

Procedure 3.2523

Distance Education Procedure

Introduction

This information constitutes a working document which serves as a resource for distance learning at Beaufort County Community College. It is presented as a dynamic document, which is evaluated and reviewed periodically for necessary revisions.

Because of the large geographic area served by Beaufort County Community College and the transportation barriers caused by distance and waterways, distance learning is the only practical delivery format to serve many students in our service area. Videoconferencing and asynchronous delivery are educational options that meet the needs of many working students who are unable to attend regularly scheduled courses. Therefore, it is incumbent on Beaufort County Community College to offer a comprehensive program of distance learning courses with the goal of providing certificate, diploma and degree options in targeted curricula.

Distance Learning is coordinated by the Blackboard Administrator, Systems Administrator, Director of Distance Learning, and the Distance Education Quality Improvement Committee under the supervision of the VP of Academics. Support for distance learning instructors and students is provided by the Blackboard Administrator, Library staff, IT staff, and through the regular administrative chain of Lead Instructors, Deans, and VP of Academics.

Mission

Beaufort County Community College (BCCC) is a public comprehensive community college committed to providing accessible and affordable quality education, effective teaching, relevant training, and lifelong learning opportunities for the people served by the College.

In support of this mission, BCCC is committed to provide students with a competitive distance education program that demonstrates the same rigor and quality of instruction as the traditional learning experience. BCCC strives to provide a comprehensive array of quality, affordable, and accessible courses delivered synchronously and asynchronously by qualified faculty.

Standards & Policy Statements

Authentication

Beaufort County Community College's (BCCC) distance learning program is provided through online instructional format and videoconferencing. The College uses North Carolina Research Education Network (NCREN) as provided by MCNC, a secure communications network, to broadcast videoconferencing courses. Online, hybrid, and web enhanced courses are delivered through the college's learning management system (LMS), Blackboard. The College requires students to log into the LMS using secure

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username/password credentials to verify each student's identity. Once verified, the LMS associates this identity with all online coursework completed throughout the login session. Students are only permitted to access content within courses in which they are enrolled.

The LMS communicates securely with the College's network directory to authenticate username/password credentials via the industry standard secure Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP). The College's industry standard Microsoft Active Directory network directory is directly and securely populated with username/password information from the student information system embedded within the College's enterprise resource planning platform, Colleague.

Each student is provided a unique username/password credential to view course content, submit assignments and tests, communicate with the instructor, participate in online discussions, and complete other course requirements. This username/password credential is also used to provide access to student e-mail and other online services provided by the College. Each student receives an acceptance letter that includes their student identification number and a link to directions for logging in, as detailed in the [Acceptance Letter Procedure \(3.2504\)](#).

All Continuing Education instructors and students are provided username/password login credentials for access to many important apps and services at the time of registration. BCCC provides each student with a Microsoft 365 license, providing access to many important desktop and web-based applications and services. Also included is a license to install the desktop versions of these apps on up to 5 home devices.

Distance learning in Continuing Education includes video conferencing and web-based courses (online, hybrid, and web-enhanced). Distance learning course and program development is a collaborative effort between instructors, continuing education directors, and coordinators with input from advisory committees. Student needs and the adaptability of the coursework to an online environment determine distance learning course offerings. Continuing Education uses a continuous improvement model as the basis for online course review, including administering an instructor and course evaluation. Continuing Education instructor and course evaluations are conducted at the continuing education director/coordinator's discretion at the conclusion of a continuing education course using the Division of Continuing Education Evaluation Form. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure quality instruction and student learning. Using the evaluation data collected, a Performance Review Letter is created where the evaluation data is summarized, documented, and reviewed with instructors using the Performance Review Letter Template Form.

In addition to the required use of the secure login/password method, instructors of some distance learning courses require students to take proctored tests and examinations through Library Services who require photo identification and audio/video monitoring.

Course instructors and North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH) site facilitators at broadcast sites verify the student identity for those who participate in the class.

BCCC does not offer correspondence courses.

Privacy

Beaufort County Community College (BCCC) has procedures in place to protect the privacy of all students and their education records. BCCC follows the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (PL 93-380) (FERPA) which sets forth requirements governing the protection of student privacy. Faculty and staff attend mandatory FERPA Training each year provided by the Vice President of Student Services.

Student Charges

The college does not charge additional fees for verification of student identity per [policy](#) of the BCCC Board of Trustees. Students in online courses are charged the same tuition and fees as students in seated courses.

Enrollment

The College uses standardized reporting for monitoring headcount enrollment each semester. Aggregate student headcount is calculated based on all students enrolled during a given term regardless of the mode of instruction the students received.

Curriculum and Instruction

Overview

Distance learning at BCCC includes video conferencing and web-based courses (online, hybrid, blended, and web-enhanced) for both curriculum and continuing education programs. The admissions requirements, placement scores, methods of evaluations, and other conditions of eligibility are consistent with the state requirements for curriculum courses. These courses are delivered via appropriate technology to maximize accessibility. Descriptions of distance learning methods at BCCC include:

Online Courses: College curriculum or continuing education course in which 100% of the instruction is delivered online.

Hybrid: College curriculum or continuing education course in which greater than 50%, but less than 100% of the instruction is delivered online.

Blended: College curriculum or continuing education course in which less than or equal to 50% of the instruction is delivered online.

Web-enhanced: College credit or continuing education course where the primary delivery is via traditional face-to-face method with a requirement that students have Internet access as a supplemental part of the course.

Video-Conferencing (North Carolina Information Highway) College credit or continuing education course where 100% of the instruction is delivered through Polycom video equipment.

Course Development and Review

BCCC online course and program development is a collaborative effort between faculty and lead instructors with input from the division dean and advisory committees. Online course offerings are determined by student need and the adaptability of the coursework

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to an online environment. Faculty developing courses for online delivery adhere to copyright and ADA regulations as well as the College's intellectual property guidelines.

BCCC will use a continuous improvement model as the basis for online course review that includes a pre-term Online Course Prep Checklist and a mid-semester Course Review. The purpose of the course review process is to ensure quality instruction and student learning. Faculty will assume primary responsibility for oversight of the course review process. Completed course prep checklists and mid-course evaluations will be signed by both the instructor and the Lead/Dean and kept on file in SharePoint.

Online Course Prep Checklist

Faculty will use the BCCC Course Prep Checklist each semester as a guide to ensure the readiness of their courses, accuracy of course menu and syllabus, ease of navigation, and logical progression of content for each upcoming online course. Lead instructors or Deans may require additional evaluation criteria specific to their program area. Leads or Deans will verify the readiness of online courses and complete the BCCC Course Prep Checklist for a random sampling of 25% of online courses, which will be generated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Mid-semester Course Review

Between the 30% and 60% point of the semester, Leads or Deans will review online courses to ensure the integrity of the course content and instructor engagement. Leads or Deans will complete the mid-course evaluation for the same random sample generated at the beginning of the semester and follow-up with the course instructor about any needed changes or improvements.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property may be defined as any intellectual or creative works that can be copyrighted or patented. The college supports the development, production, and dissemination of intellectual property to enhance the teaching/learning environment. The College will develop and maintain procedures to define the rights and responsibilities of the College, all employees, and all students in regard to intellectual property (Policy 6.12).

The ownership of intellectual property will be determined according to the following conditions. The employee retains ownership if the following criteria are met:

- The work was created independently and as a result of the individual's own initiative, not requested by the college.
- The work is not a product of a specific contract or assignment made as a result of employment of the college.
- The work is not prepared within the scope of the employee's job duties.
- The work involves insignificant use of college facilities, time, and/or other resources.

The college retains ownership if the above criteria are not met and/or if the following criteria apply:

- The work is prepared within the scope of the employee's job duties.
- The work is prepared within the scope of class assignments.

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- The work is the product of a specific contract or assignment made in the course of the employee's employment with the college.

The development of the work involved significant facilities, time, and/or other resources of the college including, but not limited to, released time, grant funds, college personnel, salary supplement, leave with pay, equipment, or other materials or financial assistance.

When it can be foreseen that commercially valuable property will be created, the college and the employee/student should negotiate an agreement for ownership and the sharing of benefits prior to the creation of the property. The College may grant an employee use of the intellectual work at another educational institution.

An ad hoc Intellectual Property Committee, appointed by the President and comprised of equal numbers of faculty and staff, will make recommendations to the President when exceptions and related issues arise (Procedure 6.1201).

All employees must abide by the College Copyright Policy (6.05).

Faculty

In order to preserve the existing standards of educational excellence guiding the pedagogical process at BCCC, curriculum online faculty should meet all qualifications set forth by the North Carolina Community College System and SACSCOC. In addition, it is encouraged that all faculty complete the BCCC Blackboard Orientation online course before the first day of class or by the end of the first semester of employment. This is a self-paced course designed to be an interactive orientation to Blackboard and provide an overview of best practices in online course design and instruction.

Online Faculty Evaluation

Curriculum instructor evaluations are conducted each Fall and Spring semester using technology managed and distributed by the Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness (ORIE). Curriculum instructor evaluations are conducted during Summer semester on request from the division dean and/or vice president of academics.

The Personnel Evaluation Systems Committee is responsible for development, review, and update of the evaluation instrument used for curriculum instructor evaluations. ORIE reserves the right to create, edit and/or customize the evaluation instrument consistent with best practices and/or the needs of program areas.

The data collected during curriculum instructor evaluations will be prepared as individual reports for each instructor; results for all courses taught by the instructor will be aggregated together into one report.

Online Faculty Training

To ensure that online instruction remains relevant and substantive, high quality training for instructors is essential. The Blackboard Administrator and other support staff provide ongoing training through a variety of synchronous and asynchronous delivery methods to meet the varying needs of faculty.

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In addition, faculty are encouraged to participate in the Blackboard Exemplary Course Program which provides professional development in four major areas: Course Design, Interaction & Collaboration, Assessment, and Learner Support.

Institutional Effectiveness

The College compares educational effectiveness of distance education programs to campus-based programs through a variety of means. Student satisfaction with educational programs are collected through course-instructor evaluations conducted each fall and spring semester and through graduating student surveys conducted during spring semester.

Course success rates are disaggregated by mode of instruction to ensure student achievement is comparable across traditional, hybrid, and distance education programs as documented on the College [student achievement page](#).

Student learning outcomes are compared across traditional, hybrid, and distance education instructional methods in assessment reports that faculty complete each semester and document on the College content management system.

To adequately assess and make improvements to the Distance Education program, the Dean of Research and Institutional Effectiveness will provide the Blackboard Administrator and Distance Education Quality Improvement Committee with pertinent reports. Reports will include data related to the following:

1. Student Learning Outcomes
2. Student Retention Rates
3. Student Satisfaction (including evaluation of instructor and course)

Library and Learning Resources

Beaufort County Community College Library has several research options available to distance learning students. Additional information, resources, and tutorials are available to distance education students through the [BCCC Library Webpage](#). See Procedure 3.2509.

Student Services

Distance education students have the opportunity to attend all student services that are available on campus, including Blackboard Support Sessions. In addition, the following services are available online:

- **Blackboard Student Orientation**
The *Blackboard Student Orientation* course is an interactive, hands-on orientation to Blackboard designed to help students navigate courses and use available tools efficiently. All students have access to this course through Blackboard.
- **New Student Online Orientation**
Various campus-based orientation sessions are offered to all new students. For students who are unable to attend, an online version is available via the BCCC Website.

Library Services

Library staff ensure that students who are unable to come to campus have access to adequate learning resources and reasonable library services through the website.

The Distance Learning & Teaching Instructional Guide provides all users aggregate resource databases with a substantial number of journal, e-book, and streaming resources subscribed to by the Beaufort County Community College Library. See policy 3.2509.

LEC Services

The LEC offers a weekly schedule of tutoring in a number of core disciplines. The LEC provides, on a drop-in basis, a supportive atmosphere for one-on-one and group tutoring, building an ever-evolving community of learners and facilitators. In addition, online tutoring is available via Blackboard from Tutor.com.

BCCC Website

Distance education students have full access to a wide-range of services and information through the college website. Contact information for support personnel is available as well as video tutorials.

Facilities and Finances

Academics, with input from the Distance Learning Department and the Distance Education Quality Improvement Committee (DEQIC), will decide which distance learning technologies are appropriate for achieving distance learning student goals and meeting instructional requirements.

Distance learning technologies should not present a barrier to enrollment to the distant learning student.

To the extent possible, distance learning students should utilize the same infrastructure technologies as campus seated students. Correspondence through email and participation in the Learning Management System should not differ between the campus seated student and the distance learning student.

The College will create employment positions, fund employment positions, and vet employees who are designated as administrators of the distance learning teaching technologies.

Distance Learning and IT will vet any third-party provider of distance learning teaching platforms by College employees who have expertise in the methods and technologies being used or developed for distance learning.

The College will commit to providing ongoing training for instructors, administrators and Information Technology resources who use and maintain the distance learning technologies.

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References

Legal References: *Enter legal references here*

SACSCOC References: *Enter SACSCOC references here*

Cross References:

History

Leadership Council Review/Approval Dates: *3/10/2023*

Senior Staff Review/Approval Dates: *8/10/2015, 2/23/2018, 2/9/2023*

Board of Trustees Review/Approval Dates: *Enter date(s) here*

Implementation Dates: *Enter date(s) here*