**Unit Strategic Plan**

**2015 to 2017**

Every two years, during spring semester, programs/departments/service units are asked to develop Unit Strategic Plans. These plans need to be closely aligned with the Institutional Action Priorities, the College’s Long Range Goals, and the College’s five-year strategic plan. The Strategic Plans incorporate and reflect the operation of that unit at all campuses and instructional sites. Each unit’s budget needs to reflect the fiscal implications associated with the unit’s identified goals and objectives.

**Name of Program/Department:** Distance Education Division

**Mission Statement**The Distance Education Division increases access to college courses by utilizing educational technologies and Internet based content delivery methods that reduce, and in some cases eliminate, the need for students to be in particular locations at set times to receive instruction.

**Division Outcomes**

• Oversee development and design of transfer, career and developmental courses to ensure comparability of distance education courses with courses delivered in the traditional manner.

• Make effective and innovative use of educational hardware, software and web services to develop and deliver Internet, hybrid/blended and interactive videoconference courses.

• Schedule flexible learning opportunities that meet the needs of students with constraints that prevent them from attending traditional classes.

• Promote faculty development and training in the use of educational technologies and alternative methods of delivering instruction.

• Coordinate dual enrollment courses for qualified high school students.

Distance education courses follow the same course outlines as courses delivered in the traditional manner and are taught by qualified Jefferson State instructors. Upon successful completion of these courses, students receive credit equivalent to traditional courses. Most Transfer/General Studies courses are available in a distance education format, along with many program courses.

**Summary of Access, Productivity and Effectiveness (Including, but not limited to, program load, success rate, retention rate, completion rate, employer surveys, student surveys):**

The Distance Education Division works with all divisions, departments and programs to provide a broad range of high-quality Internet, hybrid/blended, interactive videoconference and dual enrollment courses. Faculty assigned to the division teach distance education courses, dual enrollment courses at local high schools and traditional courses at all campuses. Instructional technology specialists within the division support the delivery of distance education classes by

* Facilitating effective use of Blackboard learning management system, Tegrity lecture capture service, audio/visual equipment in traditional classrooms, and interactive videoconference resources at all campuses.
* Working with the Department of Information Technology to insure proper integration of distance education technologies with other college resources.
* Providing advice and assistance to all divisions and departments when purchasing new audio/visual equipment and other instructional technologies.
* Maintaining an effective presence on the college’s webpage.
* Overseeing the college’s distance education email helpdesk, where students and faculty request assistance with technological issues related to distance education courses.
* Providing training opportunities for faculty and staff related to distance education.

The Executive Secretary provides daily support to faculty and staff within the division, support for Child Development faculty on the Jefferson Campus, is responsible for collecting course related materials from faculty, entering changes to Internet, dual enrollment and Spanish classes during class schedule construction, managing requests for audio/visual event support, and scheduling classes and events in interactive videoconference rooms.

**Internal Conditions:**

1. **Technology**

Faculty, staff and classroom computers are upgraded according to the college’s rotation plan. Videoconference resources are sufficient to meet current needs. Projectors and document cameras are functioning properly, and are upgraded as needed.

Blackboard, Tegrity and Respondus software licenses, which are renewed annually, are current, and sufficient to meet the college’s needs.

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| **VENDOR** | **LICENSE EXPIRY DATE** | **AMOUNT DUE/PAID** |
| **Blackboard** | **August 2013** | **$45,842.88** |
| **Blackboard** | **August 2014** | **$41,135.02** |
| **Blackboard** | **August 2015** | **$50,541.77** |
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| **VENDOR** | **LICENSE EXPIRY DATE** | **AMOUNT DUE/PAID** |
| **Tegrity** | **March 2013** | **$32,202.00** |
| **Tegrity** | **March 2014** | **$37,202.00** |
| **Tegrity** | **March 2015** | **$37,202.00** |
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| **VENDOR** | **LICENSE EXPIRY DATE** | **AMOUNT DUE/PAID** |
| **Respondus, Inc.** | **July 2013** | **$2,095.00** |
| **Respondus, Inc.** | **July 2014** | **$2,095.00** |
| **Respondus, Inc.** | **July 2015** | **$2,095.00** |
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1. **Budget**

The current budget is sufficient to

* Provide classroom resources and office supplies for division faculty and staff.
* Maintain annual licenses needed to provide distance education courses.
* Renew annual New Media Consortium and Instructional Technology Council memberships.
* Maintain equipment in interactive videoconference rooms at all campuses.

1. **Staffing**

Alan Davis: Associate Dean – Distance Education

Erma Hughes: Executive Secretary

Greg McCallister: Instructional Technology Specialist

Valerie McCombs: Instructional Technology Specialist

Zac Alexander: History Instructor

Matt Boehm: English Instructor

Shay Culbertson: Spanish Instructor

Alberto Luna: Spanish Instructor

Ann Lyons: Chemistry and Physical Science Instructor

Kevin Townes: Speech and Theater Instructor

Faculty contribute to the division’s mission by teaching dual enrollment courses, Internet courses and traditional courses. The need for additional faculty and/or staff is assessed as college needs change.

1. **Resources**

Faculty and staff are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities. Instructors submit annual IAP forms that include professional development requests and needs. IAP forms provide instructors the opportunity to request funding for workshops, conferences, etc. Professional development requests from staff are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

1. **Enrollment**

Enrollment in distance education courses continues to increase, and sections are offered to keep pace with demand. Demand for dual enrollment courses is also increasing. The Distance Education Division works with all areas of the college to insure scheduled classes meet a variety of needs.

1. **Facilities**

Current office space and instructional facilities meet the needs of distance education faculty and staff. Interactive videoconference resources at all locations are aging, but sufficient to meet current needs.

1. **Equipment**

The Distance Education Division has the equipment needed for daily tasks. Copiers, scanners, fax machines and office supplies are available and accessible at all locations. Faculty and staff computers will be upgraded according to the college’s planned rotation.

**External Conditions (such as state funding, accrediting agencies, advisory committees, postsecondary policy changes):**

Program accreditation is a high priority for Jefferson State. The Distance Education Division assists with reports and participates in meetings with the visiting committees during accreditation visits. Distance Education Division faculty and staff are active in supporting institutional goals related to the assessment of student learning outcomes. Increased state-level emphasis on dual enrollment should increase demand for dual enrollment courses, and could create a need for more division faculty.

**2013-14 Accomplishments**

A new desktop computer was purchased for Erma Hughes. Cost - $1140.45

A new desktop computer was purchased for Mark Partain. Cost - $2312.44

Three iPad tablet computers and accessories were purchased. Cost - $2250

The college reorganized ITS and IT staff in the spring of 2014. The college filled three new technician positions in the IT Department instead of hiring a new ITS staff member for the Distance Education Division. IT technicians now support installation and maintenance of audio/visual equipment, videoconference equipment, and classroom computers, while remaining ITS staff in the Distance Education Division assist faculty in the use of Blackboard, Tegrity, Respondus and other instructional technologies.

ITS staff offered individual and group training as needed and requested in 2013-14 to assist in faculty development.

ITS staff conducted a Blackboard 9 training sessions for the following departments

* Emergency Medical Services (May 2014)
* Child Development (July 2014)

An immediate need for computers to support lecture capture in the two Jefferson Campus and two Shelby-Hoover Campus videoconference rooms was addressed by purchasing four Dell desktop computers. Cost – $4553.36

Valerie McCombs attended the November 2013 Alabama eLearning Symposium at Athens State University.

Valerie McCombs attended the summer 2014 Blackboard World Conference in Las Vegas.

Greg McCallister provided ongoing technological support to Campus Police.

Matt Boehm became PTK faculty advisor for the Jefferson Campus Pi Pi Chapter.

Zac Alexander helped organize the 2013 Constitution Day Program.

Zac Alexander, Matt Boehm and Kevin Townes contributed to the dual enrollment program by teaching courses in St. Clair County Schools and Shelby County Schools.

Dual enrollment was expanded by offering speech courses at Thompson High School.

Arrangements were made to offer dual enrollment ENG 101/102 courses in Shelby County Schools in the 2014-15 school year.

Kevin Townes developed Internet THR 120 which was offered in spring 2014.

Kevin Townes worked with Janice Ralya to establish the Zeta Chapter of Sigma Chi Eta to recognize and honor students who excel in communication at two-year colleges.

Alan Davis attended the December 2013 SACS Annual Meeting in Atlanta.

Jefferson State achieved a *top ten ranking in the 2013-14 Digital Community Colleges Survey conducted by* the *Center for Digital Education.*

**2014-15 Accomplishments**

At the request of specific departments, the following live training sessions in Blackboard were provided during the 2014-15 cycle.

* September 2014 training session for faculty at the Chilton-Clanton Campus.
* January 16, 2015 – Shelby-Hoover Communications Department Blackboard tools for lecture/hybrid courses.
* Summer 2015 – ITS staffed assisted instructors preparing to teach ORI 101 Orientation to College

Ongoing individual and group training will be provided to assist faculty and staff. Online training resources are available through the college webpage and through Blackboard.

Needs assessment related to interactive videoconference and lecture capture resources determined the following. Polycom videoconference (VC) equipment is functioning properly in instructional rooms AL 111, CH 210, HSB 344, HSB 335, and at Pell City and Clanton, but equipment age is increasingly a concern. In addition to VC units in these instructional rooms, a functioning, but rarely used, VC unit in FSC 400 should be reallocated. A mobile VC unit at Shelby is still operational to send/receive VC, but the 40-inch monitor is no longer functioning, and cannot be replaced. There is also a disabled portable VC unit at Clanton, which the college chose not to repair in September 2013. IT and ITS are discussing the best approach to meeting future institutional VC needs. An estimate for replacing existing equipment in the instructional rooms listed above is $15,000-$20,000, per room, but it is not clear that this is be the best approach to meet broader institutional videoconference needs. The intended outcome is improving multisite VC collaboration capabilities while continuing to provide the ability to deliver multisite VC instruction. Evaluation of options is ongoing.

webcthelp email met distance education help needs, but the larger institutional need for a ticket-based help request system is recognized, is included in the college’s current technology plan, and is being pursued by the IT Department and Distance Education Division.

Alan Davis and Valerie McCombs participated in the May 2015 University of Alabama Scholars Institute hosted by UAB.

A July 2015 presentation of the Canvas LMS was conducted for the Distance Education Committee and the New Media in Instruction Committee.

Zac Alexander helped organize the 2014 Constitution Day Program.

Dual enrollment was expanded by offering ENG 101/102 at Oak Mountain High School, Chelsea High School and Thompson High School.

Zac Alexander, Matt Boehm and Kevin Townes contributed to the dual enrollment program by teaching courses in St. Clair County Schools and Shelby County Schools.

Arrangements were made to expand the dual enrollment program by offering dual enrollment courses at Hoover High School and Helena High School in the 2015-16 school year.

Alan Davis served on the Dual Enrollment Coordinator search committee.

Greg McCallister provided ongoing technological support to Campus Police.

Alan Davis attended the December 2014 SACS Annual Meeting in Nashville.  
  
Jefferson State achieved a *top ten ranking in the 2014-15 Digital Community Colleges Survey conducted by* the *Center for Digital Education.*

**Immediate Goals for September 2015 – August 2016**

**Goal 1:**  Renew annual licenses and memberships related to the college’s distance education program.

1. Objectives
2. All annual licenses and memberships related to the college’s distance education program will be renewed for 2015-16
3. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. All licenses and memberships are renewed for 2015-16
4. Additional Funding Requests (2015-16 estimates most recent renewals)
5. Blackboard Learn LMS License – $50,541.77 when renewed August 2015
6. Tegrity Lecture Capture License – $37,202.00 when renewed March 2015
7. Respondus Exam Creation and Management License - $2,095.00 when renewed July 2015
8. Instructional Technology Council Membership – $495 when renewed July 2015
9. New Media Consortium Membership - $2,500
10. The goals revision document will include renewal estimates for 2016-17.

**Goal 2:** Acquire new multifunction document processor for BDH 101.

1. Objectives
2. Upgrading the division’s multifunction document processor will improve service to faculty and staff in the Distance Education Division and the Child Development Program.
3. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. A more reliable and cost effective multifunction document processor is operational in BDH 101.
4. Additional Funding Requests
5. A multifunction document processor comparable to the HP MFP M476dn in Ali Yazdi’s suite can be purchased for around $700.
6. Adding a small-scale machine like the Ricoh MP250 SP in Carson Hall to the college’s lease agreement could be another option.

**Goal 3:** Provide funds for Hispanic Outreach Activities

1. Objectives
2. Participate in multicultural events to promote college services.
3. Participate in organizations that promote Hispanic interests.
4. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. Jefferson State is represented Fiesta Birmingham 2015.
   2. Jefferson State is represented in Latino Interest Meetings.
5. Additional Funding Requests
6. Up to $1000 is requested for memberships and registration fees associated with 2015-2016 Hispanic Outreach activities. The $200 registration fee for participation in the October Fiesta Birmingham at Linn Park is included in this amount.

**Goal 4:** Provide funds for spring 2016 student theatre production

1. Objectives
2. Distance Education Division faculty member Kevin Townes will work with other faculty, students and staff to produce two spring 2016 performances of Neil Simon’s *Plaza Suite* or *California Suite*.
3. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. One performance occurs at the Clanton Campus.
   2. One performance occurs at the Clanton Campus.
4. Additional Funding Requests
5. Each play requires minimal staging, but funds are needed for royalties ($125 per performance), props and transportation of equipment between the two performance sites (Shelby and Clanton). Total budget should not exceed $1000. $500 is requested to supplement $500 approved in Kevin Townes’ IAP.

**Goal 5:** Create standard student orientation materials for courses that use Blackboard 9.

1. Objectives
2. Create Internet course orientation resources in Blackboard 9 that will help students understand general expectations in courses that use Blackboard 9.

1. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
2. Orientation materials addressing expectations common to most Internet and hybrid/blended courses are available to students in Blackboard 9.
3. Additional Funding Requests
   1. No additional funding requested at this time.

**Extended Unit Goals for September 2015 – August 2017**

**Goal 6:**  Renew annual licenses and memberships related to the college’s distance education program.

1. Objectives
2. All annual licenses and memberships related to the college’s distance education program will be renewed for 2016-17.
3. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. All licenses and memberships are renewed for 2016-17.
4. Additional Funding Requests (The goals revision document will contain estimates based on 2015-16 renewals)
5. Blackboard Learn LMS License
6. Tegrity Lecture Capture License
7. Respondus Exam Creation and Management License
8. Instructional Technology Council Membership
9. New Media Consortium Membership

**Goal 7:** Acquire new computers/devices for Distance Education Division faculty and staff.

2015-16 upgrades will occur if equipment failure occurs. Replacements will be postponed until 2016-17, where possible.

1. Objectives
2. Determine the best options (desktop, laptop, tablet) for faculty and ITS staff based on daily use.
3. Acquire new computers/devices for six faculty for two ITS staff.
4. Acquire tablets of differing platforms for ITS staff.
5. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. Faculty have updated computers/devices that allow them to deliver effective instruction.
   2. ITS staff have updated computers/devices that allow them to assist faculty and students on a variety of platforms.
   3. ITS staff have access to tablet computers that run different operating systems so they can assist students and faculty with technical issues.
6. Additional Funding Requests
7. 6 laptop or desktop computers @ $1,800 each for faculty.
8. 3 Surface 4 @ $2,000 each for Associate Dean and ITS staff (Laptop or desktop could be purchased instead, if preferred).
9. $1,000 for accessories (Surface docking stations, adaptors, etc) as needed.
10. $3,500 for up to 6 tablets of different platforms for ITS use in assisting faculty and students (individual prices fluctuate and vary with type).

**Goal 8:**  Pursue an institutional webconferencing service.

Webconference service has the potential to greatly improve communications among the college’s four campuses and could provide a standard platform for virtual office hours/tutoring at a distance. Many services are available, including Blackboard Collaborate service that integrates with the college’s existing LMS.

1. Objective: Explore different services that could provide institutional webconference capabilities. Options include
2. Blackboard Collaborate (Integrates with Blackboard LMS)
3. Big Blue Button (Currenty a third-party component of Canvas LMS)
4. GoToMeeting
5. Skype
6. Method of Assessment
   1. Evaluate different webconference services.
   2. Determine the service that best meets institutional needs for meetings, faculty/student interaction, etc.
7. Additional Funding Requests
   1. Representatives from Blackboard estimate a $20,000 annually for entry level Collaborate service. Details are still being determined, but this estimate is provided because Collaborate integrates with the college’s current LMS.
   2. Webcams needed to make effective use of Webconference service – One time purchase of $60 per camera per user. Integrated cameras could become part of future laptop and/or tablet purchases.

**Goal 9:** Offer Blackboard 9 Training Sessions

1. Objectives
2. Prepare faculty to use Blackboard 9 learning management system.
3. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
4. Live training sessions are offered at different campuses.
5. Online training resources are available through the college webpage and through Blackboard.
6. Feedback from faculty indicates training needs are met.
7. Additional Funding Requests
8. No additional funding needed.

**Goal 10:** Continue assessment of Internet and hybrid/blended courses.

1. Objectives
2. Instructors teaching Internet and hybrid/blended courses will work together to evaluate their courses to insure course objectives and college quality standards are met.
3. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
4. Assessment forms for Fall 2015 – Summer 2017 Internet and hybrid instructors/course combinations are submitted and reviewed.

1. Additional Funding Requests
2. No additional funding needed.

**Goal 11:** Develop an improved help system for distance education students and faculty to replace webcthelp email.

1. Objectives
2. Develop an interface that will help students and faculty clarify problems they are encountering.
3. Develop a distribution system that will direct requests for assistance to the appropriate department or person.
4. Develop a tracking system that helps to insure requests for assistance are met in a timely manner.

1. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
   1. The college’s email based distance education technical support system is replaced by a system with the characteristics described in the objectives.
2. Additional Funding Requests
3. No additional funding requested at this time.

**Goal 12:** Conduct needs assessment related to lecture capture resources and aging interactive videoconference equipment.

1. Objectives
2. Determine the state of existing interactive videoconference resources.
3. Determine the state of existing lecture capture resources.
4. Determine current use of both resources.
5. Explore possibilities for expanded use of both resources to meet college-wide needs.
6. Explore alternatives to current approaches and resources that could benefit the college.
7. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
8. A concise assessment report is prepared addressing items stated in the objectives, and recommending any changes that should be considered.
9. Additional Funding Requests
   1. No additional funding requested at this time. However, the college should be prepared to repair or replace a VC unit in the event that failure interferes with scheduled class meetings.

**Goal 13:** Explore the need for LMS Upgrade

1. Objectives
2. Determine benefits associated with upgrading to a SaaS LMS model.
3. Determine additional costs associated with such an upgrade.
4. Compare benefits of Canvas, Blackboard SaaS.
5. Seek faculty input on an LMS upgrade.
6. Method of Assessment - The objectives will be met when
7. The benefits of different LMS options are understood and communicated to faculty for consideration.
8. Additional Funding Requests
   1. No additional funding requested at this time. Blackboard Learn hosted on JSCC servers ($50,541.77) provides adequate service, but migration to a cloud based service model seems inevitable. The annual cost to transition appears to be $120,000 - $150,000, annually. Enhanced recording functionally provided by the transition could eliminate the need for Tegrity ($37,202.00), but this has not been proven. More research is needed to determine the best course of action.