

## **PART V - Distance Education**

Continued development and use of technology to create educational opportunities enhance the quality of instruction remains a priority of Jefferson State Community College. Distance learning methodologies provide the flexibility of scheduling that many two-year college students need and allow the college to maximize the use of its resources.

### **Goal IV-1: Provide Effective Interactive Videoconference Classrooms.**

#### **Objective V-1-1: Upgrade Interactive Videoconference Units.**

The college has interactive videoconference (IVC) classrooms at all locations. Polycom units used to connect IVC classrooms are meeting college needs. The college will replace IVC units as needed, and has short term solutions in place to cover equipment failure without causing long-term interruptions in the ability to deliver instruction. The college should consider options that permit remote scheduling and automated connection as equipment is upgraded.

#### **Objective V-1-2: Upgrade Presentation and Lecture Capture Equipment in IVC Classrooms.**

Document cameras and computers are used to deliver instructional content in IVC courses, and will be upgraded as needed to insure effective presentations. These tools also provide a platform for lecture capture in IVC rooms, creating instructional content that can be delivered online to enhance instruction. The college will outfit IVC classrooms with equipment needed to facilitate lecture capture.

Projectors and monitors provide the means for visual interaction, and will be upgraded as needed to insure effective meetings. The possibility of replacing projectors with large flat-panel monitors will be considered.

### **Goal V-2: Upgrade infrastructure and technology for the expansion of distance learning.**

#### **Objective V-2-1: Upgrade Learning Management System.**

The learning management system (LMS) was upgraded from WebCT to Blackboard CE 8 in Fall 2008. Blackboard CE 8 has provided a reliable platform for distance education course delivery, and has been well received by faculty and students. The college will keep abreast of changes in the LMS market and will upgrade as needed to insure effective and consistent delivery of distance education courses.

**Objective V-2-2: Upgrade LMS and Lecture Capture Servers.**

The college will upgrade its LMS and lecture capture servers to insure that adequate capacity is available to meet growth in distance education offerings and increased use of these tools in traditional courses. The IT department will explore the possibility of virtualizing these servers.

**Objective V-2-3: Continue to study emerging and improved technologies.**

All college personnel involved in distance learning technologies will continue to be encouraged to participate in staff development activities, with the goal of maintaining currency and relevancy in instructional technology.

**Objective V-2-4: Evaluate and upgrade classroom technology to facilitate creation of online course materials.**

The availability of document cameras, microphones and computers in classrooms provides opportunities for instructors to create online learning materials while providing classroom instruction. This includes recorded class meetings that students can watch asynchronously online. The college will work with departments to upgrade classroom technology as needed.

**Objective IV-2-5: Evaluate new technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification in distance education courses.**

The college will research new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification to demonstrate that a student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.

### **Goal V-3: Develop resources for distance education faculty and students.**

#### **Objective V-3-1: Ensure effective support for faculty and students.**

With the growth in distance education courses, and increased use of Blackboard in traditional courses, there is increased need for technical support. College instructional technology specialists currently provide technical support through a dedicated email account available to faculty, staff and students. While this has proven effective, the college will explore other options that will increase the effectiveness of its technical support system.

Links to resources for Blackboard and Tegrity are also available through the Distance Education Resources webpage on the college website. These resources are updated as upgrades occur. The Distance Education Resources webpage also contains helpful links to tutoring services, academic advising, ADA resources, bookstores, library services, etc. provides quick access to these resources and increases awareness of the online and videoconferencing tutoring opportunities available. A link to the Distance Education Resources webpage is included on the Blackboard course list page, and is included within distance education courses.

#### **Objective V-3-2: Continue to provide faculty training opportunities.**

The Distance Education Division will continue to provide training and development opportunities for faculty. The division maintains an online training course in Blackboard for instructors who use, or want to use, Blackboard in their courses. The course will continue to be updated and further developed. Written instruction and tutorials available through the Distance Education Webpage will be upgraded, and on-site training workshops will be provided. Instructional technology specialists will provide ongoing individual assistance to faculty as requested.

### **Goal V-4: Enhance the distance education curriculum.**

#### **Objective V-4-1: Continue to provide motivation for instructors to develop and teach online courses.**

The college's commitment to considering the interests of distance education faculty will continue through 1) its efforts to provide compensation for creating distance education courses, 2) course ownership policy, 3) maintaining caps on class sizes, 4) support for flexible schedules and office hours, 5) providing updated computers, software, and hardware, 6) providing funds for professional development on IAP plans and 7) including distance education faculty in the planning process. This will be an ongoing process.

**Objective V-4-2: Increase the number of career and technical courses and programs available online where appropriate.**

Preparing students for immediate employment is a primary focus of career and technical programs. It continues to be extremely important to provide students with greater access to quality educational programs. The college will continue to develop career and technical courses and work toward providing students the opportunity to complete entire career and technical degrees online. This is an ongoing effort.

**Objective V-4-3: Conduct comparability and effectiveness evaluations of distance education courses at JSCC.**

Individual courses will be evaluated upon development and periodically thereafter to ensure integrity and quality, as well as comparability, of distance education courses. The Distance Education Course Evaluation form will continue to be used in this process.

In addition, student Evaluations of the Instructor and the Online Student Survey will serve as a needs assessment that will enable us to identify weak areas in our distance education program and address these needs. Faculty will continue to be polled periodically in order to address their needs and concerns. Comparability and effectiveness of distance education courses will be evaluated regularly.