

Asserting Synchronous Office Hours as Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

Resolution 2025-05

Whereas, Title 5 §55204 and Mt. San Antonio College's Administrative Procedure 4105 define *Regular and Substantive Interaction* (RSI) as a necessary component of distance education, requiring instructors to initiate and maintain active, scheduled interaction with students about academic matters;

Whereas, synchronous office hours meets the definition of *substantive interaction* as stated in AP 4105, which includes "interacting with an instructor about academic matters," and fulfill the requirement that institutions provide "opportunities for substantive interactions... on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency" and meet the definition of *substantive interaction* published by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College (ACCJC) in their June 2025 Policy paper¹, "substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following a) Providing direct instruction; b) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework; c) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; d) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or e) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency";

Whereas, Mt. SAC's RSI Mentoring Program provides faculty-centered support for implementing best practices in online teaching, aligning with both federal compliance requirements and accreditation expectations, while modeling the Academic Senate's commitment to professional development, innovation, and peer leadership; and,

Whereas, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) at its Spring 2024 Plenary emphasized the importance of faculty voice and expertise in defining and implementing RSI, and encouraged local senates to recognize synchronous office hours as a valid and valuable method of engagement.

Resolved, that the Mt. SAC Academic Senate asserts that synchronous office hours constitute Regular and Substantive Interaction when held at scheduled and predictable times and designed to provide opportunities for instructors to engage with students in teaching, learning, and assessment or other activities related to the course;

Resolved, that the Mt. SAC Academic Senate affirms that the definition of RSI must remain broad enough to reflect the diversity of instructional strategies and faculty

¹ ACCJC June 2025 Policy Paper: <https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Policy-on-Distance-and-on-Correspondence-Education.pdf>

expertise, while maintaining compliance with Title 5, federal regulations, and accreditation standards; and

Resolved, that the Mt. SAC Academic Senate commends the Distance Learning Committee and RSI Mentoring Program for supporting faculty implementation of RSI through mentorship, examples, and guidance grounded in pedagogical integrity and regulatory compliance.

Contact: Kelly Rivera, Mt. SAC Academic Senate Legislative Liaison