Improving Success and Retention in Distance Learning Courses
Resolution 2009-11

Whereas the success and retention in Distance Learning (DL) courses has not significantly increased at Mt. SAC in the last seven years, the College has set a Strategic Objective to increase the success of DL students , and the DL Committee has identified several college processes that could be modified to better serve students, and

Whereas Mt. SAC's DL course Schedule Notes are inconsistent, changed regularly, do not contain professor contact information and often are not read by students after they register for a class, leading to confusion for students on how to begin a DL course, and

Whereas students have incorrect assumptions regarding the expectations and responsibilities regarding DL courses, including the use of Mt. SAC email, academic rigor and time commitment, and

Whereas there is outdated or absent department, division, and instructional area web pages, no online directory of both full and part-time faculty available to students and community, no easily accessed official display of currently offered DL courses, little emphasis on the strict use of Mt. SAC email in all courses and College correspondence, and no process in place to automatically forward email messages for all Mt. SAC account holders,

Resolved, the Academic Senate recommends that the College implement or modify the following processes to increase student success and retention in DL courses:

- A consistent format for Schedule Notes for all DL courses to be displayed in the Mt. SAC Schedule of Classes, on the Luminis or MyMtSAC portal and on the student's individual printed schedule, that directs the student on how to begin their DL course, includes the professor's name and contact information, and lists all required on-campus meeting dates, times and locations,

- A standard paragraph describing that the academic rigor and time commitment required of students enrolled in a DL course are equivalent to those of traditional courses should be presented to students through the Mt.SAC Schedule of Classes, display on Mt. SAC web pages, in Luminis Course Studio, on Bb Login page, and in student and faculty channels in Luminis portal

- Strong emphasis on the strict use of Mt. SAC email addresses for all official college and course communications

- A voluntary survey that will assess a student's minimum online learning skills and will include suggestions for increasing their skill set, to be made available online to all students who wish to register or who enroll in a DL course

Resolved, the Academic Senate requests that Information Technology collaborate in a cooperative, efficient manner with faculty to provide and maintain the following online resources:

- Full-time and part-time faculty directory, including names, phone, email and office location

- A process to allow the automatic forwarding of Mt. SAC email messages, to be maintained by the account holders

- Department, division, and instructional area web pages

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