LAMAR STATE COLLEGE - ORANGE
ORANGE, TEXAS

ANNUAL REPORT
OF
DISTANCE EDUCATION

Submitted 2011

(Includes spring, summer, and fall semesters of 2010)
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PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

What is Distance Education: Distance education is education for which the majority of instruction occurs when the students and instructor are not in the same physical setting. A distance education course can be delivered synchronously or asynchronously to any single or multiple locations through electronic modes (e.g., the Internet, video conferencing, television, etc.), by correspondence, or by other means. Off-campus instruction occurs when a faculty member travels to a distant site to teach a course. Extension instruction refers to self-supporting courses and programs delivered on campus, off campus, or via distance education (THECB).

Distance Education at Lamar State College-Orange (LSC-O): The Distance Education Committee at LSC-O has defined distance education more specifically by taking single and combined modes of delivery into consideration. The definitions are as follows:

Distance Education is planned learning that occurs outside the traditional classroom and, as a result, requires special techniques of course design, special instructional techniques, and special methods of communication by electronic means and other technology. Additionally, special techniques of course design, other technology, and special organizational and administrative arrangements may be used.

Hybrid Learning at LSC-O combines face-to-face classroom instruction with online instruction. In addition to having an online component for communication and assessment purposes, a significant amount of learning occurs online in a hybrid environment. As a result, a hybrid learning environment reduces the amount of actual classroom meeting times.

Blended Learning at LSC-O would be a traditional face-to-face class, with an online component (Course Management System/Learning Management System) for any or all of the following: submitting assignments, taking exams/quizzes, and using a graded discussion board for continuing classroom discussion. This will not include classes where students go online for just resources. This will also not reduce any classroom meeting times.

STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITY AND THREAT ANALYSIS (SWOT)

LSC-O’s Distance Education is well developed and the Distance Education Committee is vital to development of policy and procedure. Faculty, who continuously upgrade their skills, are a key to the current success. Comprehensive research has been ongoing but not always applicable, available to the key players, or used for improvement.

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Strengths and Opportunities for Distance Education at LSC-O

- LSC-O has moved to a new Learning Management System – Desire2Learn. This move has brought with it opportunities as well as risks.
- All courses, except the Continuing Education courses, that are being offered by LSC-O have been made available in Desire2Learn from fall 2010.
- Expanding market potential by increasing access to education.
- Shared resources leading to increased collaboration.
- Students and faculty have access to new and improved emerging technologies.
- Ability to improve quality of instruction.
- An active and dynamic Distance Education Committee that plays a key role in developing policies and procedures.
- The institution has provided funds and opportunities for ongoing faculty training.
- The infrastructure and technical support provided by the Information Technology Services is exceptional.
- Annual improvement plan has been put in place.

Weaknesses and Threats for Distance Education at LSC-O

- Training for all faculty members in a new system is a challenge.
- Constant updates affect training and class schedules.
- Faculty experience results of lack of trust towards distance learning.
- Rising costs of technology.
- The ever-changing dynamic nature of technology requires ongoing training.
- Students’ computer skills are not required to be at the minimum standard for successful participation.

IMPROVEMENTS IN PLACE

The following changes were put in place in the year 2010.

- LSC-O has moved completely to a new Learning Management System (LMS) – Desire2Learn 8.5. This move brings with it opportunities as well as risks.
- The new Desire2Learn Learning Management System (LMS) is hosted by Desire2Learn Inc. and is expected to be accessible during severe weather conditions, such as hurricanes, when the campus is down.
- The contract was signed in fall 2009, with batch integration with Banner.
- Real time integration with Banner went live in summer 2010.
- A Desire2Learn system update was done on Dec 20, 2010. The current version is 9.0.1.MR1
- Multiple training sessions were offered in spring and fall 2010.
- A new online YouTube site was created for LSCO and online orientation demo videos for students were uploaded to it.
• Orientation materials for students have been uploaded to My LSCO. Students have access to videos and handouts in this Distance education space for students.
• The Distance Education Committee has completed updating the Distance Education Handbook, which provides policy framework, guidelines, and standards for designing and teaching online courses, to account for the new changes to LMS.
• The course proposal process has also been revised and the timeline shortened to six months.
• The Distance Education award for the best online course for the academic year 2009-2010 went to Bonnie Dorman for Medical Terminology HITT 1305 course and to Jim Ellis for Supervision BMGT 1301 course.
• The Instructional Designer has provided advanced hands-on technology and pedagogical support to experienced faculty to promote the use of Web 2.0 tools.
• Nominations on behalf of Jim Ellis and Bonnie Dorman were sent to Instructional Technology Council (ITC) for Best Online Course and Distinguished Online Educator. Bonnie Dorman received the Distinguish eLearning Educator by the Instructional Technology Council. The award will be presented at the eLearning conference in Feb 2011.
• Three new courses were developed and taught: Intro to Process PTAC 1302, Beginning Web Programming ITSE 1311, and General Biology BIOL 1406.

DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Distance Education Committee was established in 2001. The committee’s charge is to address the far-reaching changes that instructional technology in general and distance learning in particular bring to the educational environment of LSC-O and its students.

The Dean of Instruction functions as the Chair of the Distance Education Committee and appoints a secretary from the members. The committee membership consists of faculty and Student Services staff appointed for three-year terms (maximum) on a staggered expiration basis. The following also serve on the committee: the Dean of Instruction, the Instructional Designer, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, a Library representative, a Continuing Education representative, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, an at-large faculty member, and a student representative.

The Distance Education Committee makes recommendations regarding the following:

• Establishment of long- and short-term programmatic and performance goals;
• Expansion of instructional offerings;
• Coordination of distance education with other college initiatives;
• Partnerships with other colleges and organizations;
• Faculty recruitment, orientation, and development;
• Marketing strategies for promoting distance education;
Utilization and evaluation of technology, technical support, and instructional support for distance education programs; 
Funding resources to support distance education initiatives; and 
Evaluation of the effectiveness of distance education efforts.

**HISTORY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AT LSC-O**

Lamar State College-Orange began distance learning classes during Summer I of 1998. Two-way interactive classes were begun with Bobbie Miller, Instructor of Sociology, teaching from the Lamar State College-Orange campus as the “near” campus and Lamar State College-Port Arthur as the “far” campus. These sites were linked on a closed circuit television system in which the teacher would present from either site and students would be stationed in a classroom at both sites. Students watched a television monitor and could interact with the teacher at the other site. Training sessions were provided to the faculty who would be the instructors in this mode of instruction. After two sessions of interactive classes from Orange to Port Arthur or Port Arthur to Orange (begun in fall 1998), television courses were ended. Classes were broadcast via cable television and video. Beginning in spring 1999, internet courses were added.

The Distance Education Committee recommends that the rubric for sections of classes that are online have the number series 80-89; classes that are hybrid contain the number series 60-69 from spring 2010 schedule. The committee will prepare explanations of this including what is involved with a hybrid class. This will involve clearly identifying different types of online classes so that students know what to expect, when they register.

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PART 2 – MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

Mission Statement

The primary purpose of distance education at Lamar State College-Orange (LSC-O) is to maximize student access to courses through the use of web-based delivery systems.

Distance education at LSC-O integrates the assets of the college to provide a teaching and learning environment for distance learners, which is comparable to that provided to on-campus students. Central to the integration process is ensuring that support services are available to distant learners and faculty and providing a quality education that is conveniently accessed.

Distance education at LSC-O is consistent with and supports the college’s mission and its strategic plan. The campus mission includes the provision of academic transfer, technical, developmental, and non-credit instruction. Distance Education is an additional method of delivering instruction which expands the options for students who may not be able to take advantage of the traditional course schedule.

Goals of Distance Education at LSC-O

- Enhance student accessibility and participation in distance education initiatives;
- Create an environment which facilitates the development of distance education instruction in response to student and community needs;
- Encourage faculty participation in distance education initiatives and provide assistance and support in the development of courses, course materials, and use of instructional technology;
- Help ensure the technical infrastructure that makes it possible for faculty to use alternate means of instruction is in place;
- Promote the availability and utilization of distance education courses as a viable option for pursuing education goals; and
- Ensure quality instruction in all distance education classes through assessment.
PART 3 – ONLINE COURSES ACROSS DIVISIONS

This report deals with the changes that have taken place in Distance Education at LSC-O since 2009, when the last report was filed. The steady, streamlined growth that was visible in the last report has continued this year also. We have experienced growth in the number of faculty involved in distance education, growth in the number of students, growth in the number of courses, and growth in the quantity and quality of online services offered to all students at our institution.

Online courses (fully online and hybrid courses) offered in the Year 2010 are as follows:

Spring 2010 (29 courses, 36 sections compared to 25 courses and 31 sections in spring 2009)

1. ART 1301-80
2. BIOL1322-80
3. BUSI 1301-80
4. COSC 1301(3 sections- 80, 81, 82)
5. DRAM 1310-80
6. ECON 2301-80
7. EDTC 2096-80
8. EDTC 1096-80
9. ENGL 1301-80
10. ENGL 1302 (2 sections- 80, 81)
11. ENGL 2331-80
12. GOVT 2301-80
13. GOVT 2302 (2 sections-80, 81)
14. HIST 1301-80
15. HIST 1302 (2 sections-80, 81)
16. HITT 1305-80
17. HPRS 2321-80
18. HUMA 1315-80
19. ITSC 2339-80
20. MLAB 2232-80
21. MRKG 1301-80
22. MRKG 1311-80
23. POFT 1127-80
24. POFI 2301-80
25. PSYC 2308-80
26. RNSG 1207 (3 sections- 80, 81, 82)
27. RNSG 1300-80
28. RNSG 1311-80
29. RNSG 2535-80
Summer 2010 (18 courses, 22 sections compared to 14 courses, 16 sections in summer 2009)

1. BUSI 1301-80 (Summer I)
2. COSC 1301-80 (Mini)
3. COSC 1301 (2 sections 80, 81. Summer I)
4. COSC 1301-82 (Summer II)
5. DRAM 1310-80 (Summer I)
6. DRAM 1310-81 (Summer II)
7. ECON 2301-80 (Summer I)
8. GOVT 2301-80 (Summer II)
9. GOVT 2302-80 (Summer I)
10. HIST 1301-80 (Summer II)
11. HIST 1302-80 (Summer I)
12. HITT 1305-80 (Through Summer)
13. HPRS 2321-80 (Summer I)
14. MRKG 1301-80 (Summer I)
15. RNSG 1210 (3 sections-80, 81, 82)
16. RNSG 1300-80 (Summer I)
17. RNSG 1311 80 (Summer I)
18. RNSG 1327-80 Summer I

Fall 2010 (36 courses, 50 sections compared to 26 courses and 31 sections in fall 2009)

1. ARTS 1301-80
2. BIOL 1322-80
3. BIOL 1406-60
4. BUSI 1301-80
5. COSC 1301(4 Sections-80, 81, 82, 83)
6. DRAM 1310-80
7. DWRT 0301-60
8. ECON 2301-80
9. EDTC 1096-80
10. EDTC 2096-80
11. ENGL 1301(2 Sections-80, 81)
12. ENGL 1302 (2 Sections-80, 81)
13. ENGL 2331 (2 Sections-80, 81)
14. GOVT 2301 (3 Sections-80, 81, 82)
15. GOVT 2302 (2 Sections-80, 81)
16. HECO 1307-80
17. HIST 1301(3 Sections-80, 81, 82)
18. HIST 1302-80
19. HITT 1305-80
20. HUMA 1315-80
21. ITCC 1310-60
22. ITCC 1312-60
23. ITSC 1325-60
24. MLAB 1201-80
25. MRKG 1301-80
26. POFT 1127-80
27. PSYC 2308-80
28. PTAC 1302-80
29. PTAC 1308-80
30. RNSG 1300 (2 Sections-60, 61)
31. RNSG 1300 (2 Sections-80, 81)
32. RNSG 1311-60
33. RNSG 1311 (2 Sections-80, 81)
34. RNSG 1327-60
35. RNSG 2514-60
36. RNSG 2514-80

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1.0. Institutional Report Guideline version used to prepare this plan is IRDE-2004.1.

SECTION 1 – INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1.1. The institution documents compliance with The Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs (PPG). Does your institution use the PPG Course Guide (an example of compliance documentation) when developing new courses or evaluating existing courses?

(https://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AAR/DistanceEd/PPGCourseGuide.pdf) If not, please attach an example of the course evaluation form that you use and explain how it allows you to confirm compliance with the PPG.

Response: Partially yes

LSC-O has recently streamlined the process of developing and approving online courses. The implementation of this process has just begun (from Fall 2007). In this process, The Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs is being used as a guide for all planning, training and implementation activities as we build and deliver the online courses at our institution. Recognizing that adhering to these principles is generally accepted as an indication of a quality distance education program; LSC-O has integrated these principles into the policies and practices of their distance learning activities.

Beginning Fall 2008 semester, our distance education committee members will use the guide as an instrument to review online courses. The “principles” is included in the LSC-O Distance Education Handbook.

Documentation:

Guide for Incorporating the Principles of Good Practice into Electronically-based Courses
(Appendix A: DE Handbook - Section 1)
1.2. The institution evaluates the overall effectiveness of its distance and/or off-campus education efforts by assessing progress toward meeting its institutional goals. The evaluation outcomes are incorporated into the institution’s overall institutional effectiveness efforts.

Response: Partially yes

However, we implemented most of the strategies from our “Annual Improvement Plan” (AIP) and have achieved positive results. The final evaluation of the AIP for the year 2009-2010 is included in the appendices. The AIP for the year 2010-2011 is also included.

Documentation:

Annual Evaluation 2009-2010 (Appendix B)

Annual Improvement Plan 2010-2011 (Appendix C)
1.3. The institution has a position responsible for distance learning and off-campus instruction that is appropriate for the institution and the size of the distance and/or off-campus education program.

Response: Yes

In January, 2007 the college created an Instructional Designer’s position, responsible for the oversight of the distance education courses at LSC-O. This office serves as the primary internal and external point of contact for distance education related information and supports the technical aspects of the program for the instructional divisions. The Instructional Designer reports to the Dean of Instruction and serves on the Distance Education Committee.

The job responsibilities of the Instructional Designer are as follows:

- Provide faculty help through regular training, refresher courses, and ongoing development.
- Develop orientation materials and online tutorials for faculty and students.
- Undertake the efficient running of online courses.
- Streamline the process of developing online courses.
- Review courses at mid-semester and give information regarding course standards to division heads.
- Ensure all training materials for faculty are made available through the MyLSCO portal.
- Ensure all students also have access to orientation handouts in their MyLSCO distance education channel. In addition, Online Tutorials are available to them in their individual courses.
- Help create online courses consistent in design and are user-friendly.
- The instructional designer completed a three year term on the Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC), which is part of the THECB. The term has been extended for the next three years. In addition, she is now the vice-chair of DEAC.

Documentation:

DEAC Roster (Appendix D)
1.4. The institution has a process for evaluating the rationale behind the proposal of complete degree and certificate programs for delivery via distance and/or off-campus education.

Response: Yes

LSC-O follows the rules and regulations stipulated by THECB and SACS to determine whether or not a program is considered online. If more than 50% of the courses are available online, the program is considered online.

Based on that assumption, the Upward Mobility Nursing Program is now an online program. All courses offered by Allied Health Division are available online except for the Clinical part. The percentage of online courses in the Upward Mobility Nursing Program is 60%. The online nursing courses account for 26% of the program. LSC-O continues to offer the traditional version as well.

Entrepreneurship Certificate program in the Business and Technology Division is also now an online program with 55% of the courses available online. Two other programs are close to being considered online, namely the Business Associate of Science Degree which is 48% online and the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Management which is 50% online.

Documentation:

Notification Letters (Appendix E)
1.5. The institution’s admission and recruitment policies and decisions take into account the capability of students to succeed in distance education and off-campus courses and programs.

Response: Yes

LSC-O has an open admission policy ensuring that all persons who can profit from post-secondary education will have an opportunity to enroll. LSC-O does not differentiate between distance learning and on-campus students, including admissions requirements. LSC-O also admits dual credit students and does not stop them from taking distance education courses.

Students are provided information regarding skills required to succeed in distance education by their instructors, counselors, and advisors. They are encouraged to take the “Am I ready” quiz available in their individual online courses to see how equipped they are for taking an online course. The result obtained from this quiz is not held against them, even if they are not considered to have the necessary aptitude that is required for an online course. However, it does provide the student and the instructor a list of strengths and weaknesses the student has. It allows them to work through the weaknesses and help in the success of the student.

All students have access to orientations that are available online at http://www.youtube.com/lscoedu. These videos address the nuts and bolts of taking online classes.

Documentation:

General Admission Policy – LSC-O College Catalog
1.6. The institution has established requirements for satisfactory progress and graduation for distance education students.

Response: Yes

LSC-O does not have separate requirements for satisfactory progress and graduation for distance education students. Academic policies related to satisfactory progress and graduation are outlined in our catalog and is the same for on-campus students and for distance education students. These are in the “Academic Policies and Procedures” sections titled “Dropping Courses”, “Instructor-Initiated Drops” and “Withdrawals”

Documentation:

Student-Initiated Drops and Withdrawals – LSC-O College Catalog
1.7. Policies relevant to transcripting, grading, and transfer credentials are in place.

Response: Yes

LSC-O does not have separate requirements for transcripts, grading, and transfer credentials. Academic policies related to transcripts, grading, and transfer credentials are outlined in our catalog. The catalog includes information on student classification, grading system, course credit, course transfer, student initiated drops and withdrawals, grade reports, final examinations, grade change procedure, repeating courses, grades used to determine academic honors and transfer of credit to LSC-O for graduation.

Documentation:

Academic Policies related to transcripts, grading and transfer – LSC-O College Catalog
1.8. The institution has a process in place to address the needs of distance learners who fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Response: Yes

LSC-O offers variety of services to students with disabilities. Services are arranged to fit students' individual needs and may include individualized test administration; registration assistance; resource referral; sign language interpreters; note takers; tutors; mobility assistance; readers/audio tapes; and the loan of specialized equipment such as wheelchairs, tape recorders, closed captioned decoders, large print materials and access to a TDD.

When necessary, the counselor for students with disabilities acts as a liaison among students and faculty, administrators, and outside agencies. The Disability Support Services Office works closely with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and the Texas Commission for the Blind.

Services are described in the LSC-O 2010 - 2012 catalog, available online at


The “Guide for incorporating the principles of good practice into electronically-based courses” by the THECB used to approve new courses before they are offered to students, addresses ADA compliance.

Documentation:

Disability Support Services – LSC-O College Catalog 2010-2012

Guide for incorporating the principles of good practice into electronically-based courses (Appendix A: DE Handbook - Section 1)
1.9. SACS and other professional credentialing agencies are notified, as appropriate.

Response: Yes

The Upward Mobility Nursing Program is now an online program. All courses offered by Allied Health Division are available online except for the Clinical part. The percentage of online courses in the Upward Mobility Nursing Program is 60%. The online nursing courses account for 26% of the program. LSC-O continues to have the traditional version offered as well.

Enterpreunership Certificate program in the Business and Technology Division is also now an online program with 55% of the courses available online. The Business Associate of Science Degree is 48% online and the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Management is 50% online.

Since the online portion accounts for more than 27% of the degree program, notification letters have been submitted to SACS for the above 4 degrees and certificate.

THECB has also been notified of two online degrees the Upward Mobility Nursing Program and Enterpreunership Certificate program which are more than 50% online. They have also been notified of programs that are nearing the more than 50% mark, namely the Business Associate of Science and the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Management.

Documentation:

Notification Letter Drafts (Appendix E)
1.10. The institution has sufficient financial resources to initiate and sustain quality distance learning and off-campus courses and programs; the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential for them; and a process by which funding is distributed to support distance education and off-campus instruction.

Response: Yes

LSC-O commits appropriate financial resources of its own to distance education courses and affirms its commitment to distance education’s success at LSC-O, in accordance to its strategic plan. The distance education at LSC-O does not have a big budget of its own as its needs are met by different branches of LSC-O. The necessary equipments (hardware, software, license agreements) are provided by our Information and Technology Services. Faculty incentive for first time online teaching and faculty overload for developing new online courses come from the budget allocation of their respective divisions. The institution allocates approximately $5000 per year for activities concerning distance education that is not funded by other entities. This mainly relates to maintenance and operation of distance education committee and to distance education connected travel.

Documentation:

Distance Education Budget Planning Process FY 2010-2011 (Appendix F)
1.11. The institution complies with THECB Rules in Chapter 4, Subchapter E and with Notification and Approval Procedures concerning prior notification of peer institutions before offering off-campus courses and programs and the Higher Education Regional Council procedures.

Response: Yes

As a member of the Texas State University System, Lamar State College-Orange regularly confers with the other member institutions concerning program offerings, course changes, cooperative agreements with area high schools and businesses, and all other plans that might impact those other institutions.

Documentation:
1.12. A procedure for calculating the cost of offering distance education courses to out-of-state students and a process for determining that fees “sufficient to cover the cost of instruction” are charged to those students are in place.

Response: Yes

Online courses at LSC-O cost the same as any other on-campus course, plus a $50 internet course fee. As with any in-state student, any additional costs incurred are passed on to the student at cost. This includes services such as shipping fees for books or library materials. Students requiring proctored testing are responsible for making arrangements with an approved proctor and are responsible for any associated fees.

Documentation:

Tuition and Fees – LSC-O College Catalog
SECTION 2 - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

2.1. The institution has procedures in place for planning, development, approval and review of distance and/or off-campus education programs to ensure quality and currency; and for meeting external accrediting bodies’ standards.

Response: Yes

Distance education is not considered a separate program within the structure of the college. Online courses are approved, administered and taught by the same instructors. The online course instructors submit a proposal and on given the go-ahead, design and develop the course and showcase their product in an open forum to the distance education committee. The distance education committee gives its approval to the online courses after being satisfied with the course designs. The instructional designer helps the instructor in this process.

Distance Education at LSC-O also has provisions for providing in-depth help to faculty members through workshops and seminars to become an online instructor.

Documentation:

Online Course Proposal (Appendix G: DE Handbook – Section 2)
2.2 The institution has plans/procedures for assessing student learning outcomes. The institution also evaluates student retention and student satisfaction in its distance and/or off-campus education programs and courses; and using the results of the assessment to improve courses and programs.

Response: Yes

All LSC-O courses and programs are planned, delivered, and administered by the same instructional personnel and faculty regardless of delivery method. In this manner, the college ensures that learning outcomes are identical for distance learning classes and on-campus classes.

LSC-O uses a common syllabus with identical learning objectives and student competencies regardless of the delivery mode of the course. Student competencies are measured in distance learning courses and traditional courses by the use of identical or equivalent proctored examinations, demonstrations, research and essay requirements, and portfolio assessments. Faculty members update and submit syllabi to their division chairs each semester. All Distance Education syllabi offer learning outcomes and conform to the institution’s requirements for syllabi.

Documentation:

Syllabus (Appendix G: DE Handbook-Section 2)
2.3. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of the electronic delivery modes it uses in the context of student learning.

Response: Yes

The effectiveness of online courses is done through a mid-term evaluation of the course and at the end of the semester, through the “Student Evaluation of Distance Education Courses”

Documentation:

Midterm Evaluation (Appendix G: DE Handbook-Section 2)
2.4. Programs and courses provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty, and among students.

Response: Compliance

For online courses, LSC-O uses the Desire2Learn platform to deliver courses. Interaction with students is mandatory requirement for all online classes. Desire2Learn provides for an internal email system and discussion board functions, which promote faculty to student and student to student interaction. We use softwares such as SoftChalk to increase student interactivity with content.

At the beginning of each long semester and short summer sessions, students are required to attend a face-to-face orientation to help familiarize with the Desire2Learn format. These orientations are mandatory and provide for face-to-face interaction with students.

Documentation:

Distance Education Orientation Materials (Appendix H)
2.5. Appropriate security measures are in place to assure the integrity of student work and testing.

Response: Yes

Our assessments make use of multiple approaches to test students. We have an excellent testing center on campus that has strict security policies requiring students to show a picture ID issued by an official agency. We have a Proctor policy in place for those who cannot access our testing center. Our Learning Management System, Desire2Learn, has some inbuilt security systems in place to assure integrity of the testing process. Students must be authenticated in order to log on to the system. Techniques to minimize cheating are implemented within Desire2Learn. These include timed testing, displaying a single question at a time, including javascript code to prevent printing, question order scrambling, and answer order scrambling. We also use the turnitin.com service to check for plagiarism in written assignments.

Documentation:
3.1. The qualifications for distance and/or off-campus education faculty are the same as faculty teaching the same courses in a traditional on-campus format.

Response: Yes

LSC-O faculty must meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools requirements in their given subject area, which is scrutinized by the Office of Human Resources. The college is very meticulous in ensuring that all faculty members, both full and part-time, have the proper credentials and that the proper procedure has been followed when rare exceptions to academic preparation are made.

The procedure for making exceptions to faculty qualifications applies to both on-campus and distance learning courses. In academic areas, exceptions are rare. Occupational/Technical course instructors with less than a bachelor’s degree must have extensive training, certifications and/or experience in the subject field. Exceptions are referred to the Instructional Council for final approval.

Documentation:

Faculty Handbook
3.2. The institution provides orientation, training, and support services for faculty involved in distance education and off-campus programs.

Response: Yes

The Instructional Designer provides all the necessary training and professional development opportunities for instructors to ensure that the instructors are comfortable in the online teaching environment. The focus is on faculty support involving Desire2Learn designer training, software tutorials, and online pedagogy. The training is in the form of workshops for a hands-on training. It is also available online for those who have time constraints and hence are unable to attend the workshops or just want some refresher lessons. The Instructional Designer provides individual consultations for those interested. Plans are afoot to have a well designed Distance Education website with more resources for both faculty and students.

The college also has a Helpdesk that provides support to faculty and students with log-in and other technical issues.

Documentation:
3.3. Procedures are in place for appropriate evaluation of faculty involved in the distance and/or off-campus education program (such as procedures that evaluate faculty-student interaction).

Response: Compliance

Faculty members that teach online courses also teach traditional courses and are evaluated using the similar instruments. The Dean of Instruction and Division Directors are provided copies of the appropriate data from the “Student Evaluation of Online Course,” and grade analyses for use in evaluation activities.

Documentation:

Statistical Data Page 37
3.4. Faculty have a role in development and evaluation of courses.

Response: Yes

LSC-O faculty is highly involved in the development and evaluation of courses. They go through a year long process of designing and developing their online course, simultaneously getting technical training through workshops and individual consultations with the Instructional Designer. The courses are evaluated by the distance education committee. The “Online Course Development Procedure”, is published in the Distance Education at LSC-O handbook, and outlines the process.

Documentation:

Developing a Distance Education Course (Appendix G: DE Handbook - Section 2)
3.5. A policy exists that addresses faculty teaching load for those involved in distance and/or off-campus education.

Response: Yes

Faculty members are not required to develop or teach a distance education course; however, full-time faculty, administrators, staff, and part-time faculty are eligible to propose a course/program for development and delivery via a distance education medium. Remuneration for course development is based on the formula of “course credit hour equivalency.” Developmental rate for publisher-developed courses are paid one-half of the course credit-hour equivalency. Payment for credit course delivery will be based on the formula of “faculty course load + 1 credit hour” for first-time delivery of an online course (fully online or a hybrid). Subsequent semesters and courses are paid as regular faculty course load. Distance Education course development pay is not paid as part of base pay but only as an overload. Payment is made upon the successful completion of development based upon the required standards.

Documentation:

Distance Education Instructional Policies (Appendix I: DE Handbook - Section 4)
3.6. A process exists for evaluating the credentials of faculty employed by other institutions who are teaching courses for which your institution is awarding credit.

Response: Yes

We have faculty that teach for us and for other institutions. The process of evaluating their credentials is the same as for our regular faculty members.

Documentation:

Faculty Handbook
3.7. The institution has policies on intellectual property, faculty compensation, copyright guidelines, and the distribution of revenue (if applicable) that are appropriate for distance and/or off-campus education.

Response: Yes

LSC-O has developed policies for the development of distance education courses. These policies address intellectual property, compensation for course development, licensing rights and revenue distribution.

Documentation:

Distance Education Instructional Policies (Appendix I: DE Handbook - Section 4)
SECTION 4 – STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

4.1. The institution provides distance and off-campus learners’ access to appropriate student services.

Response: Yes

The goal of distance education at LSC-O is to provide students with the flexibility to take classes in a way that does not interfere with their work life. In order to do that, we provide comparable academic support services through the use of technologies including the Internet, email, telephone and fax. The scope of these services available via alternative means (other than a physical visit to campus) is constantly expanding.

Contact information for all academic support services is provided to students via the college web site (http://www.lsco.edu), catalog (http://www.lsco.edu/Students.htm). New students have to contact their advisor to register for classes. Regular students, who have already been in the semester for a semester, can register for classes online, provided there are no holds in their accounts. Students can access information on Financial Aid, Library Resources, and Academic Advising, Technical Support, Tutoring, Admissions. As of now, we do not have Online Application process ready. Counseling students are required to come to campus or are referred to a professional counselor in their area.

Students receive bookstore services over the Internet via a secure server. Students may request shipping services or reserve their books for pickup at a later date.

The Testing Center currently provides test proctoring services for distance education students. Students are able to schedule appointments for online course exams through the Testing Center on the main campus by phone, email or in person Monday through Saturday of each week.

Help desk support is available in person, via telephone or email during standard office hours and is manned during the critical first 3 weeks of the long semesters.

Following the course final, students are asked to complete a survey which evaluates the following student services: Library, financial aid, advising/counseling, technical support, and tutoring (The Learning Center). The results of these surveys are analyzed and used to identify areas within student services which need to be addressed.

Documentation:

Distance Education orientation materials (Appendix H)
4.2. Distance and off-campus learners have access to library resources of an appropriate breadth and quality for the distance and/or off-campus education program(s) offered.

Response: Yes

The LSC-O library (Ron E. Lewis Library) serves all students who are taking courses through LSC-O whether in traditional classroom or through distance education. The public services librarian is the main point of contact for distance learning students. The Library’s web page provides a gateway to a variety of resources, digital and non-digital. The library is a member of TexShare and subscribes to a wide variety of electronic resources that include full-text journal and citation databases, encyclopedias, and special subject informational databases. Access is available through any campus networked computer and remote access from home is available to our students and faculty. TexShare allows our students to check out books from other TexShare libraries. Interlibrary loans allow students to request materials not owned by our Library. For reference services, students are encouraged to ask for assistance by phone, e-mail or in person.

Documentation:

Ron E. Lewis Library
SECTION 5 – DISTANCE EDUCATION FACILITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

5.1. The institution has available the facilities and equipment necessary to deliver its distance learning program.

Response: Yes

LSC-O provides a budget to support a quality distance education program that is used for travel, supplies, and training. The Desire2Learn system is hosted by the Desire2Learn Inc. in Canada. They provide the learning environment and are responsible for hosting, SIS integration, and providing support. They are also responsible for providing regular updates to the system.
5.2. Arrangements have been made for off-campus delivery of required laboratories, clinical placement sites, workshops, seminars, etc. associated with distance education activities.

Response: Yes

The platform used for distance education at LSC-O is primarily Desire2Learn, which is accessed through the Internet. Online courses are offered through use of servers hosted by Desire2Learn Inc. To access these online classes, students must have access to the Internet. They can access the Internet either through their own Internet Service Provider or through computers located on campus. All courses are dealt with on a case by case basis. If required for a course, Information & Technology Services burns CDs and provides them to students on request from faculty. No other activity has occurred which mandates any additional help. If anything comes up in future, we will take adequate steps that help students.

Documentation:
PART 5 – STATISTICAL DATA

Distance Education Course Enrollment

Student retention and completion have been measured by reviewing the class rolls (12th class day) and the final roll showing drops, withdrawals, etc. for the distance education classes. As can be seen from the graph below, there has been a consistent increase in enrollment in distance education classes, when viewed for the past 5 years.

The enrollment has increased from 1673 in Year 2009 to 2457 in Year 2010. This includes the spring, fall, Mini-Spring, summer I and summer II sessions. The sections include totally online as well as hybrid classes. These are duplicated enrollment numbers, which means that if a student has enrolled in more than one online class, the student is shown more than once.
1. Distance Education Course Completion rates

The completion rates have drastically improved. The completion rate has increased from 60.6 in spring 2009 to 77.6 in spring 2010, while it has increased from 67.9 in fall 2009 to 77.2 in fall 2010. Though it is a matter of conjecture at this point to rationally explain this increase, it could be due to quite a few reasons. Students find the new learning management system more suited to their style, more students are digital literate; faculty is better equipped to teach online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Fall</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>63.07</td>
<td>67.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>57.93</td>
<td>67.77</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>64.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Student Learning Outcomes**

The goal of the distance learning classes from their inception was to have the learning outcomes as similar to the traditional classes as possible with different modes of delivering instruction. Reviewing the syllabi and class materials of the DL courses indicated the courses have the same learning outcomes.

3. **Student Evaluation of the course and instructor / Student satisfaction**

Student satisfaction of the course and their online instructor has been measured through self-reported responses in surveys. Generally, self-disciplined students with complicated schedules loved online courses. Students who felt disenfranchised (isolated from the instructor) hated the experience and vowed to never take a DL course again. Self reported data from surveys show the following:

**I have learned a great deal in this course**

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that they have learned a lot in their online course.
Increased my interest in the subject matter

Nearly 90% of our students agree with the fact that their interest in the subject matter increased by taking the online course.
Objectives and course requirements were stated clearly

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that course objectives and course requirements were stated clearly in their online course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Agree</th>
<th>Total Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2005</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2006</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2007</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2009</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2010</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The professor seemed to have a thorough knowledge of the subject

More than 95% of our students agree with the fact their professor had a thorough knowledge of the subject being taught online.
The professor encouraged thinking and reasoning

More than 95% of our students agree with the fact that the professor encouraged thinking and reasoning.
The professor made the course interesting and challenging

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that the professor made the course interesting and challenging.
I felt comfortable expressing my ideas and viewpoints

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that they felt comfortable expressing their ideas and viewpoints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Agree</th>
<th>Total Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2005</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2006</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2007</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2008</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2009</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The professor responded to questions in a helpful way

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that the professor responded to questions in a helpful encouraged thinking and reasoning.
The course was well prepared

More than 95% of our students agree with the fact that the course was well prepared.
Course content was thorough and appropriate

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that the course content was thorough and appropriate.
Assignments were consistent with the course objectives

More than 95% of our students agree with the fact that the course assignments were consistent with course objectives.
The professor provided a syllabus

More than 99% of our students agree with the fact that they were given the course syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Agree</th>
<th>Total Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2005</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2006</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2007</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2009</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2010</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Examinations tested over materials covered in class or assigned

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that examinations tested materials covered in the class or were assigned.

![Bar chart showing percent agreement from FY 2005 to FY 2010. Total Agree: 92.5, 92.9, 93.4, 96.5, 96.8. Total Disagree: 7.0, 7.1, 2.4, 3.7, 3.2.](chart.png)
Professor graded and returned student work in a reasonable time

More than 87% of our students agree with the fact that the professor graded and returned student work in reasonable time.
Grading was objective and fair

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that grading was objective and fair.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Agree</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Completing a course using computer technology was easier that I expected

More than 80% of our students agree with the fact that completing a course using computer technology was easier than expected.
I was able to submit assignments without instructor help

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that they were able to submit assignments without instructor’s help.
Overall I found distance learning class excellent

More than 85% of our students agree with the fact that distance learning class was excellent.
The professor replied promptly to my questions

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that their professor replied promptly to their questions.
I felt a sense of community in this course

More than 80% of our students agree with the fact that they felt a sense of community in this course.
The chat sessions were helpful

More than 70% of our students agree with the fact that chat sessions were helpful. It needs to be kept in mind, that not all courses make use of the chat tool.
I need to learn more about my computer

More than 60% students think they know how their computer works. This means that today’s students are more computer savvy and are comfortable in the online environment.
Taking an internet class was perfect for my schedule

More than 90% of our students agree with the fact that internet classes are perfect for their schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Agree</th>
<th>FY 2005</th>
<th>FY 2006</th>
<th>FY 2007</th>
<th>FY 2008</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>92.8</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Disagree</th>
<th>FY 2005</th>
<th>FY 2006</th>
<th>FY 2007</th>
<th>FY 2008</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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</table>
Internet courses are as effective as traditional classes

More than 80% of our students agree with the fact that internet classes are as effective as traditional classes. The decrease from previous years is because of more number of students who are taking online classes and so this could be their first online experience.
I would enroll in another internet course

More than 85% of our students agree with the fact that they would enroll in another internet course.
4. Faculty satisfaction

Faculty satisfaction has been measured through self-reported responses on survey conducted in Fall 2007, the willingness to teach again and to develop new courses. The self-reported responses from the faculty indicated that the experiences were good or excellent and that they were satisfied teaching Internet courses. Some of the responses we got are given below:

- Did you have any training on Desire2Learn prior to teaching your first course?
  - 100% of our online instructors had training. They also mentioned that the training was very helpful.
- Would you teach another course on Desire2Learn?
  - 81% of our online instructors said “yes.”
- Have you submitted a proposal to add any of these courses to the inventory?
  - 18% of our online instructors said “yes.”
- Overall, how would you rate your experience teaching a Desire2Learn course?
  - 81% of our online instructors rated their experience as “good.” I like that students can work at their own pace and convenience. Desire2Learn makes communication easier. It makes you look at your entire course at one time (instead of in pieces as usually done when teaching in the classroom), the objectives, evaluation measures, etc. It is a very user friendly program. The mail option and discussion board are wonderful tools to engage students.

5. Compare Distance Education Courses/Traditional

The comparison of the distance learning classes with the traditional counterpart is a little difficult. One reason for this difficulty is the lack of comparable traditional classes. This aspect needs to be looked into before a conclusion can be arrived at. However, overall performance of students in both formats is comparable. The course completion rate for online courses was 77.6 for spring 2010. This compares favorably well with the overall college completion rate of 78.2%. For spring 2010 the online course completion rate was 77.2, which again compares well with the overall college completion rate of 74%.

6. Library Use

Library use was not recorded for this report as it may not be used solely for distance learning classes.

7. The Learning Center Use

Learning Center Use was not recorded for this report as it may not be used solely for distance learning classes.
PART 6 – APPENDIX

APPENDIX A