

# Substantive Change Proposal

**College of the Sequoias**

**Addition of Distance Education Programs**

Presented to the

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

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**Table of Contents**

A. Description of the proposed change and reasons for it 1

Brief Description of the College of the Sequoias 1

A.I Description of the Proposed Change 3

A.2 Evidence of a clear relationship to the institution’s stated mission 6

A.3 Discussion of the rationale for the change 6

B. A description of the program to be offered if the substantive change involves a new education program, or change in delivery method 6

B.1 The educational purposes of the program are clear and appropriate 7

B.2 The proposed program meets eligibility requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies related to student learning programs and services and resources7

C. A description of the planning process which led to the request for the change 8

C.1 Evidence of the change’s relationship to planning, evaluation, and stated mission8

C.2 Assessment of needs and resources 9

C.3 Anticipated effect of the proposed change on the institution10

C.4 A clear statement of the intended benefits that will result from the change10

D. Evidence of Human, Administrative, Financial, and Physical Resources Support for the Proposed Change 11

D.1 Adequate and accessible student support services Library and Technology Resources 11

D.2 Sufficient and qualified faculty, management and support staffing Administrative Capacity12

D.3 Professional development for faculty and staff to effect the change13

D.4 Appropriate equipment and facilities14

D.5 Evidence of sustainable financial resources including the initial and long term amount and sources of funding for the proposed change and an analysis of the fiscal impact on the institution’s budget14

D.6 Comparative analysis of the budget, enrollment and resources, identifying new or reallocated funds 14

D.7 Evidence of plans for monitoring achievement of the desired outcomes of the proposed changes 14

D.8 Evaluation and assessment of student success, retention and completion 15

E. Evidence that the Institution Has Received Internal or External Approvals16

E.1 Clear statements of what faculty, administrative, governing board or regulatory agency approvals are needed and evidence that they have been obtained. 16

E.2 Legal Requirements have been met 16

E.3 Governing Board action to approve the change and budget detail supporting the change16

F. Evidence that each Eligibility Requirement will be still be fulfilled specific to the change17

F.1 Authority17

F.2 Mission 17

F.3 Governing Board18

F.4 Chief Executive Officer18

F.5 Administrative Capacity18

F.6 Operational Status18

F.7 Degrees18

F.8 Educational Programs19

F.9 Academic Credit19

F.10 Student Learning and Achievement 19

F.11 General Education 20

F.12 Academic Freedom20

F.13 Faculty20

F.14 Student Services21

F.15 Admissions 21

F.16 Information and Learning Resources 21

F.17 Financial Resources 21

F.18 Financial Accountability 22

F.19 Institutional Planning and Evaluation 22

F.20 Integrity in Communication with the Public 22

F.21 Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission 22

G. Evidence that each Accreditation Standard will be still be fulfilled specifically related to the change and that all relevant Commission policies are addressed 23

G.1 Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness 23

I.A. Mission 23

I.B. Institutional Effectiveness 23

G.2 Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services 23

II.A. Instructional Programs 23

II.B. Student Support Services 25

II.C. Library and Learning Support Services 27

G.3 Standard III: Resources27

III.A. Human Resources 27

III. B. Physical Resources 28

III.C. Technology Resources 28

III.D. Financial Resources 29

G.4 Standard IV: Leadership and Governance 29

IVA. Decision-Making Roles and Processes 29

IV.B. Board and Administrative Organization 29

Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education30

Appendix A: Complete list of all Programs Approved for Online Delivery 32

Appendix B: Additional programs reaching 50% or more online 33

Appendix C: AP 4105 Distance Education and Student Authentication Process 35

# Sequoias Community College District

# Substantive Change Proposal

# Addition of courses that constitute 50% or more of the units in a program via Distance Education

The purpose of this proposal is to request approval for offering 50 additional programs at College of the Sequoias where 50% or more of units can be taken via Distance Education (DE).

# A. Description of the proposed change and reasons for it

## Brief Description of the College of the Sequoias

College of the Sequoias (COS) is a public two-year community college located in Visalia, California, with centers located in the surrounding communities of Hanford and Tulare. The current enrollment of COS is over 13,000 students, and the District offers a variety of transfer, vocational and community-based classes.

In 1926, College of the Sequoias was originally established as Visalia Junior College and was a department in the city’s high school. Its mission at that time was to provide inexpensive, lower-division college education to local high school graduates who intended to transfer to a traditional four-year college. Visalia Junior College was later expanded and the Visalia campus was built in 1938. In 1949, a separate district was created and was renamed College of the Sequoias Community College District.

College of the Sequoias serves the communities of: Corcoran, Exeter, Hanford, Farmersville, Lindsay, Orosi, Three Rivers, Tulare, Woodlake, and Visalia. In addition to the Visalia Campus, the District has operated an outreach site in Hanford for nearly 30 years and a center site in Tulare since spring 2012.

College of the Sequoias is part of California's public community college system of 112 campuses across the state. The District's Mission is focused on helping our diverse student population achieve their transfer and/or occupational objectives and advancing the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region.

COS is a fully accredited California Community College serving Tulare and Kings Counties in the middle of California's vast San Joaquin Valley. It offers 156 certificate and degrees (84 certificates and 72 AA/AS degree programs) in a variety of vocational, technical and academic disciplines. The District’s programs articulate with both University of California and California State University systems, as well as private colleges and universities. The District’s student body is diverse. College of the Sequoias has seen a significant increase in the enrollment of Latino and low-income students who are the first in their families to attempt higher education. The District includes large numbers of migrant workers and their families, chronically high unemployment, high rates of poverty, and low levels of educational attainment. A large number of residents are from homes where English is not spoken as the primary language.

Distance Education courses and programs at College of the Sequoias adhere to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Policy on Distance and Correspondence Education. Distance Education courses have equivalent quality, accountability and focus on student outcomes to face-to-face courses. Development, implementation and evaluation of Distance Education courses and all courses takes place within College of the Sequoias Mission. Approval criteria for courses and programs must adhere to Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and includes appropriateness to the Mission, need, quality, feasibility, and compliance.

Distance Education courses are developed, implemented and evaluated in the same way as face-to-face courses. All courses follow the Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and Administrative Procedure 4020 [[E2]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E2%20AP%204020%20-%20Program%20Development,%20Approval,%20and%20Modification.pdf) and 4022 [[E3]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E3%20AP-4022%20Curriculum-Course%20Development%20Modification%20and%20Approval.pdf) on curriculum, course and program development. Courses are updated every five years (CTE every two years). Distance Education courses and all courses must be approved at the department and division level, by the Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, Board of Trustees and submitted for approval to the Chancellor’s Office.

Distance Education courses, and all courses, have clearly defined and appropriate student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are reviewed and approved through the curriculum approval process. In addition, student learning outcomes assessments are evaluated and discussed in annual program reviews, including distance education.

The District provides the appropriate resources and structure to support outcomes and to demonstrate students achieve these outcomes through the three-year assessment cycle. Assessment is discussed on an annual basis through the program review process. Resources are allocated through the resource allocation process based on annual program reviews as described in the COS Resource Allocation Manual [[E4]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E4%20COS%20Resource%20Allocation%20%20Manual%202014.pdf). Distance education courses are included in the assessment cycle, program review and resource allocation process.

College of the Sequoias has offered distance education classes since 1995 initiated by a handful of dedicated faculty. Distance education class enrollments continued to grow over the decade between 1995 and 2005 and in response to the charge of the framers of the COS

Educational Master Plan (2005-2006) [[E5]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E5%20Educational%20Master%20Plan%202005-06.pdf), the college examined growth in distance education with the intention to “…increase student access as well as the ability of COS to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of businesses within our District (p. 50)”. COS identified our commitment to meeting the educational needs of our students in our Accreditation Self Study (2006) [[E6]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E6%20Accreditation%20Self%20Study%20Sept.%202006.pdf) and Accreditation mid-term report of 2009 [[E7]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E7%202009%20Accreditation%20Mid-Term%20Report-final.pdf) by describing our courses and programs offered at numerous sites, at different times, and using different distance education methodologies.

To advance the implementation of the Master Plan and to support the needs of our students as identified in our Accreditation Self Study and Five-Year Strategic Plan, the District created and filled a fulltime faculty position, Distance Education Coordinator, in Fall 2007. COS faculty has responded positively to the District’s commitment to distance education by increasing distance education course offerings from 27 online courses in the 2005-2006 academic year to 113 online courses in 2009-2010. Course offerings decreased between 2010 and 2013 due to the budget crisis. Currently, divisions across campus continue to schedule online classes, including Business, Consumer Family Studies, English/Fine Arts, I&T, Math, Counseling, Fire Technology, Library, Nursing, and Social Sciences. Instructors schedule classes in three main formats: (1) entirely online; (2) online with orientation; and (3) hybrid (requiring scheduled meetings in addition to online activity). The table below indicates the number of sections offered in the Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Summer 2014, Fall, 2013, and Fall 2014. Distance Education enrollments account for about 7% of all District FTES.

***Number of Distance Education Courses Offered by Semester***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Semester** | **Online Sections** |
| Spring 2013 | 85 |
| Spring 2014 | 96 |
| Summer 2013 | 0 (no summer school) |
| Summer 2014 | 20 |
| Fall 2013 | 91 |
| Fall 2014 | 93 |

***Distance Education FTES by year***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **DE FTES** | **COS FTES** |
| 2012-2013 | 627.4 | 8,711 |
| 2013-2014 | 615.43 | 8,984 |

## A.I Description of the Proposed Change

In July 2011, COS submitted a Substantive Change [[E8]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E8%20Distance%20Education%20May%202011.pdf) proposal and received approval from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) to offer 23 degrees and certificates with 50 percent or more of the classes for those degrees and certificates offered through distance education (see table below).

***Certificates and Degrees approved for Distance Education* (Appendix A)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Type** |
| Accounting | Certificate |
| Law Office Clerk/Receptionist | Certificate |
| Real Estate | Certificate |
| Child Development – Assistant | Certificate |
| Child Development – Associate Teacher | Certificate |
| Fashion Merchandising | Certificate |
| Accounting | AS |
| Business | AS |
| Paralegal | AS |
| Health Education | AS |
| Physical Education | AS |
| Administration of Justice: Corrections | AS |
| Liberal Arts (Arts & Humanities) | AA |
| Liberal Arts (Communication Studies) | AA |
| Liberal Studies (Natural Science) | AA |
| Liberal Studies (Social and Behavioral Sciences) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Arts & Humanities) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Business) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Communication Studies) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Elementary Teaching Preparation) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Math and Science) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Social and Behavioral Sciences) | AA |

Since our Substantive Change approval in July 2011, the District has monitored all courses and programs approved through the curriculum process with distance learning addendums (Appendix B). There are currently 50 additional degrees and certificates that have the potential for 50 percent or more delivery through distance education (see table below). College of the Sequoias students could complete nearly all general education requirements through distance education classes, so distance education delivery of most of our degrees and certificates is plausible. The addition of distance education delivery to course offerings does not supplant traditional face-to-face courses but is in addition to current delivery methods. This proposal does not involve any new educational programs.

**The District is requesting that the additional 50 programs be approved for 50% or more Distance Education via the Substantive Change proposal.**

The 50 additional degrees potentially offering 50 percent or more of courses via DE are as follows:

***Additional programs reaching 50% or more online* (Appendix B)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Name** | **Type** | **% of program approved for DE** |
| Administration of Justice | AST | 100% |
| AG Business Management | AS | 69% |
| Administration of Justice - Law Enforcement | AS | 80% |
| American Sign Language | AS | 100% |
| Animal Science | AS | 50% |
| Architectural History | Certificate | 100% |
| Art | AA | 50% |
| Art History | AAT | 65% |
| Biology | AS | 90% |
| Business Financial Recordkeeping | Certificate | 100% |
| Business | Certificate | 73% |
| Business | AS | 53% |
| Chemistry | AS | 77% |
| Child Development | AS | 75% |
| Communication Studies | AAT | 95% |
| Communication | Certificate | 100% |
| Computer Applications | Certificate | 49% |
| Computer Programming and Information Systems | Certificate | 72% |
| Computer Programming and Information Systems | AS | 103% |
| Construction Inspection | AS | 65% |
| Consumer Family Studies | AS | 85% |
| Dairy Science | AS | 65% |
| Dance | AS | 80% |
| Dramatic Arts – Acting | AA | 55% |
| Dramatic Arts - Technical | AA | 57% |
| Engineering | AS | 58% |
| English | AAT | 92% |
| Fashion Design | AS | 75% |
| Fashion Merchandising | AS | 75% |
| Fire Technology | AS | 68% |
| Geology | AST | 78% |
| Human Services | AS | 50% |
| Industrial Maintenance Technology | AS | 50% |
| Landscape Management | AS | 50% |
| Legal Secretary/Law Office Clerk | Certificate | 54% |
| Mathematics | AS | 80% |
| Mathematics | AST | 90% |
| Music | AAT | 57% |
| Music | AA | 63% |
| Paralegal | Certificate | 61% |
| Physical Science | AS | 88% |
| Physics | AS | 73% |
| Plant Science | AS | 70% |
| Political Science | AAT | 97% |
| Psychology | AAT | 103% |
| Sociology | AAT | 98% |
| Spanish | AAT | 100% |
| Sports Medicine | AS | 92% |
| Transfer Studies (Agriculture and Environmental Science) | AA | 100% |
| Welding | AS | 60% |

## A.2 Evidence of a clear relationship to the institution’s stated mission

There are three areas of the District’s Mission. First, College of the Sequoias is a comprehensive community college district focused on student learning that leads to productive work, lifelong learning and community involvement. Secondly, the District affirms that our mission is to help our diverse student population achieve its transfer and/or occupational objectives and to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region. Lastly, College of the Sequoias is committed to supporting students' mastery of basic skills and to providing access to programs and services that foster student success.

The first step in preparing the District’s Master Plan(educational and facilities) is an analysis of effectiveness in which the District compares its current status to its Mission (internal scans) and an analysis of projected demographics, legislative, and economic changes (external scans). These data, along with other relevant college documents, are used to identify challenges and opportunities. Based on these data, the District developed a long-term Master Plan. Through the process of developing the comprehensive master plan, the District develops District Goals that describe how it intends to address the identified current and anticipated challenges. In the recently developed 2015-2025 Master Plan [[E9]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E9%20COS%202015-2025%20Master%20Plan%20%201-5_revised_2.pdf) the District proposes to “increase student enrollment relative to population growth and education and workforce development needs.” Distance Education is one of the ways the District can increase enrollment and provide increased access to higher education.

## A.3 Discussion of the rationale for the change

The District is responding to a need to provide a delivery option for our diverse student body. The people of Kings and Tulare counties are underserved in easy access to higher education compared to most of California’s population. The District Mission includes the goal “to help our diverse student population achieve their transfer and, or occupational objectives and to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region.” As our distance education enrollment growth (from approximately 78 online/hybrid enrollments in Fall 2007 to approximately 2700 enrollments in Fall 2014) suggests, distance education, especially in the form of online or hybrid classes, provides critical access to college classes for those living in the COS district which encompasses an immense geographic range with widely scattered communities from the Giant Forest in the Sequoia National Park, to Alpaugh and Sultana in the San Joaquin Valley. Many of our online students select online classes due to challenges with reliable regional transportation, family, and work obligations that make it difficult to attend classes on campus at particular times of the day. Distance Education programs are intended to supplement, rather than supplant, traditional delivery of our educational programs.

# B. A description of the program to be offered if the substantive change involves a new education program, or change in delivery method

The District is not proposing any new programs or courses in the distance education modality. All courses and programs previously existed and have added distance education as a form of delivery, Distance education is in addition to traditional face-to-face classes.

## B.1 The educational purposes of the program are clear and appropriate

The Distance Education Committee at College of the Sequoias (DECOS) has developed a Distance Education Plan [[E10]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E10%20COS_DE_Plan_Jan_15.pdf) that provides an outline for continuous improvement of distance education at College of Sequoias within an environment of collegiality and with respect for Academic Freedom. The District and DECOS is committed to engaging in a dynamic process of planning and assessment that is informed by research and facilitated by communication in order to develop outstanding distance education opportunities for all COS students. The courses and programs proposed are intended to supplement exisiting programs and to provide alternate access for students.

## B.2 The proposed program meets eligibility requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies related to student learning programs and services and resources

Distance Education courses and programs at College of the Sequoias adhere to the ACCJC Policy on Distance and Correspondence Education. Distance Education courses have equivalent quality, accountability and focus on student outcomes to face-to-face courses.

Development, implementation and evaluation of Distance Education courses and all courses takes place within College of the Sequoias Mission. Approval criteria for courses and programs must adhere to Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and includes appropriateness to the Mission, need, quality, feasibility, and compliance.

Distance Education courses are developed, implemented and evaluated in the same way as face-to-face courses. All courses follow the Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and Administrative Procedure 4020 [[E2]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E2%20AP%204020%20-%20Program%20Development,%20Approval,%20and%20Modification.pdf) and 4022 [[E3]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E3%20AP-4022%20Curriculum-Course%20Development%20Modification%20and%20Approval.pdf) on curriculum, course and program development. Courses are updated every five years (CTE every two years). Distance Education courses, and all courses, must be approved at the department and division level, by the Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, Board of Trustees and submitted for approval to the Chancellor’s Office.

Distance Education courses, and all courses, have clearly defined and appropriate student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are reviewed and approved through the curriculum approval process. In addition, student learning outcomes assessments are evaluated and discussed in annual program reviews, including distance education.

The District provides the appropriate resources and structure to support outcomes and to demonstrate students achieve these outcomes through the three-year assessment cycle. Assessment is discussed on an annual basis through the program review process. Resources are allocated through the resource allocation process based on the annual program review as described in the COS Resource Allocation Manual [[E4]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E4%20COS%20Resource%20Allocation%20%20Manual%202014.pdf). Distance education courses are included in the assessment cycle, program review and resource allocation process.

College of the Sequoias submitted a Distance Education Substantive Change proposal in 2011 and 23 programs were approved for Distance Education delivery by the ACCJC. The District’s Curriculum Committee and Distance Education committee review all programs annually to determine which programs are close to meeting the 50% distance education metric. The District is submitting a substantive change proposal for 50 programs.

The Distance Education Coordinator, Distance Education Committee, and the Curriculum Committee track all courses with distance education addendum approval and calculate the percentage of courses offered through distance education. Courses cannot be approved for distance education without approval of the Distance Education Coordinator who verifies the calculations prior to approval.

College of the Sequoias has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in distance education courses is the same person who participates, completes the course and receives the academic credit. Administrative Procedure 4105 [[E11]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E11%20AP%204105%20-%20Distance%20Education%20and%20Student%20Authentication%20Process.pdf) (Appendix C) establishes the procedures for the student authentication process. The District uses secure credentialing/login and password with applicable course management systems for student authentication via Blackboard. Blackboard secures credentialing/login and password using the Banner ID and randomly generated password retrieved from Banner. In addition, photo ID authentication is used at hybrid sessions in order to receive passwords for other course management systems. Students are notified of protection of student privacy at registration and policies are published in the General Catalog [[E12]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E12%202014-2015%20General%20Catalog.pdf).

# C. A description of the planning process which led to the request for the change

This Substantive Change proposal supports the College of the Sequoias Model for Integrated Planning and depicts how the components of planning link to one another in a cycle of evaluation, development of goals and objectives, resource allocation, plan implementation, and reevaluation. The District demonstrates institutional effectiveness and practices a cycle of continuous quality improvement through the systematic and routine implementation of specific planning processes. Following the graphic (below) is a narrative explanation of the planning processes summarized in the graphic that starts with the District’s Mission.

## C.1 Evidence of the change’s relationship to planning, evaluation, and stated mission

As shown in the graphic, the analysis of data is central to the College of the Sequoias Model for Integrated Planning and serves as an important tool in each of the District’s planning processes.

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Institutional Program Review captures unit-level planning for instructional, student service, and administrative units. These Institutional Program Reviews describe how each unit will contribute to the achievement of the District Objectives and includes an analysis of unit-specific data, the identification of strengths and weaknesses, a report on prior year Actions, a link to the assessment of student learning, the development of Actions for the coming year, and the identification of resources, if any, that are needed to support the initiatives. If a District Objective or Action requires funding, the responsible party for that Action includes the funding request through program review and/or through a process that connects to the Strategic Plan. Unit program reviews are completed annually.

The Distance Education Committee at COS (DECOS) is a standing committee of the Academic Senate and plays a central role in the decision-making processes at the District. DECOS developed a Distance Education Plan [[E10]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E10%20COS_DE_Plan_Jan_15.pdf) that includes connection to the mission, planning and assessment. The plan is being vetted through the participatory governance process.

The mission of DECOS is to extend educational opportunities to a diverse population who prefer or have need of alternative methods of delivery. These approaches to instruction outside the traditional classroom setting provide greater opportunities for students to obtain the education they need to achieve their goals, while continuing with demanding personal and employment schedules.

## C.2 Assessment of needs and resources

Resource Allocation follows the development of the short-term plans. This process ensures that Actions identified in the Strategic Plan and Institutional Program Reviews are funded to the extent possible. Resources for Distance Education courses, and all courses, are allocated through the planning process.

Outcome Assessments occur annually through the documentation and analysis of progress made toward achieving the District Goals. For both certificate and degree programs, faculty participate through the formal Student Learning Outcomes assessments that all District faculty are required to do for continuous quality improvement. These Outcome Assessments, which include distance education courses and programs, are consolidated and documented in the College of the Sequoias Annual Report on the Master Plan. The annual report summarizes the current year’s achievements, analyzes progress toward achievement of the District Goals, and directs the District’s Actions in the coming year.

The decision to offer courses at a distance are made at the division level including the identification of appropriate modalities of delivery and suitability for distance education courses for each individual certificate and degree. The Distance Education Coordinator is available for consultation to assist in these types of decisions. In the program review process, all divisions are required to examine success and retention data for distance education sections and compare to non-distance sections of the same course. Additionally, all divisions engage in the process of developing and assessing course outcomes to inform instructional decisions.

All distance education courses receive separate Distance Education Coordinator and Curriculum Committee approval for distance education delivery. The coordinator and the Curriculum Committee must approve a Distance Learning Addendum that addresses regular and effective contact, how a course promotes the District Mission, and adaptations of delivery for the online environment. Once passed by the coordinator and Curriculum Committee, all curriculum proposals must be approved by the Academic Senate and Vice President of Academic Services and require subsequent Board of Trustees approval.

## C.3 Anticipated effect of the proposed change on the institution

Distance education has been offered at COS since 1995. The courses in each of the programs have added a distance education addendum but not all have been offered online to date. It is expected that addition of online courses will increase enrollment for the District and provide access for students who would otherwise be challenged to attend one of the three campuses. The District does not have any programs that are offered solely online and most online sections are limited to 20% of total offerings. The District expects improvement in completion rates through offering of the distance education courses as students will have increased access to high demand classes.

## C.4 A clear statement of the intended benefits that will result from the change

The District is responding to a need to provide a delivery option for our diverse student body. The people of Kings and Tulare counties are underserved in easy access to higher education compared to most of California’s population. The District Mission includes the goal “to help our diverse student population achieve their transfer and, or occupational objectives and to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region.” As our distance education enrollment growth (from approximately 78 online/hybrid enrollments in Fall 2007 to approximately 2700 enrollments in Fall 2014) suggests, distance education, especially in the form of online or hybrid classes, provides critical access to college classes for those living in the COS district which encompasses an immense geographic range with widely scattered communities from the Giant Forest in the Sequoia National Park, to Alpaugh and Sultana in the San Joaquin Valley. Many of our online students select online classes due to challenges with reliable regional transportation, family, and work obligations that make it difficult to attend classes on campus at particular times of the day. Distance Education programs are intended to supplement, rather than supplant, traditional delivery of our educational programs.

# D. Evidence of Human, Administrative, Financial, and Physical Resources Support for the Proposed Change

## D.1 Adequate and accessible student support services

Students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning. Student Services information, such as financial aid, admissions and records, and counseling are also available to students online. Students can apply to the college, register, apply for financial aid, contact a counselor, and order transcripts online. The COS catalog is available online. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) also provides online access to students for catalog searching, to online full-text articles and e-books, to librarians through the “Ask a Librarian” service. Online tutoring was available beginning in the fall 2011 semester. We have also established a Student Computer Helpdesk available online and staffed during LRC hours.

A relatively small number of students experience difficulty getting started with Bb the first time. To help students, we have developed a number of support structures. The general online orientation to COS contains information about Bb (and online classes). In addition, students can find login information online in text and video tutorial format or get help logging in at the Student Helpdesk in the library or Welcome Center. The Distance Education Coordinator also provides one-to-one student support as needed and gives face-to-face orientations in classrooms when invited to do so.

Information on Distance Education is provided in the General Catalog published online (p. 35) [[E13]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E13%20P.35%20of%20General%20Catalog.pdf) as well as on the COS Online Learning website [[E14]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E14%20COS%20Online%20Website.pdf): Online Learning Readiness; Blackboard; and Getting Started with Online Classes. The Blackboard log-in page provides information to students about logging in to the system, as well as course management system help.

## Library and Technology Resources

The resources of the institutional library system and related learning resource centers are adequate to support the needs and meet the goals of any DE program. The Learning Resource Center also provides:

* Online access to students for catalog searching, full-text articles, and e-books
* Librarians through the “Ask a Librarian” service
* Online tutoring was available beginning in the fall 2011 semester
* Student Computer Helpdesk available online and staffed during LRC hours.

In addition to the library and its targeted services, all students may access the tutoring services available in the District. These services are available for a variety of areas:

1. Math Tutorial Center: Trained student tutors and math faculty are available for most classes five days a week.
2. Writing Center: Trained student tutors and English faculty are available five days per week.
3. Other Drop-in and One-on-One Tutoring: tutoring for multiple subjects, as well as one-on-one tutoring. Students are scheduled with a qualified tutor to meet on a regular basis at no cost. Small group drop-in tutoring is also available.

## D.2 Sufficient and qualified faculty, management and support staffing

The Distance Education Coordinator (a full-time, tenured faculty member) provides Blackboard (Bb) management support and all online pedagogy training. The Distance Education Coordinator reports to the VP for Academic Services and is a co-chair or member of several governance committees including the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee. All full-time and adjunct faculty teaching DE classes are members of their respective academic divisions and report to the Division Chair.

The COS Distance Education Committee (DECOS) is co-chaired by the Distance Education Coordinator and the Director of the Learning Resource Center. DECOS reviews and recommends policies and procedures for the conduct of online instruction and the operation of online courses, as well as makes recommendations to the Academic Senate regarding priorities as they relate to instructional support for online and hybrid courses. DECOS provides input to the Academic Senate on the development of policies and academic initiatives as they relate to online courses and serves as a discussion forum for pedagogical issues regarding the teaching, learning, assessment, ADA/504/508 compliance, and student support services for online and hybrid courses

Sequoias Community College District Board Policies in regard to recruitment and hiring are followed for all instructional faculty. In addition, all distance education programs adhere to all District processes, including participatory governance, academic honesty, and student learning outcomes for academic coursework and clinical affiliations that include objective measurable criteria.

The distance education programs are subject to the same academic and technical support afforded all other programs on campus. The workload policies for online instructors are consistent with other programs system wide and follow the District Board Policies of academic freedom as well as program, curriculum and course development.

## Administrative Capacity

The administrative staff is outlined in the organizational chart [[E15]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E15%20Acad.%20Svcs.%20Org%20Chart%202014-15-rev.%20Jan.%202015.pdf) for the District. The District has sufficient administrative capacity. All administrative personnel meet or exceed the minimum qualifications for the positions they hold. The Distance Education Coordinator reports directly to the Vice President of Academic Services. All DE instructors are members of an academic division which is overseen by a division chair who reports to an academic dean.

## D.3 Professional development for faculty and staff to effect the change

The District and its teacher associations agreed to institute an online teaching certification requirement for full-time and adjunct instructors in 2011. Prior to 2011, 82 instructors were qualified to teach online classes. Sixty-five additional instructors have been certified to teach online through the COS in-house Online Teaching Certification Program (OTCP) [[E16]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E16%20one_sqot.pdf) since 2011. The OTCP is based on the newly-adopted Online Education Initiative Standards for Online Teaching. It is a 12-week comprehensive program facilitated by the Distance Education Coordinator and includes instruction in student support issues related to online learning, developing active learning structures, communication strategies, legal and ethical issues related to online teaching and learning, basic technology literacy, and using the course management system.

There is no difference between the hiring process for instructors who teach online and those who do not, but instructors must be qualified to teach online by meeting an online teaching certification requirement before they can teach online at COS. The Human Resources Department keeps official online teaching certification records. No faculty member may be scheduled for a DE class without proof of certification or equivalence. No faculty member will be penalized for not offering distance education courses or forced to convert courses to the online environment.

The Distance Education Plan [[E10]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E10%20COS_DE_Plan_Jan_15.pdf) establishes outcomes for support of professional development for faculty:

* Establish an online teaching certification equivalency process
* Support the Online Teaching Certification Program (OTCP)
* Provide Bb management support
* Help faculty be knowledgeable about learning theories in order to make effective decisions about the use of online teaching methodologies that require active participation on the part of students and faculty, provide multiple methods of content delivery and student engagement, and incorporate a variety of student learning assessment methods.
* Help faculty be technical proficient in the use of the course management system and other required technologies.
* Help faculty be aware of communication standards for online teaching that support the COS Regular and Effective Contact policy and good teaching practices.
* Help faculty be aware of digital equity issues and provide support and direction for students who encounter daunting technology thresholds.
* Provide faculty with course review support that results in quality online course offerings
* Provide faculty with formative and summative course evaluation tools
* Provide technology failure policies and procedures
* Ensure that the COS policy on Academic Freedom applies to DE
* Measure Faculty Satisfaction

## D.4 Appropriate equipment and facilities

Distance education programs use a combination of physical facilities and virtual classrooms of sufficient quality and quantity to provide an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The classrooms used for hybrid class sessions are smart classrooms that provide a full range of instructional media. The virtual classroom space exists via the Blackboard Learning system. Blackboard is fully hosted by Blackboard, supported by the Distance Education Coordinator, and Computer Services technician. The Blackboard program is sufficient for content delivery, communication, and learning assessment.

1. Smart Classrooms. A smart classroom is a classroom that that has an instructor station equipped with computer and audiovisual equipment, allowing the instructor to teach using a wide variety of media. These include DVD and VHS playback, PowerPoint presentations, and more, all displayed through a data projector.
2. Blackboard Course Management System. This classroom management system allows instructors and students to view on-line information, submit assignments, conduct discussions and provide input, and test. One of the main benefits of this methodology is that it allows explicit direct instructions that can be utilized by students in meeting course objectives.

## D.5 Evidence of sustainable financial resources including the initial and long term amount and sources of funding for the proposed change and an analysis of the fiscal impact on the institution’s budget

The program planning and development activities have been used to establish the fiscal resources needed for the operation of all academic programs.

The on-going budget process includes annual program reviews for faculty-identified needs, and other program obligations related to providing appropriate levels of qualified faculty and resources to meet all program objectives. No new funds are required for the proposed change.

## D.6 Comparative analysis of the budget, enrollment and resources, identifying new or reallocated funds

There are no new or reallocated funds required for the changes requested. The Distance Education Coordinator has been part of the established budget since 2007 and no new faculty or resources are required to implement changes.

## D.7 Evidence of plans for monitoring achievement of the desired outcomes of the proposed changes

College of the Sequoias is focused on student learning that leads to productive work, lifelong learning and community involvement. In order to help our diverse student population achieve their educational and occupational goals, faculty and staff focus on the learning outcomes of our work. By researching variations in success, we adjust teaching strategies to improve student learning.

District-wide meetings have been dedicated to dialogue and implementation of SLOs for courses, and programs and at the institutional level. SLOs apply to all students regardless of the campus/site in which they enroll and regardless of mode of delivery. The Curriculum Committee, with support from faculty and division chairs, reviews all course outlines and makes curriculum recommendations to the Board of Trustees regardless of location or delivery mode. Course content, objectives, methods of evaluation and SLOs apply to all courses. The Curriculum Committee manages the curriculum development and approval process through the CurricuNet online system. Distance education outcomes are monitored in the same process and analyzed on an annual basis via the annual program review process.

All distance education courses receive separate Distance Education Coordinator (DEC) and Curriculum Committee approval for distance education delivery. The DEC and the Curriculum Committee must approve a Distance Learning Addendum (DLA) [[E17]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E17%20Current_DLA.pdf) that addresses regular and effective contact, how a class promotes the college mission, and adaptations of delivery for the online environment. Once passed by the DEC and Curriculum Committee, all curriculum proposals require approval by the Academic Senate and Vice President of Academic Services and subsequent Board of Trustees approval.

Divisions continue to be responsible for the development of programs and curriculum that meet the stated distance educational needs of students. The decision to offer courses at a distance are made at the division level including the identification of appropriate modalities of delivery and suitability for distance education courses for each individual certificate and degree. The Distance Education Coordinator is available for consultation to assist in these types of decisions. In the program review process, all divisions are required to examine success and retention data for distance education sections and compare to non-distance sections of the same course. Additionally, all divisions engage in the process of developing and assessing course outcomes to inform instructional decisions.

## D.8 Evaluation and assessment of student success, retention and completion

Success, retention and completion are assessed on an annual basis via the Student Success Scorecard, Annual Report on the Strategic Plan, District Objectives and annual program reviews. In addition, with the assistance of DECOS members, a survey was developed in the spring 2013 semester designed to ascertain what behaviors, conditions, and dispositions students and faculty felt were important to being a successful online student. The Online Success Survey was administered in the 15 day period from Thursday, April 25, 2013 to Thursday, May 09, 2013. 1,779 students rolled in online or hybrid classes during the spring 2013 semester were invited (by email from the COS Research Office) to take the survey. 165 completed responses were received to the survey during this time representing a 9% response rate.

Most survey respondents were very satisfied with their experience in online classes. 93% indicated that they would take another online class. Student comments included the following:

* I have taken many online classes at COS and they are as close to perfect as classes can get.
* During the time I took my online class. I did not see anything that needed improvement.
* It was the first online class I have ever taken and it was a wonderful experience!
* I have had only positive experiences with my online courses, and have had great instructors.
* My online class was great, I'm taking more next semester.
* I think COS is doing a good job with online classes.

Student success rates for DE classes continue to remain at lower levels than those for face-to-face classes in general. According to data from the Fall 2013 semester, 48.8% of our online classes had a better success rate or fell within 10% of the face-to-face counterpart, 44.2% have between 11% and 29% lower success than face-to-face, and 7% have a range of between 30% and 45% lower success rates than their face-to-face counterparts. One key issue that may explain the disparity of student performance found between traditional lecture and distance education courses is that many students withdraw from courses or simply stop participating. This data will serve as baseline data as the District assesses the success, retention and completion of the proposed courses and programs.

# E. Evidence that the Institution Has Received Internal or External Approvals

## E.1 Clear statements of what faculty, administrative, governing board or regulatory agency approvals are needed and evidence that they have been obtained.

At College of the Sequoias, the Board of Trustees primarily relies upon the faculty for curriculum. The Curriculum Committee, a committee of the Academic Senate, approves all courses. The Committee reports recommendations directly to the Academic Senate. The Vice President, Academic Services recommends courses and programs to the Board of Trustees and Chancellor’s Office for approval (Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and Administrative Procedures 4020 [[E2]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E2%20AP%204020%20-%20Program%20Development,%20Approval,%20and%20Modification.pdf) and 4022 [[E3]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E3%20AP-4022%20Curriculum-Course%20Development%20Modification%20and%20Approval.pdf)). Curriculum committee, Academic Senate and Board minutes are posted on the District and provide evidence for the approval of recommended courses and programs.

## E.2 Legal requirements have been met.

All courses and programs offered at College of the Sequoias go through the curriculum approval process outlined in Administrative Procedures 4020 [[E2]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E2%20AP%204020%20-%20Program%20Development,%20Approval,%20and%20Modification.pdf) and 4022 [[E3]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E3%20AP-4022%20Curriculum-Course%20Development%20Modification%20and%20Approval.pdf). Courses that will be offered via distance education are required to complete a separate Distance Learning Addendum that is approved by the Distance Education Coordinator, Curriculum Committee, and Academic Senate before being sent to the Board of Trustees.

## E.3 Governing Board action and budget detail supporting the change

All proposed courses and programs are existing programs at the District and no new financial resources are required. The Board of Trustees approves all courses and programs, including those with Distance Education Addendums. The Board minutes reflecting the approval is posted on the District website.

# F. Evidence that each Eligibility Requirement will be still be fulfilled specific to the change

## F.1 Authority

Distance Education programs meet all the Eligibility Requirements, Accrediting Standards, student learning outcomes and other curricular requirements. Specifically, in fall 2012, the District completed its standard cycle of Accreditation process under the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). In February 2013, the District was placed on Show Cause sanction. In November 2013, the District was again visited by an evaluation team representing the ACCJC. The team commended the District and reported that the institution had successfully responded to all recommendations, Standards, and Eligibility Requirements, citing only the need for additional time to complete the annual planning and assessment cycle. On February 10, 2014, College of the Sequoias received its action letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The Commission had removed COS from “show cause” status and reduced our sanction level to warning for purposes of completing the full cycle of improved processes set forth by the District. The District submitted the required warning report and is expecting to be off sanctions in February 2015.

With the important work of Accreditation response successfully fulfilled, the District has submitted this Substantive Change Proposal for Distance Education.

## F.2 Mission

College of the Sequoias Mission is defined and adopted in Board Policy 1200 [[E18]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E18%20BP%201200%20-%20Mission.pdf) and is published in the current Catalog and Schedule of Classes. The Mission supports the population served by the District and identifies its commitment to student learning, student support, and student success.

The Mission of the College of the Sequoias Community College District is:

* College of the Sequoias is a comprehensive community college district focused on student learning that leads to productive work, lifelong learning and community involvement.
* College of the Sequoias affirms that our mission is to help our diverse student population achieve its transfer and/or occupational objectives and to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region.
* College of the Sequoias is committed to supporting students' mastery of basic skills and to providing access to programs and services that foster student success.

Specifically, Distance Education programs increase student access by enhancing the Mission of the District through expansion of access to classes. These new programs provide increased access to higher education to the residents of Tulare and Kings County by offering access to certificate and degree programs fulfilling the Mission of the District.

## F.3 Governing Board

The Board of Trustees of the College of the Sequoias consists of five elected representatives from the five geographical wards that comprise the District. The Board of Trustees is the policy making body of the District. The Board of Trustees Policy Manual contains policies, duties, responsibilities, ethical conduct requirements, and structure and operating procedures for the Board. The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the policies that ensure the quality and effectiveness of student learning programs and services, and to maintain the financial stability of the District. Policies are regularly reviewed by our Board to ensure alignment with our District Mission. The Distance Education Coordinator provides an annual Distance Education report to the Board of Trustees [[E19]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E19%20Dist%20%20Education%20-%20Annual%20Report_August%20_2014.pdf).

## F.4 Chief Executive Officer

The Superintendent/President of College of the Sequoias is Stan Carrizosa. He was appointed by the Board of Trustees effective July 1, 2012. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board under the Education Code 70902 and 72400, under Title 5 regulations and Board Policy 2430 [[E20]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E20%20BP%202430%20-Delegation%20of%20Authority%20to%20Superintendent.pdf).

## F.5 Administrative Capacity

The administrative staffing is outlined in the organizational charts [[E15]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E15%20Acad.%20Svcs.%20Org%20Chart%202014-15-rev.%20Jan.%202015.pdf) for the District. The District has sufficient administrative capacity. All administrative personnel meet or exceed the minimum qualifications for the positions they hold. Their preparation and experience is scrutinized through the Management Hiring Policies [[E21]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E21%20Management%20Hiring%20Procedures%20(Revised%20Oct%206%202014).pdf) and Administrative Procedure 7120 [[E22]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E22%20AP%207120%20-%20Recruitment%20and%20Hiring.pdf).

## F.6 Operational Status

The Sequoias Community College District has been in operation since 1926. The District offers courses at the Visalia campus, the Hanford Educational Center, the Tulare College Center, online, and in various locations throughout the District. In the fall 2014, COS served over 10,000 (unduplicated headcount) students.

## F.7 Degrees

College of the Sequoias offers 156 Associate of Arts/Science degree and vocational certificates. The requirements for these degrees and certificates are published in the General Catalog [[E12]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E12%202014-2015%20General%20Catalog.pdf), are available on the District’s website, and are available as “Major Sheets” [[E23]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E23%20Major%20Sheets.pdf) from the Counseling Division.

## F.8 Educational Programs

All certificate and degree programs at the College of the Sequoias are listed in the General Catalog, which includes DE programs. These programs have been developed by specific departments and approved by the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the State Chancellor’s Office. Each program is in a recognized postsecondary field of study and contains sufficient content and rigor. In addition, each program meets the mission of the District “…to help our diverse student population achieve its transfer and/or occupational objectives and to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region.” The District also provides instruction in English and mathematics basic skills and in English as a Second Language. These courses help the District meet its mission “…to supporting students’ mastery of basic skills and to providing access to programs and services that foster student success.”

## F.9 Academic Credit

College of the Sequoias awards credit for coursework using the Carnegie Standard, as defined in Title 5 of the California Education Code, as a minimum. Generally, one unit of academic credit is awarded for one hour of lecture/discussion per week. A minimum of three hours of laboratory per week is equivalent to one unit of credit. (Board Policy 4090 [[E24]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E24%20BP%204090%20--%20Unit-Credit%20Hr%20Configuration%20Updated.pdf) and Administrative Procedure 4090 [[E25]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E25%20AP%204090%20-%20Unit%20Credit%20Hour%20Configuration.pdf))

## F.10 Student Learning and Achievement

College of the Sequoias develops and assesses student learning outcomes for its courses and programs as part of the Institutional Program Review. Resource allocation is tied to Institutional Program Review. Required analysis of student learning as part of the program review process is designed to lead to continuous quality improvement. In 2010-2011, the District created and staffed a full-time faculty coordinator position to lead curriculum and student outcomes assessment efforts across the entire District.

College of the Sequoias is focused on student learning that leads to productive work, lifelong learning and community involvement. In order to help our diverse student population achieve their educational and occupational goals, faculty and staff focus on the learning of our work. By researching variations in success, we adjust teaching strategies to improve student learning.

District-wide meetings have been dedicated to dialogue and implementation of SLOs for courses, and programs and at the institutional level. SLOs apply to all students regardless of the campus/site in which they enroll or regardless of delivery mode.

The Curriculum Committee, with support from faculty and division chairs, reviews all course outlines and makes curriculum recommendations to the Board of Trustees regardless of location or delivery mode. Course content, objectives, methods of evaluation and SLOs apply to all courses. Distance Education courses are required to have a Distance Education Addendum [[E17]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E17%20Current_DLA.pdf) that is approved by the Distance Education Coordinator and the Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee manages the curriculum development and approval process through the CurricuNet online system.

## F.11 General Education

All degree programs at College of the Sequoias require the completion of twenty-two units of general education. At least three units are chosen from each general education area: Written Communication; Oral Communication and Analytical Thinking; Natural Science; Humanities; and Social/Behavioral Science. Nine units are chosen from subject requirements: Information Competency; Dance, Intercollegiate Athletics or Physical Education activity courses; and Health and Wellness. The District General Education and Curriculum Committees are responsible for the approval of courses that meet these requirements. Courses that meet these area requirements are listed in the General Catalog [[E12]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E12%202014-2015%20General%20Catalog.pdf). The General Catalog also includes the District’s philosophy of general education. Distance education courses support students earning their General Education credits by offering alternative modes of delivery that increase student access and success.

## F.12 Academic Freedom

The Sequoias Community College District affirms and supports the basic principles of Academic Freedom as enumerated in the Association of American University Professors 1940 Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom, Sections (a), (b), and (c) and as approved by the Academic Senate (Board Policy 4030 [[E26]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E26%20BP%204030%20-%20Academic%20Freedom.pdf) and Administrative Procedure 4030 [[E27]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E27%20AP-4030%20Academic%20Freedom.pdf))

1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of appointment.
3. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public might judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

These academic freedom principles are exercised and respected through DE programs.

## F.13 Faculty

The District provides adequate full-time and adjunct faculty, along with student services counseling faculty, to ensure that instructional and support services are available to all student enrolling in DE programs. Per District policy, all faculty meet the minimum qualifications for employment as outlined in the Faculty Hiring Policy [[E28]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E28%202012%20Faculty%20Hiring%20Procedures%20(Adopted%20by%20Board%20on%20November%202012)%20(Final%20Copy).pdf). All full-time faculty and their degrees are listed in the General Catalog. Faculty duties and responsibilities are described in the COSTA Master Agreement [[E29]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E29%20COSTA%20MA%202007-2010_Oct2013%20WEB.pdf) (distributed to each faculty member and available online). Full time and adjunct faculty teaching DE programs have all met minimal certification requirements to teach at COS.

The District and teacher associations agreed to institute an online teaching certification requirement for full-time and adjunct instructors in 2011. Prior to 2011, 82 instructors were qualified to teach online classes. 65 additional instructors have been certified to teach online through the COS in-house Online Teaching Certification Program since 2011.

## F.14 Student Services

College of the Sequoias provides a comprehensive set of student services to all students, including DE students. These services are described in the General Catalog, the Schedule of Classes, and the District’s website. The District offers many programs that serve the general student body (Academic Counseling, Financial Aid, Student Health Center), as well as specialized services designed for certain student populations (Disability Resource Center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services/Cooperative Agencies Resource for Education, Cal WORKS). The student services support student learning and assist students with their matriculation. Distance Education students can receive numerous services online, on the website or via telephone.

## F.15 Admissions

College of the Sequoias’ admissions policy and procedures are clearly outlined in the General Catalog, and on the District’s website. In general, students must be 18 years or older and have graduated from high school or successfully completed the California High School Proficiency Examination or the General Education Development Test. The District may admit students under 18 years of age if there is evidence that the student will benefit from college level instruction.

## F.16 Information and Learning Resources

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is available on the Visalia Campus, Hanford Center, and Tulare College Center. LRC services, including tutorial services, access to students for catalog searching, access to online full-text articles and e-books, and access to librarians through the “Ask a Librarian” service are available to DE students. Students also have access to computers and Wi-Fi in the Learning Resource Center.

## F.17 Financial Resources

College of the Sequoias is a publicly funded institution. The majority of the unrestricted financial resources at the District’s disposal are derived from a State mandated revenue limit.

Financial resources arrive in the form of local taxes, student enrollment fees and apportionment from the State. The District has an established budget development process that includes the publication of a Budget Book [[E30]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E30%20Budget_Book_14-15%20FINAL.pdf), which is the Final Budget. The Vice President, Administrative Services, the Senior Management, and the Budget Committee of District Governance Senate are involved in this process.

The District also receives financial resources that are restricted in their use, such as financial aid from the federal government. The District has also been the recipient of numerous State, Federal and privately funded grants. The College of the Sequoias has a COS Foundation that raises funds for use by programs and services.

## F.18 Financial Accountability

COS undergoes an annual external audit. The audit reviews both funds and processes in order to determine compliance with established accounting and reporting standards. The most recent audit, December 2013, noted no material weakness in internal control of financial reporting.

## F.19 Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The College of the Sequoias Community College District participates in an ongoing systematic cycle of institutional planning that includes data-driven evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. These processes are characterized opportunities for District-wide participation. The District Governance Senate, Academic Senate, and the Senior Management Council supervise the ongoing planning processes, including development and assessment of learning and service area outcomes, program reviews, and budgeting processes that lead to resource allocations.

## F.20 Integrity in Communication with the Public

College of the Sequoias strives to present itself accurately in all of its printed and electronic publications. The General Catalog is published annually and contains all key information students require to enroll and matriculate through the District. There is an extensive review of the Catalog prior to publication to ensure currency and accuracy. The District’s website is updated frequently as needed. The Schedule of Classes is published twice each year online.

## F.21 Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission

College of the Sequoias is committed to adhering to all ACCJC accreditation Eligibility Requirements and Standards, and to accurately portraying itself to the Commission. The District publishes a general statement of accreditation in its General Catalog.

The Vice President of Academic Services has been delegated as the Accreditation Liaison Officer and is responsible for ensuring all necessary reports, documentation and evidence of compliance are provided to ACCJC in a timely fashion. Through the office of the Vice President of Academic Services, the District has responded to all recommendations and requests for reports from ACCJC. Some programs in the District undergo their own professional accreditation process.

# G. Evidence that each Accreditation Standard will be still be fulfilled specifically related to the change and that all relevant Commission policies are addressed.

## G.1 Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

## I.A. Mission

The people of Kings and Tulare counties are underserved in easy access to higher education compared to most of California’s population. The District Mission includes the goal “to help our diverse student population achieve its transfer and/or occupational objectives and to advance the economic growth and global competitiveness of business and industry within our region.” The mission and program goals of DE programs are congruent with that of the District.

## I.B. Institutional Effectiveness

Distance Education programs are included in the Institutional Program Review process within each unit. The District demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The District also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.

Institutional Program Review captures unit-level planning for instructional, student service, and administrative units. These Institutional Program Reviews describe how each unit will contribute to the achievement of the District Objectives and includes an analysis of unit-specific data, the identification of strengths and weaknesses, a report on prior year Actions, a link to the assessment of student learning, the development of Actions for the coming year, and the identification of resources, if any, that are needed to support the initiatives. If a District Objective or Action requires funding, the responsible party for that Action includes the funding request through program review and/or through a process that connects to the Strategic Plan. Unit program reviews are completed annually.

Specifically, each division conducts the Institutional Program Review process to examine and address division-wide course quality issues, suitability of distance education delivery of curriculum, identification of student interest in and satisfaction with distance education offerings.

## G.2 Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

## II.A. Instructional Programs

In keeping with the District Mission, Distance Education programs provide greater access to COS classes for those living in the COS district, which encompasses an immense geographic range with widely scattered communities from Giant Forest in the Sequoia National Park, to Alpaugh and Sultana in the San Joaquin Valley. Many of our students are looking for educational opportunities that fit within their many life obligations.

Distance Education programs meet the standards of the academic divisions. All programs are involved in development, assessment, and analysis of Student Learning Outcomes.

To support quality instruction, the District has established Administrative Procedure 4105: Distance Education and Student Authentication Process (Appendix C) that provides procedures for student authentication and regular and effective contact.

College of the Sequoias has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in distance education courses is the same person who participates, completes the course and receives the academic credit. Administrative Procedure 4105 [[E11]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E11%20AP%204105%20-%20Distance%20Education%20and%20Student%20Authentication%20Process.pdf) establishes the procedures for the student authentication process. The District uses secure credentialing/login and password with applicable course management systems for student authentication via Blackboard. Blackboard secures credentialing/login and password using the Banner ID and randomly generated password retrieved from Banner. In addition, photo ID authentication is used at hybrid sessions in order to receive passwords for other course management systems. Students are notified of protection of student privacy at registration and policies are published in the catalog.

The following Regular, Effective Contact Policy for Online Classes was approved by the

Academic Senate in 2009 and is used to support Curriculum Committee review of distance education courses.

Background

District governing boards shall ensure that: Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. (Title 5 §55204 Instructor Contact)

Purpose

The purpose of the regular, effective contact policy is to provide faculty with the recommendations of the Distance Education at COS Committee (DECOS) for assuring high quality online education. Any changes to this policy will be made in collegial consultation between the Academic Senate and the COS Teachers Association.

Effective contact features include those that:

* are instructor-initiated
* are outlined in the syllabus
* enable student-instructor contact
* are timely (as outlined in the syllabus)
* use available acceptable contact methods
* are documented

Recommended minimum contact standards for online courses

It is the responsibility of the instructor in an online course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students. Initiate means that the instructor facilitates the beginning of instructor-student interaction. For example, the instructor posts an announcement on the course management system. The instructor’s and/or department’s policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact, instructor feedback, and student responsibility, will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for an unexpected reason, notification to students, including when students can expect regular effective contact to resume, should be made through typical course communication channels.

The use of the term “regular effective contact” in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record. It is recommended that instructors have a threaded discussion that is set aside for general questions about the course and weekly or other question and answer sessions available to students.

For online courses, there are a number of acceptable interactions between instructor and student, not all of which may require in-person contact.

Acceptable interactions include: email correspondence; threaded discussion forums with appropriate instructor participation; weekly announcements in the course management system; timely feedback for student work; face-to-face classroom encounters, orientations, and review sessions; field trips; correspondence via the U. S. Postal Service; online interactions via chats, discussions, or other appropriate online technology; phone; and videoconferences. It is important to document regular effective contact and how it is achieved.

Documentation may include email archives, discussion board archives, anecdotal records, and inclusion of information in applicable syllabus and/or curriculum outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each online course/section or session. Standards for documentation may be established by individual divisions, departments, and individual instructors.

## II.B. Student Support Services

Students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning. Student Services information, such as financial aid, admissions and records, and counseling are also available to students online. Students can apply to the college, register, apply for financial aid, contact a counselor, and order transcripts online. The COS catalog is available online. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) also provides online access to students for catalog searching, to online full-text articles and e-books, and to librarians through the “Ask a Librarian” service. Online tutoring was available beginning in the fall 2011 semester. There LRC has also established a Student Computer Helpdesk available online and staffed during LRC hours.

A relatively small number of students experience difficulty getting started with Bb the first time. To help students, we have developed a number of support structures. The general online orientation to COS contains information about Bb (and online classes). In addition, students can find login information online in text and video tutorial format or get help logging in at the Student Helpdesk in the library or Welcome Center. The Distance Education Coordinator also provides one-to-one student support as needed and gives face-to-face orientations in classrooms as needed.

According to data from the Fall 2013 semester, 48.8% of online classes had a better success rate or fell within 10% of the face-to-face counterpart, 44.2% have between 11% and 29% lower success than face-to-face, and 7% have a range of between 30% and 45% lower success rates than their face-to-face counterparts. Five considerations related to student success that have been identified are as follows:

1. Awareness
   * Students must be aware that they are registering for an online class and that it won’t be easier than a face-to-face class. A recent survey of online students (Spring 2014) indicated as many as 30% of students thought the class would be easier than a face-to-face class.
2. Expectations
   * Students who have a compelling reason to finish a class tend to be more successful in the class.
3. Skills
   * Students should have basic computer skills.
   * Students should have strong time management skills
4. Dispositions
   * Students tend to be successful if they:
     + Are able to set and achieve goals.
     + Are comfortable troubleshooting computer problems.
     + Do not mind being separated from their instructors and classmates.
     + Prefer reading instructions to listening to them.
     + Monitor their COS email regularly.
     + Know when they need help and know how to ask for it.
5. Situation
   * Students who have a GPA above 2.0 and have taken an online class before tend to be more successful.
   * Students who have support outside of school tend to be more successful.

The District has made an effort to support student awareness of the difference between online and face-to-face classes by sending pre-course messages to students and giving them tips to being successful. Additionally, this year, the District developed and launched an online class registration confirmation mechanism in the student registration system (Banner) that alerts students to the fact that they are registering for an online class and that online learning has some important differences about which students should be aware.

For those factors related to student success involving expectations, skills, dispositions, and situation that are difficult to address, the District has developed an Online Learning Readiness Survey to help students and faculty become aware of success factors and provide support whenever possible. The survey is available to all DE instructors.

## II.C. Library and Learning Support Services

Faculty and students have full access to the library resources, including the technological resources. These resources include:

* Learning Center
* Computer access
* Library classes on research and writing
* Private search engines and Academic Subscription Databases
* Academic Electronic Databases
* Research services for faculty and students
* Computer helpdesk
* Reference librarian for assistance with work
* Wi-Fi access
* Writing Center
* Math Lab
* Tutorial Center
* Learning Skills Lab

## G.3 Standard III: Resources

## III.A. Human Resources

In terms of human resources, COS administrative and academic leadership have made a commitment to support distance education. The District created and filled the Distance Education Coordinator position in 2007. The coordinator reports to the Vice President of Academic Services and is a member of several key District committees, including the Academic Senate, the Distance Education Committee (co-chair), the Curriculum Committee, Technology Committee (co-chair), Faculty Enrichment (co-chair), and Instructional Council. The Distance Education Coordinator provides an annual report to the Board of Trustees on Distance Education and student success.

The District has assigned a Computer Services technician to support the Blackboard technical management.

All new faculty are able to participate in a comprehensive orientation to the District, including learning about technology. The Faculty Enrichment Committee facilitates multiple professional development opportunities for all faculty, including distance education instructors. A sample of workshop offerings is listed below:

* Reaching the hard-to-reach student: students with learning disabilities
* Blackboard technical training
* Online teaching certification
* Copyright and fair use in the classroom
* Academic integrity
* Online educational resources
* Using Bloom’s Taxonomy to improve critical thinking
* Teaching with the Multiple Intelligences in Mind
* Universal Design for Learning
* Using your library

## III. B. Physical Resources

The physical resources necessary for DE programs include computer labs on campus and the District technological infrastructure. DE programs use a combination of physical facilities and virtual classrooms of sufficient quality and quantity to provide an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The classrooms used for hybrid class sessions are smart classrooms that provide a full range of instructional media. The virtual classroom space exists via the Blackboard Learning system. Blackboard is fully hosted by Blackboard, supported by the Distance Education Coordinator, and Computer Services technician. The Blackboard program is sufficient for content delivery, communication, and learning assessment.

A smart classroom is a classroom that that has an instructor station equipped with computer and audiovisual equipment, allowing the instructor to teach using a wide variety of media. These include DVD and VHS playback, PowerPoint presentations, and more, all displayed through a data projector.

## III.C. Technology Resources

Technology for instructional purposes is easily accessible and is of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the program. The Blackboard Course Management System allows instructors and students to view online information, submit assignments, conduct discussions collaborate, and conduct assessments. One of the main benefits of this methodology is that it allows explicit direct instructions which can be best utilized by students in meeting course objectives.

A subcommittee of the District Governance Senate, the Technology Committee, meets regularly to discuss and evaluate how well the District technology systems meet the needs of our students. The Distance Education Coordinator is co-chair of the committee and advocates for technology improvements related to distance education.

## III.D. Financial Resources

College of the Sequoias is a publicly funded institution. The majority of the unrestricted financial, resources at the District’s disposal are derived from a State mandated revenue limit.

Financial resources come from local taxes, student enrollment fees and an apportionment from the State. The District has an established budget development process that includes the publication of a Budget Book, which is the Final Budget. The Vice President of Administrative Services, the Senior Management and the Budget Committee are involved in this process.

The District also receives financial resources that are restricted in their use, such as financial aid from the federal government. The District has also been the recipient of numerous State, Federal and privately funded grants. The College of the Sequoias has a Foundation that raises funds to support District programs and services.

The on-going budget process includes annual program reviews for faculty-identified needs, and other program obligations related to providing appropriate levels of qualified faculty and resources to meet all program objectives.

## G.4 Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

## IVA. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The District’s participatory governance process includes faculty, staff, administration, and students.

A subcommittee of the Academic Senate, Distance Education at COS (DECOS) meets regularly to discuss and evaluate how well the District meets the needs of our distance education students.

DECOS plays an important role in the decision-making process at the District as evidenced in the participatory governance structure [[E31]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E31%20ParticipatoryGovernanceStructure%20Model.pdf). DECOS members represent a wide range of academic divisions across campus and help the committee advocate for processes and procedures to support students based on the analysis and evaluation of their online courses accomplished through the Program Review process. DECOS makes recommendations to the Academic Senate, which is an essential body involved in participatory governance at COS.

The mission of DECOS is to extend educational opportunities to a diverse population who prefer or have need of alternative methods of delivery. These approaches to instruction outside the traditional classroom setting provide greater opportunities for students to obtain the education they need to achieve their goals, while continuing with demanding personal and employment schedules.

## IV.B. Board and Administrative Organization

The role of the Board of Trustees in making decisions is to determine policy and to serve as the legal and fiduciary body for the District. The Board of Trustees maintains, operates, and governs the operations of the entire District in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. As an independent policy-making body responsible for policies as well as legal and fiscal issues, the Board’s ultimate responsibility is to ensure that the District’s Mission is fulfilled and that the District’s financial resources are dedicated to providing sound educational programs.

The Board of Trustees consists of five locally elected trustees who represent wards within the District. One trustee is elected by the qualified voters from each of the five trustee wards to serve four-year terms. The Board annually elects a president, vice president, and clerk from among its members and the superintendent/president serves as the Board’s secretary. A student trustee is elected annually in a general student election. The student trustee provides a student perspective on the issues facing the Board. The student trustee receives all materials sent to other members of the Board, except those pertaining to closed-session matters; attends all open session board meetings; asks questions; participates in discussions; and may cast an advisory, nonbinding vote on matters that come before the Board.

The Distance Education Committee (DECOS) is part of the governance structure, reporting to Academic Senate. Therefore, decisions and recommendations on Distance Education are part of the decision-making process at the District. The Distance Education Coordinator provides annual updates on Distance Education to the Board.

## Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Distance Education courses and programs at College of the Sequoias adhere to the ACCJC Policy on Distance and Correspondence Education. Distance Education courses have equivalent quality, accountability and focus on student outcomes to face-to-face courses.

Development, implementation and evaluation of Distance Education courses and all courses takes place within College of the Sequoias Mission. Approval criteria for courses and programs must adhere to Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and includes appropriateness to the Mission, need, quality, feasibility, and compliance.

Distance Education courses are developed, implemented and evaluated in the same way as face-to-face courses. All courses follow the Board Policy 4020 [[E1]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E1%20BP%204020%20-%20Program,%20Curriculum,%20and%20Course%20Development,%20Modification,%20or%20Discontinuance.pdf) and Administrative Procedure 4020 [[E2]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E2%20AP%204020%20-%20Program%20Development,%20Approval,%20and%20Modification.pdf) and 4022 [[E3]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E3%20AP-4022%20Curriculum-Course%20Development%20Modification%20and%20Approval.pdf) on curriculum, course and program development. Courses are updated every five years (CTE every two years). Distance Education courses, and all courses, must be approved at the department and division level, by the Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, Board of Trustees and submitted for approval to the Chancellor’s Office.

Distance Education courses, and all courses, have clearly defined and appropriate student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are reviewed and approved through the curriculum approval process. In addition, student learning outcomes assessments are evaluated and discussed in annual program reviews, including distance education.

The District provides the appropriate resources and structure to support outcomes and to demonstrate students achieve these outcomes through the three-year assessment cycle. Assessment is discussed on an annual basis through the program review process. Resources are allocated through the resource allocation process based on the annual program review as described in the COS Resource Allocation Manual [[E4]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E4%20COS%20Resource%20Allocation%20%20Manual%202014.pdf). Distance education courses are included in the assessment cycle, program review and resource allocation process.

College of the Sequoias submitted a Distance Education Substantive Change proposal in 2011 and 23 programs were approved for Distance Education delivery by the ACCJC. The District’s Curriculum Committee and Distance Education committee review all programs annually to determine which programs are close to meeting the 50% distance education metric.

The Distance Education Coordinator, Distance Education Committee, and the Curriculum Committee track all courses with distance education addendum approval and calculate the percentage of courses offered through distance education. Courses cannot be approved for distance education without approval of the Distance Education Coordinator who verifies the calculations prior to approval.

College of the Sequoias has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in distance education courses is the same person who participates, completes the course and receives the academic credit. Administrative Procedure 4105 [[E11]](http://old.cos.edu/Accreditation/Documents/Substantive%20Change%202015/E11%20AP%204105%20-%20Distance%20Education%20and%20Student%20Authentication%20Process.pdf) establishes the procedures for the student authentication process. The District uses secure credentialing/login and password with applicable course management systems for student authentication via Blackboard. Blackboard secures credentialing/login and password using the Banner ID and randomly generated password retrieved from Banner. In addition, photo ID authentication is used at hybrid sessions in order to receive passwords for other course management systems. Students are notified of protection of student privacy at registration and policies are published in the catalog.

**Appendix A: Complete list of all Programs Approved for Online Delivery**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Type** |
| Accounting | Certificate |
| Law Office Clerk/Receptionist | Certificate |
| Real Estate | Certificate |
| Child Development – Assistant | Certificate |
| Child Development – Associate Teacher | Certificate |
| Fashion Merchandising | Certificate |
| Accounting | AS |
| Business | AS |
| Paralegal | AS |
| Health Education | AS |
| Physical Education | AS |
| Administration of Justice: Corrections | AS |
| Liberal Arts (Arts & Humanities) | AA |
| Liberal Arts (Communication Studies) | AA |
| Liberal Studies (Natural Science) | AA |
| Liberal Studies (Social and Behavioral Sciences) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Arts & Humanities) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Business) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Communication Studies) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Elementary Teaching Preparation) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Math and Science) | AA |
| Transfer Studies (Social and Behavioral Sciences) | AA |

**Appendix B: Additional programs reaching 50% or more online**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Name** | **Type** | **% of program approved for DE** |
| Administration of Justice | AST | 100% |
| AG Business Management | AS | 69% |
| Administration of Justice - Law Enforcement | AS | 80% |
| American Sign Language | AS | 100% |
| Animal Science | AS | 50% |
| Architectural History | Certificate | 100% |
| Art | AA | 50% |
| Art History | AAT | 65% |
| Biology | AS | 90% |
| Business Financial Recordkeeping | Certificate | 100% |
| Business | Certificate | 73% |
| Business | AS | 53% |
| Chemistry | AS | 77% |
| Child Development | AS | 75% |
| Communication Studies | AAT | 95% |
| Communication | Certificate | 100% |
| Computer Applications | Certificate | 49% |
| Computer Programming and Information Systems | Certificate | 72% |
| Computer Programming and Information Systems | AS | 103% |
| Construction Inspection | AS | 65% |
| Consumer Family Studies | AS | 85% |
| Dairy Science | AS | 65% |
| Dance | AS | 80% |
| Dramatic Arts – Acting | AA | 55% |
| Dramatic Arts - Technical | AA | 57% |
| Engineering | AS | 58% |
| English | AAT | 92% |
| Fashion Design | AS | 75% |
| Fashion Merchandising | AS | 75% |
| Fire Technology | AS | 68% |
| Geology | AST | 78% |
| Human Services | AS | 50% |
| Industrial Maintenance Technology | AS | 50% |
| Landscape Management | AS | 50% |
| Legal Secretary/Law Office Clerk | Certificate | 54% |
| Mathematics | AS | 80% |
| Mathematics | AST | 90% |
| Music | AAT | 57% |
| Music | AA | 63% |
| Paralegal | Certificate | 61% |
| Physical Science | AS | 88% |
| Physics | AS | 73% |
| Plant Science | AS | 70% |
| Political Science | AAT | 97% |
| Psychology | AAT | 103% |
| Sociology | AAT | 98% |
| Spanish | AAT | 100% |
| Sports Medicine | AS | 92% |
| Transfer Studies (Agriculture and Environmental Science) | AA | 100% |
| Welding | AS | 60% |

**Appendix C: AP 4105 Distance Education and Student Authentication Process**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 4105**

**SEQUOIAS CCD Academic Services**

**DISTANCE EDUCATION AND STUDENT AUTHENTICATION PROCESS**

1. **Definition**: Distance education allows the exploration and development of educational initiatives using advanced communication and computing technologies to address student access issues related to geographical, cultural, disability or facility barriers. A distance education course/section or session is defined as the use of technology utilized 51 percent or more of the time to deliver instruction during the course term and where the student and instructor are separated by distance. (CCC Distance Education Guidelines)

Distance education instruction is subject to requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 55200). The Director of the Disability Resource Center will assure that all accommodations are accessible to students with disabilities as outlined in the California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines, March 2004 edition.

1. **Course Approval:** Each proposed or existing distance education course shall be reviewed and approved separately. Separate approval is mandatory if any portion of the instruction in a course or a course section is designed to be provided through distance education.

The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in Administrative Procedures 4020 or 4022.

* 1. **Course Quality Standards**: The same standards of course quality shall be applied to distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses (Title 5, Section 55207).
  2. **Course Quality Determinations:** Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education course were made with the full involvement of the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Board of Trustees according to Sequoias CCD approval procedures.
  3. **Duration of Approval:** All distance education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless changes are warranted through the regular review cycle or there are substantive changes of the course outline.
  4. **Instructor Contact:** All approved distance education courses include regular effective contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities (Section 55204).

A regular, effective contact audit form, which supports academic program review processes and evaluation, provides instructors with a tool to develop, assess, and maintain course structures and online instructional practices that promote and document regular, effective contact in online courses.

The regular, effective contact policy assures high quality online education. Any changes to this policy will be made in collegial consultation between the Academic Senate and COSTA. Effective contact features include those that:

* + - Are instructor-initiated
    - Are outlined in the syllabus
    - Enable student-instructor contact
    - Are timely (as outlined in the syllabus)
    - Use available, acceptable contact methods
    - Are documented

Online courses that do not involve regular and effective contact between instructors and students may be considered correspondence courses for which apportionment cannot be claimed.

For online courses, there are a number of acceptable interactions between instructor and student, not all of which may require in-person contact. Acceptable interactions include: email correspondence; threaded discussion forums with appropriate instructor participation; weekly announcement in the course management system; timely feedback for student work; face-to-face classroom encounters; orientations; review sessions; field trips; correspondence via the US Postal Service; online interactions via chats; discussions or other appropriate online technology; phone; and videoconferences. It is important to document regular effective contact and how it is achieved. Documentation may include email archives, discussion board archives, anecdotal records, and inclusion of information in applicable syllabus and/or curriculum outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each online course/section or session. Standards for documentation may be established by individual divisions, departments, and individual instructors.

1. **Faculty Selection and Workload**: Instructors of course sections delivered via distance education technology shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments. Instructors shall possess the minimum qualifications for the discipline into which the course’s subject matter most appropriately falls. The number of students assigned to any one course section offered by distance education will be determined by and be consistent with other District procedures related to faculty assignment. (Title 5, Section 55204)

**D.**  **Student Authentication Process:** Consistent with federal regulations pertaining to federal financial aid eligibility, the District must authenticate or verify that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The District will provide to each student, at the time of registration, a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any.

The Vice President of Academic Services shall authorize one or more of the methods to authenticate or verify the student’s identity approved by federal regulation.

For the Sequoias CCD, authentication uses secure credentialing/login and password within applicable course management systems, which is specifically referenced in the federal regulation as an appropriate and accepted procedure for verifying a student’s identity. The Blackboard method involves securing credentialing/login and password using Banner ID and randomly generated password retrieved from Banner. The other method involves photo ID authentication at hybrid sessions in order to receive password to other course management system.

The Vice President, Academic Services shall establish procedures for providing a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any, to each student at the time of registration.

**E. Student’s Last Day of Attendance**: A student’s last day of attendance in an online class is determined by one or more of the following activities:

* 1. Opening, editing, or submitting an assignment online using the Course Management System assignment feature, by email, or in person.
  2. Participating in an online discussion.
  3. Engaging in an exam either online or in person.
  4. Engaging in course activity beyond login (e.g., wiki, blog, group) as demonstrated by record in Blackboard Course report.

A faculty member is encouraged to store the following evidence in such a manner that it can be easily retrieved should the College be audited:

1. Record of student’s grade for assignment or test and corresponding due date.
2. Course report (Course Management System) of user activity beyond login.
3. Email.
4. **Ongoing Responsibility of Districts**: Section 55210 requires that the District maintain records and report data through the Management Information System on the number of students and faculty participating in new courses or sections of established courses offered through distance education. In addition, the District shall provide other information as deemed necessary by the Board of Governors.
5. **Reporting**: The Distance Education Coordinator will make an annual report to the Board of Trustees addressing the current state of distance education at COS.

References: Title 5, Section 55200 et seq.; California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines, March 2004.

Form: Curriculum Committee Distance Education Form Adopted: May 12, 2009

Revised: April 8, 2013