issue. That visit will be this coming fall. The ACCJC letter is linked on our web page; recommendation #2 is the relevant issue. Here is a direct link: [ACCJC Action Letter Jan 2019](#). The original report had the same recommendation, but did not label it as a compliance violation. That report is linked here: [External Evaluation Report 2018](#)

The specifics of the compliance violation relate to the federal mandate, from the Department of Education, that “faculty teaching online courses consistently provide regular and substantive interaction with students.” That “regular and substantive interaction” must be documentable. The only mechanism we have for such documentation is the archive of our online courses in Canvas.

Any of us who teach online, need to assure that we are engaging in regular, substantive, and **documentable** interaction with our classes through Canvas. That certainly would include your own comments in discussion streams, your announcements to the whole class, and meaningful guidance and feedback on assignments. KCCD Board policy specifies a minimum of two substantive interactions per week.

While we legally could take as much as a year from now to have this addressed, Chancellor Burke has asked President Henry to have it addressed before the end of this semester so as to avoid passing the problem on to a new campus president. In our meeting with Bill and Sam, our Senate leadership fully supported that goal. We need to make adjustments now.

Our Distance Education Committee will be discussing more specific guidelines to recommend, and we will assure that those are communicated as soon as possible. Please look forward to that guidance and to a probable message from your division chair with her/his suggestions in the interim until the DE committee has a chance to respond.

We will absolutely need some sort of compliance checking system. We are working on how to make that happen. Regular compliance checks of most or all online classes are not and cannot be part faculty evaluations, but they are absolutely necessary for us to achieve compliance. The model for this in my own head would resemble our system of checking for current SLOs on our syllabi; it would be a technical check-off, not a

quality assessment. We will be working with CCA leaders to be certain that no contract violations arise as we develop a system.

For now, until we get more detailed guidance, if you are teaching online:

- Please be sure that you “consistently provide regular substantive interaction with students” in your classes and that it is handled in Canvas so that it is documentable.
- If you are using off-site resources:
 - Please be sure that each resource and its assignments are linked from Canvas
 - Please be sure that your communication with students, including instructions, guidance, and evaluation is handled in Canvas
- If you are using off-site communication tools like email or Remind, please bring that communication into canvas or duplicate it in Canvas so that it is documentable for accreditation purposes.

I appreciate all that you do and thank you in advance for your efforts to keep serving our students and to respond constructively to this accreditation recommendation.

Thank you,

Jeff Keele

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 **PORTERVILLE COLLEGE**

