Proposal to Add Non-Participation Language to All Classes

April 24, 2013

**1) Issue:** We need to adapt the non-participation language in the Distance Education Attendance and Non-Participation Policy section on p. 23 of the 2012-13 Catalog for use in all of our classes, including face-to-face, to make our class attendance and participation policies uniform across all modes of instruction. The adapted language will be added to the Attendance Policies of the catalog (currently, p. 22 of the 2012-13 Catalog).

**2) Rationale:** The rigor of a course is not supposed to be dependent on the modality of instruction, including the participation level expected *of* students. [***Background:*** The need to explicitly state the non-participation policy in the distance education courses was originally a result of the tightening of federal financial aid guidelines for what constituted active attendance in distance education courses—students at some colleges were signing up for a number of online courses simply to get federal financial aid money and not participating in the classes. Bakersfield College needed to state its participation policy for distance education courses to meet federal financial aid requirements and to make it clear to regulators. The policy was stated in a separate distance education sub-section of the Attendance Policies section of the catalog.]

In whatever mode of instruction, the students who succeed are those who do more than just “show up”; the ones who succeed in college-level courses are those who are active participants in the course—for example, engaging in class discussions and doing homework assignments. We need to make it clear to face-to-face faculty that they can adopt the distance education non-participation policies for their classes and we need to make it clear to college students what it takes to succeed in college. Title V also makes it clear that the rigor of college-level courses must be such that for each hour spent inside the classroom, a student will spend at least two hours of academic work outside of the classroom studying, doing homework assignments or other course assignments in order to earn a C.\*

* Title 5 § 55002. Standards and Criteria for Courses. (a) Degree-Applicable Credit Course. (2) Standards for Approval. (B) Units. The course grants units of credit based upon a relationship specified by the governing board between the number of units assigned to the course and the number of lecture and/or laboratory hours or performance criteria specified in the course outline. The course also requires a minimum of three hours of student work per week, including class time for each unit of credit, prorated for short-term, extended term, laboratory and/or activity courses.
* Title 5 § 55002. Standards and Criteria for Courses. (a) Degree-Applicable Credit Course. (C) Intensity. The course treats subject matter with a scope and intensity that requires students to study independently outside of class time.
* Title 5 § 55002. Standards and Criteria for Courses. (b) Nondegree-Applicable Credit Course. (2) Standards for Approval. (B) Units. The course grants units of credit based upon a relationship specified by the governing board between the number of units assigned to the course and the number of lecture and/or laboratory hours or performance criteria specified in the course outline. The course requires a minimum of three hours of student work per week, per unit, including class time and/or demonstrated competency, for each unit of credit, prorated for short-term, extended term, laboratory, and/or activity courses.

Reference: <http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=CCR-1000> and then choose the Title 5 Education link (will then automatically sign you on to the weblinks.westlaw.com site) Accessed on 22-April 2013

**4) Opposition:** Are not the distance education guidelines just for distance education courses? Answer: We cannot require a greater level of activity or engagement or rigor in our distance education courses than what we have in our face-to-face courses and vice versa. If students are required to have above a certain threshold of active participation in a distance education mode for a course, then such a threshold of active participation is required for face-to-face courses. Furthermore, the BC college transcript makes no distinction between a section of a course taught face-to-face and another section of the same course taught via distance education. They are supposed to be “equivalent”.

**5) Solution:** Adapt the Distance Education Attendance and Non-Participation Policy language on p. 23 of the 2012-13 catalog for application to all of our classes, including those taught face-to-face and insert that generalized language in the Attendance Policies currently on p. 22 of the 2012-13 catalog.

***Suggested language*** inserted in the third paragraph of the Attendance Policies section (p. 22 of 2012-13 catalog) after the sentence “Excessive absence may result in the student being dropped from the course” and before “Instructors may drop a student from a course…”:

“In order to succeed in college-level courses, students must actively participate in the class such as doing required assignments and studying. *[Ed: Can we include “studying”?]* In the case of college-level courses, `absences’ include `non-participation.’ Non-participation shall be defined as, but is not limited to:

* Not following the instructor’s participation guidelines as stated in the syllabus
* Not submitting required assignments
* Not contributing meaningful discussion in required classroom activities
* Not participating in scheduled activities
* Failing to communicate with the instructor as required

It should be noted that simply showing up for a course does not constitute participation. Students must demonstrate by submitting required assignments and contributing to classroom discussion, as outlined above.”

We can either keep the distance education attendance and non-participation policy as it is or have it refer to the new absence/non-participation language on the previous page with the clarification that “meaningful discussion in required classroom activities” for distance education courses means “meaningful discussion in required chat rooms, discussion boards, or other online forums.”