



DISTANCE EDUCATION PLAN

2018-2020
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INTRODUCTION

College Information

Porterville College is located in the San Joaquin Valley, in Tulare County, in the southeastern part of California's Central Valley. The College provides academic services to approximately 4,300 students and offers a wide range of educational programs that lead to Associate degrees, certificates, or transfer opportunities. The town of Porterville is a blue-collar community that lies along the Tule River at the base of the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The city currently has a population of approximately 62,000.

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE MISSION

With students as our focus, Porterville College provides our local and diverse communities quality education that promotes intellectual curiosity, personal growth, and lifelong learning, while preparing students for career and academic success.

In support of our values and philosophy, Porterville College will:

- Provide quality academic programs to all students who are capable of benefiting from community college instruction.
- Provide comprehensive support services to help students achieve their personal, career and academic potential.
- Prepare students for transfer and success at four-year institutions.
- Provide courses and training to prepare students for employment or to enhance skills within their current careers.
- Provide developmental education to students who need to enhance their knowledge and understanding of basic skills.
- Recognize student achievement through awarding degrees, certificates, grants, and scholarships.

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE VALUES

Porterville College's core values define the character of the institution and are active ingredients in all that the College does. Through our commitment to these values the College can better serve and be more responsive to its students, staff, and community:

- Collaboration - working together to encourage input and dialogue in a collegial and cooperative manner.
- Respect - treating each other with respect, trust, and dignity.
- Innovation - nurturing and supporting exploration of new ideas, programs, and services to enhance our service to the community.
- Accountability - continuously assessing where we are as a College and to assume responsibility for all that we do.
- Equity - reducing achievement gaps between demographic groups.
- Participation - fostering and encouraging the involvement of staff and students in campus activities and the various aspects of the College decision-making process.

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE PHILOSOPHY

In support of our mission and values, Porterville College will base its decisions and actions upon the following beliefs:

- All students at Porterville College will be treated with respect and dignity regardless of who they are or the goals they have established for themselves.
- The College staff will provide the best service possible to its students in order for them to meet their individual academic or vocational goals.
- The College will encourage innovation, creativity, and new ideas and will support professional development opportunities.
- As an integral part of the community, the College will develop and enhance partnerships with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and community-based organizations to respond to the educational, workforce, and economic development needs of the region.
- As an integral part of the Kern Community College District, the College will participate in and be actively involved with all district-wide committees and governance structures.

Definitions

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Title 5, 55200. Definition and Application:

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. All distance education is subject to the general requirements of this chapter as well as the specific requirements of this article. In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements that may be imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. §794d).

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Education SS602:

Distance education means:

Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include: The internet; One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications DEVICES; Audio CONFERENCING; or Video cassettes, DVDs, and CDROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.

ACCJC, from Guide to Evaluating & Improving Institutions, July 2015:

Distance education is defined, for the purpose of accreditation review as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

ONLINE COURSE

Currently there is no statewide or federal level definition for an online course. At Porterville College, an online course is one in which there are no required class meetings at a physical location or even remotely on a set schedule. However, an online class may require students to take proctored exams with an approved proctor located as close to the student as possible. Online classes may also require students to meet remotely with the instructor and/or other students, at an agreed upon time. Online courses must go through a separate approval process before they can be offered at the college. Instructors in online courses must initiate regular and substantive interaction with the students, either synchronously or asynchronously. Online courses are not self-paced. Online courses are considered distance education courses by the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

HYBRID COURSE

Currently there is no statewide or federal level definition for a hybrid (or blended) course. At Porterville College, a hybrid course is one in which some but not all of the class meetings of a traditional class have been replaced with online activities and communication. The percentage of the in-class and online portions of a hybrid course can vary greatly from course-to-course, and is determined by those familiar with the course and its unique needs. Hybrid courses are considered distance education courses by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, and as such must go through a separate course approval process. In addition, instructors of hybrid courses must initiate regular and substantive interaction through the online delivery method(s) approved for the course.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

A correspondence course provides instructional materials online or by mail. Interaction between the instructor and the students is limited, is not regular nor substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. These courses are usually self-paced. Correspondence courses are not considered distance education courses by the California Community College Chancellor's Office nor by the ACCJC.

REGULAR AND EFFECTIVE CONTACT

Title 5, 55204. Instructor Contact:

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that: (a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular and effective contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

California Community College Chancellor's Office Distance Education Guidelines, 2008 Omnibus Version states the following:

Subdivision (a) stresses the responsibility of the instructor in a DE course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status. The use of the term "regular effective contact" in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record.

Distance Education Mission at Porterville College

For those who are unable to attend regularly scheduled classes, we will provide them with classes and support services that are comparable in quality and responsiveness to our on-campus classes and services. In this way, we further the mission of Porterville College to focus on students.

History and Current Status

The first distance education courses offered at Porterville College were interactive classes conducted in 1993, when Porterville College partnered with Bakersfield College to provide nursing courses through two-way interactive video. In the fall of 1998, Porterville College began offering online courses.

The first online courses that PC offered were conducted on Webpages that instructors created themselves. Communication was often conducted through email and occasionally on discussion boards created or sourced by the instructor. As the number of online classes grew, the college joined other colleges in the free Blackboard Course Management System (CMS) that was provided through the state of California's CVC initiative. When that ended, the College contracted with the ETUDES, to run their classes on their CMS. A few years after that, the KCCD District contracted with Remote Learner to run all district classes on the Moodle CMS that they operated. In the summer of 2017, KCCD ended its contract with Remote Learner and began using the Canvas CMS that is supported by Chancellor's Office Online Education Initiative (OEI).

Since first offering distance education courses in 1993 to the present, Porterville College has steadily increased its online and hybrid class offerings, along with its online student enrollments. What began with just a few classes in 1993 has grown to fifty-seven classes by spring of 2017, and an enrollment that in 2016-17 constituted 14.5% of all enrollments at the College. As our DE courses have expanded, so has the success rates for students in our DE courses. In 2016-17, the success rate for students in DE courses at Porterville College was 68.7%, which was 2.7 percentage points higher than the California Community College system average.

Institutional support for distance education has also grown with the increase in DE courses offered. DE students now have access to online tutoring, online counseling, library catalog and database access, as well as a full featured learning management system. Faculty support and concerns are now represented by the Distance Education Committee. In addition, because the DE Coordinator is now organized within the Office of Instruction, the DE program has more visibility to the institution as a whole.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

Through the years, the organizational structure and support for distance education at Porterville College has seen a number of changes. What has remained has been the underlying goal to support students enrolled in and wishing to enroll in distance education classes at the college. As staff changes and as technology evolves, the structure of the program and support that we can provide to students and to faculty will continue to be modified to achieve the most favorable results.

Distance Education Program

The Distance Education Program currently operates under the supervision of the Vice President of Instruction. Reporting to the Vice President of Instruction, the Distance Education Coordinator oversees the program and conducts the day-to-day operations, training, and support. The Distance Education Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Senate, plays an integral role in the planning process for the program. The Curriculum Committee performs the important task of course approval for DE courses.

Student Support Services for DE

A wide variety of services exists for DE students at Porterville College. Currently, students can receive counseling and advising remotely through a program called Cranium Café. This tool offers a private space for Web-conferencing between the counselor and student. In addition, we offer numerous online tools to assist students and their counselors with staying informed about their registration, course completion, and use of various college resources. Some of these tools include:

- Degree Works – a system used to check student progress toward educational goals.
- EAB Navigate – enrollment navigation tool.
- EAB Campus – system that allows counselors to track student enrollment step completion.
- Campus Cast – notification system for prospective students.

Library and Learning Support Services for DE

The Porterville College Library provides numerous online resources for our students. Currently the college offers fifty-three online databases, a catalog of eBooks, and three reference collections. Library staff are available by email or phone, to assist students remotely with their research needs.

Further support for student learning is offered through online tutoring by professional tutors contracted with NetTutor. Students can remotely interact with a NetTutor tutor by clicking on a link from within our course management system. Live support through NetTutor is offered during a wide range of operating hours. When live help is not available, students may submit their questions through the online interface, and a tutor's detailed response will be sent to the student by email within 24 hours.

Technology Support for DE

Two, twenty-four hour help desks serve the technology needs of both students and instructors in DE classes. The KCCD Help Desk provides support for KCCD account issues such as login to the college portal, access to email, access to Banner, etc. The Canvas Help Desk provides support for all issues related to Canvas.

In addition to these services, DE faculty can receive individualized technical support with their classes either in-person, by phone, or by email from the full-time Educational Media Design Specialist (EMDS) on staff at the College. The EMDS also offers a number of workshops throughout each term on matters pertaining to the use of technology in college courses, and oversees a technology center that is available to all faculty at the college who need access to specialized hardware or software, or would like to a personal consultation with the EMDS.

Staffing Needs

Currently, the DE program at Porterville College is staffed by one full-time classified employee. The official job title for this employee is Educational Media Design Specialist. The job duties for this employee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Act as single-point-of-contact for the state Chancellor's Office on DE matters
- Stay abreast of DE issues within the state and country
- Co-chair the DE Committee
- Administer the College's course management system (CMS)
- Provide help-desk support to students and faculty for the CMS
- Administer the College's Turnitin account
- Administer the College's NetTutor account
- Provide technology training to faculty
- Provide support for course accessibility of online content
- Administer Web pages for online course information
- Administer Web pages for the Technology Learning Center
- Oversee the Technology Learning Center
- Provide just in-time assistance to faculty for technology related issues

Staffing for the DE program is currently sufficient. However, staffing may become inadequate as the DE program at the College grows, and/or new tasks become assigned to DE program.

DE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT PORTERVILLE COLLEGE

Faculty Preparedness

Currently, the College does not require an instructor to provide confirmation of their preparedness for teaching a course either fully online or as a hybrid course. Those who assign instructors to teach a DE course, may take multiple factors into consideration when deciding who is prepared to teach an online or hybrid course. However, the DE program is pursuing more consistency in DE course assignment and faculty preparedness. At the time of this writing, there are a number of training and certification models being considered. The plan is to have a policy in place by fall 2018.

Regular and Effective Contact

In February of 2015, Porterville College established a policy pertaining to regular and effective contact in distance education courses. The policy was approved by the Academic Senate on February 6, 2015 and has been included in the “Online Faculty Handbook” since that time. Please refer to the “Online Faculty Handbook” for the latest version of this policy.

Course Approval Process

Title 5 55206. Separate Course Approval:

If any portion of the instruction in a proposed or existing course or course section is designed to be provided through distance education in lieu of face-to-face interaction between instructor and student, the course shall be separately reviewed and approved according to the district's adopted course approval procedures.

All of courses that are intended to be offered in a distance education modality, must obtain separate approval from the Curriculum Committee before being offered as an online or a hybrid course.

Student Authentication and Integrity

In order for students to access their distance education class, they must login through the College’s portal using their unique student ID and password. Instructors in DE courses use a wide variety of methods to ensure integrity in their courses. Some of the methods used by our instructors at Porterville College include:

- Verify originality of content through Turnitin.
- Require examination through a proctor or an online tool such as Proctorio.
- Create quizzes and exams that randomly draw from large question pools.
- Employ a limited timeframe for quiz/exam completion.
- Show only one question at a time on quiz/exam.
- Prevent moving backward on a quiz or exam.
- Force completion of quiz/exam when time runs out.
- Require a password to access a quiz or exam.

- Delay test results until submissions to the test are no longer allowed.
- Require regular and frequent assignments.
- Include grading rubrics for assignments.
- Change assignments from term-to-term.

Accessibility Compliance

Faculty are made aware of their responsibility to ensure that their courses are accessible, through multiple avenues and at various times. For example, at the start of each term an email is sent to all distance education instructors giving them tips as well as reiterating policies. During each term, a workshop on accessibility of online content is offered to all full-time and part-time faculty. In addition, the EMDS is available on a just-in-time basis, to assist faculty who have questions or need help with making their content accessible. The EMDS has extensive experience in Web accessibility and has been trained on using the PDF accessibility tool, Equidox. As a part of our on-going self-evaluation process, we are currently analyzing data that will allow us to determine how we can better serve students with disabilities who take our online and hybrid courses.

DE DATA AT PORTERVILLE COLLEGE

The following tables list data from the most recent academic year available, 2016-2017.

Table 1: Note - Students are counted only once even if taking multiple DE classes. Students are only counted if still enrolled at census.

DE Student Headcount			
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	3 Year % Change
1549	1722	2040	31.7%

Table 2: Students may take multiple classes during a term, and each student enrolled in a class section is considered an enrollment. These are not unduplicated headcount numbers. In 2016-17 DE was 14.5% of all enrollments.

DE Enrollments			
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	3 Year % Change
2481	2747	3457	39.3%

Table 3

2016-17 Student Gender		
	Female	Male
DE	65.3%	34.3%
Traditional	59.5%	39.9%

Table 4

2016-17 Student Age			
	19 or Younger	20-39	40 or Older
DE	30.0%	64.4%	5.6%
Traditional	35.8%	57.0%	7.2%

Table 5

2016-17 Student Ethnicity							
	African American	American Indian	Asian/Filipino/Pac.Isl	Hispanic/Latino	White	Two or More Races	Not Reported
DE	1.8%	0.8%	3.1%	73.5%	18.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Trad.	1.0%	0.7%	3.3%	77.5%	14.9%	1.9%	0.8%

Table 6: Courses are counted only once, regardless of how many sections offered.

DE Courses Offered			
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	3 Year % Change
33	38	53	60.60%

Table 7

DE Sections Offered			
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	3 Year % Change
85	94	118	38.8%

Table 8

DE FTES			
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	3 Year % Change
253	269	348	37.7%

Table 9: The attrition rate is based on the number of students enrolled at term-end vs. the number enrolled at first day, and is included to illustrate the higher rate of drops in DE sections. This rate differs from a retention rate, which is calculated using individual grade records.

Attrition Rate			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
DE	29.3%	24.6%	23.4%
Traditional	8.0%	7.1%	5.7%
Gap	21.3%	17.5%	17.7%

Table 10: The retention rate is based on calculating the sum of all A, B, C, D, F, I, P, and NP grades divided by the sum of all of those grades and also W grades.

Retention Rate			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
DE	82.7%	82.6%	86.3%
Traditional	88.5%	89.4%	90.2%
Gap	-5.8%	-6.8%	-3.8%

Table 11: The success rate is based on calculating the sum of all A, B, C, and P grades divided by the sum of all A, B, C, D, F, I, P, NP, and W grades.

Success Rate			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
DE	60.1%	58.6%	68.7%
Traditional	71.0%	72.6%	73.2%
Gap	-10.9%	-14.0%	-4.6%

GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

Goal 1 – Establish a certification process for DE faculty (online and hybrid), which may become part of the consideration for faculty assignment to a DE course.			
Action plans	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Proposed Leads	Target Deadline
Plan 1.1 – Identify (and develop if necessary) professional development activities that focus on effective online teaching practices.	1.1 – Plan in place for how to use the activities with our faculty.	1.1 – DE Committee	1.1 – March 2018
Plan 1.2 – Provide support for faculty to take part in the activities.	1.2 – Support for faculty participation.	1.2 – DE Committee	1.2 – May 2018
Plan 1.3 – Compare retention and success rates prior to and after faculty participate in the professional growth activities.	1.3 – Data showing retention and success rates before and after faculty participation in activities.	1.3 – DE Coordinator, Institutional Researcher	1.3 – Ongoing from May 2018

Goal 2 – Align courses to the OEI Course Design Rubric.			
Action plans	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Proposed Leads	Target Deadline
Plan 2.1 – Identify (and develop if necessary) professional development activities that help faculty evaluate their courses and modify them if necessary so they are aligned to the rubric.	2.1 – Plan in place for how to use the activities with our faculty.	2.1 – DE Committee	2.1 – March 2018
Plan 2.2 – Provide support for faculty to take part in the activities.	2.2 – Support for faculty participation.	2.2 – DE Committee	2.2 – May 2018
Plan 2.3 – Compare retention and success rates prior to and after courses become aligned to the rubric.	2.3 – Data showing retention and success rates before and after a course becomes aligned to the OEI rubric.	2.3 – DE Coordinator, Institutional Researcher	2.3 – Ongoing from May 2018

Goal 3 – Offer remote proctoring option(s) for distance education classes.			
Action plans	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Proposed Leads	Target Deadline
Plan 3.1 – Secure funding for Proctorio for one year.	3.1 – Get a quote from Proctorio for about 675 students, and submit a request for funding through Student Equity.	3.1 – DE Coordinator	3.1 – March 2018
Plan 3.2 – Execute contract with Proctorio	3.2 – Contract with Proctorio for two semesters and about 675 students.	3.2 – DE Coordinator	3.2 – July 2018
Plan 3.3 – Pilot test Proctorio with online math classes for two semesters.	3.3 – Survey faculty and students in the math classes.	3.3 – DE Coordinator	3.3 – Fall 2018 and Spring 2019
Plan 3.4 – Look into joining the Proctoring Network.	3.4 – Identify proper groups or individuals to involve in the discussion.	3.4 – Vice President, Academic Affairs	3.4 – Fall 2018
Plan 3.5 – Evaluate results of Proctorio Pilot and make decision to continue or end.	3.5 – Decide whether to continue or discontinue use of Proctorio.	3.5 – DE Committee	3.5 – April 2019

GAPS TO ADDRESS IN THE FUTURE

At present, gaps still exist in providing equivalent services, support, and enrichment to DE students. Although it may not be possible to fill every gap, it is important to identify where gaps exist so that we can begin to address them as time and resources permit. As new technology emerges, gaps may shrink or disappear on their own or may become easier to address. Currently, we have identified the following gaps:

- Online assessment for matriculation.
- Online support services for veteran students (partially addressed through use of CraniumCafe).
- Online support services for students with disabilities (partially addressed through use of CraniumCafe).
- Online club participation and activities.
- Online workshops from JEC Center

- Online CHAP events
- Online art exhibits
- Online athletic events