

In order to comply with the mandate expressed by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 to ensure program integrity by authentication and verification of students in distance learning courses,

“(ii) the agency or association requires an institution that offers distance education or correspondence education to have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who **registers** in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who **participates in** and **completes the program** and **receives the academic credit.**”

it is recommended that these four identified processes authenticate and verify Mt. SAC students through interaction with the College's official information system, Banner, by the beginning of Fall 2010 semester.

Rationale for this recommendation:

- A. A reasonable definition of student identity has been established already, and it starts with Admissions and Records (A&R) as the creator of each individual student record in Banner.
- B. Current College practices to establish and secure student identity include:
 - 1. A&R collects students' date of birth and social security number on application forms.
 - 2. Students have to provide evidence to establish residency in California for a minimum of one year.
- C. Three of the four processes indicated in the Higher Education Act to authenticate students in DL courses are already in place at Mt. SAC. The fourth process can be implemented through the use of existing or newly implemented resources. The four processes and their interactions with Banner are:
 - 1. **“registers”** – registration for courses is conducted online through MyMtSAC portal, interacting with Banner through Student ID # and PIN, which is designated by Mt. SAC Admissions and Records office
 - 2. **“participates in”** - students are authenticated in online mode through userID and password-required Luminis Portal or Blackboard participation, or by use of Mt. SAC email address
 - 3. **“completes the program”** - faculty gives the student a final grade on college-generated Grades Roster or in Luminis portal, starting Summer 2009
 - 4. **“receives the academic credit”** - official transcript which provides evidence of course credit is handled through Mt. SAC Admissions and Records office, with Mt. SAC student ID #

Portion of the Higher Education Act:

PART H—PROGRAM INTEGRITY

SEC. 495. RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING AGENCY OR ASSOCIATION.

Section 496 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

“(4)(A) such agency or association consistently applies and enforces standards that respect the stated mission of the institution of higher education, including religious missions, and that ensure that the courses or programs of instruction, training, or study offered by the institution of higher education, including distance education or correspondence courses or programs, are of sufficient quality to achieve, for the duration of the accreditation period, the stated objective for which the courses or the programs are offered; and

“(B) if such agency or association has or seeks to include within its scope of recognition the evaluation of the quality of institutions or programs offering distance education or correspondence education, such agency or association shall, in addition to meeting the other requirements of this subpart, demonstrate to the Secretary that—

“(i) the agency or association’s standards effectively address the quality of an institution’s distance education or correspondence education in the areas identified in paragraph (5), except that—

“(I) the agency or association shall not be required to have separate standards, procedures, or policies for the evaluation of distance education or correspondence education institutions or programs in order to meet the requirements of this subparagraph; and

“(II) in the case that the agency or association is recognized by the Secretary, the agency or association shall not be required to obtain the approval of the Secretary to expand its scope of accreditation to include distance education or correspondence education, provided that the agency or association notifies the Secretary in writing of the change in scope; and

“(ii) **the agency or association requires an institution that offers distance education or correspondence education to have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit;”**