

## Overview

The Leeward Community College Distance Education (DE) Plan defines a common vision for online education. The DE Plan establishes comprehensive strategic goals, and it charts the steps needed for successful implementation of distance learning.<sup>[a]</sup>

The DE Plan positions the College to respond effectively and efficiently to changing workforce needs, to growth in demand for distance learning, and to rapidly changing technologies and pedagogies.

## Introduction

The primary purpose of DE is to provide access to (engaging, innovative, flexible) facilitated learning opportunities to students anywhere in the state who are committed to higher education.

A fundamental requirement for DE is that the quality and standards of its courses and programs be comparable to other instructional programs. Credit courses and programs offered through DE result in learning outcomes appropriate to the degree or certificate granted, and course requirements are of equal rigor and breadth to those required of on-campus classes and programs.<sup>[b]</sup> Mechanisms for the planning, delivery, and evaluation of DE programs are carried out to assure the maintenance of standards and quality. Faculty are responsible to maintain in their DE courses those instructional standards that apply to all instructional programs of the College.

DE technologies are dramatically changing the landscape of higher education. In order for the College to continue offering high quality educational opportunities that promote student success, three core values guide the DE Plan:

1. **Innovation** in the use of distance learning technologies is critical since the technologies for learning at a distance delivery is consistently changing. Understanding the effective use of these technologies in ways that improve learning and enhance teaching is an increasing and ongoing process. The College is committed to encouraging the most effective ways to implement technologies that are congruent with its mission and resources.
2. **Collaboration and interaction** are implicit in the very nature of these technologies. DE eliminates traditional boundaries and enables institutions to find ways to collaborate in serving the needs of students. The College is committed to developing collaboration and interaction in DE courses that are consistent with its mission.
3. **Quality** of DE courses is essential to the College. The use of distance learning technologies must contribute to the quality of courses and the success of students.

## Purpose of the Distance Education Plan

The objective of the DE Plan is to document the past, describe the present, and define future goals of the DE Program at Leeward Community College. This is the first strategic effort developed since online courses were first offered at the College.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION DEFINITIONS**

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) includes the definition of **distance education** based on language from the Higher Education Opportunity Act ([HEOA](#), Sec. 103, a.19.A & B) in its [Substantive Change Manual](#) (August 2009):

*Distance education is defined, for the purposes of accreditation review, as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMS, in conjunction with any of the other technologies. (p. 12)*

### **Definition of Course Modalities at Leeward Community College**

DE at the College is defined as instruction where students and faculty are separated by distance and interact using a variety of technologies. There are four types of courses supported by the DE Program.

#### **Online Course**

An online course at the College is a class offered entirely online or a class that meets both online and on-campus for orientation and/or exams but not for on-campus instruction.

#### **Hybrid Course<sup>[c]</sup>**

~~A hybrid course at the College is a class that offers instruction both online and on-campus. Required on-campus class meetings are included in the schedule of classes following a predictable pattern, such as on the same day(s) of the week and at the same time.~~

#### **Other Delivery Modes: Broadcast and Video Conferencing Distance Education**

The College began offering cable courses in the fall of 1997, producing five cable courses per year. Cable courses are all web enhanced, offering student access to class materials and other resources online. Cable courses are aired on Channel 55, Olelo, as part of the Hawai'i Educational Networking Consortium (HENC) agreement to provide cable programming intended to lead to the acquisition of an Associate of Arts degree.

The University of Hawai'i<sup>[d]</sup> (UH) System offers two-way video conferencing over Hawai'i Interactive Television System (HITS). HITS is closed circuit, allowing only interactivity and connectivity among HITS classrooms fully equipped with the proper video-conference and room-based equipment within the UH System.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Vision**

Leeward Community College will gain recognition as a leader in providing open access, college-level education by removing barriers that restrict access to online learning by increasing the

equality of educational opportunities for learners, including under-served populations in Hawai'i, and by responding to emerging technologies in proactive and innovative ways.

## **Mission**

The mission of Distance Education at Leeward Community College is dedicated to providing open access to online learning that connects learner and community needs with educational resources, appropriate technologies, and a variety of instructional pedagogies.

The College's mission is to improve the quality of education by designing innovative, interactive, and collaborative learning environments by using technologies to address the needs of adult<sup>[e]</sup> learners.

## **Goals**

1. Through continual evaluation, improve the quality of distance learning.
2. Provide increased access, especially for under-served populations.
3. Assist faculty to identify and implement strategies that use appropriate and effective technologies and pedagogies for learning at a distance.
4. Provide on-going support for faculty and students to enhance distance learning with technology.
5. Develop and implement strategies to increase DE faculty and staff recruitment and retention efforts (linked to Strategic Plan, Goal D: Objective 1a).

### **Goal #1 -Through continual evaluation, improve the quality of distance education.**

#### Objectives

1. Through the DE Committee and in conjunction with Faculty Senate, develop a systematic evaluation of online courses for effectiveness in meeting student needs and providing comparable student learning outcomes as face-to-face courses<sup>[f]</sup>.
2. Develop standards, criteria, and evaluation tools for evaluating <sup>[g]</sup>the quality of online courses. (Sample: <http://www.coastline.edu/files/AcademicQualityRubric.pdf>)
3. Through the Office of Planning, Policy, and Assessment, systematize the data collection for online courses and services.
4. Create an internal planning process for continual evaluation <sup>[h]</sup>of DE.
5. Create an online DE faculty handbook and checklist with administrative procedures and other pertinent information.
6. Integrate DE goals into the Annual Program Review Process.
7. Develop a plan and procedures to include stakeholders in the process of determining which courses and programs are delivered via DE modes.
8. Revise the DE peer evaluation form to include DE standards<sup>[i]</sup> developed in step 2.
9. Require DE faculty to have at least one peer evaluation for an online course per year.
10. Create, establish, and develop performance evaluation policies and procedures that specifically address DE within the UH System, the UH Community Colleges, and the appropriate bargaining unit framework.
11. Create a DE Standing Committee<sup>[j]</sup> of the Faculty Senate to review all planning lists and provide comprehensive, broad-based recommendations for the direction needed for DE at the College.

## **Strategic Considerations**

Courses and programs are the purview of instructional divisions. There is a need for a campus wide plan that commits each of the divisions to work together to develop online courses and programs.

There is a lack of data on the need for specific courses and programs offered through DE compared with the availability of faculty trained in online course delivery.

## **Assessment<sup>[k]</sup>**

**The assessment of educational opportunities can be measured in terms of the following data points:**

1. Total enrollment in DE courses and face-to-face courses (growth and enrollment comparison of DE and face-to-face courses).
2. The number of DE classes offered each semester.
3. The number of non-duplicated headcount of DE students.
4. The number of new online classes offered in each semester.
5. The number of new degrees and certificates in each year.
6. The number of different courses available over two years.
7. The number of programs that are offered completely online.
8. Comparison of success rates and withdrawal rates of DE and non-DE classes.
9. Completed DE questions in the Annual Program Review process.
10. Data from mandatory question(s) in eCafe course evaluations.

## **Goal #2. Provide increased access, especially for under-served populations.**

**The College is committed to use online technology to provide access to general education as well as career and technology education programs to students throughout the state and, in particular, students in under-served regions<sup>[l]</sup> as identified by the College.**

This goal is in alignment with the College's Strategic Plan #2, which is to increase the educational capital of the state by increasing the participation and completion of students, particularly low-income students and those from under-served regions.

## **Objectives**

1. Develop at least one program every two years that can be completed through DE.
2. Establish funding for DE to develop at least one program every two years.
3. Increase DE enrollment by 25 percent over the next five years.

## **Assessment**

**The assessment of educational opportunities can be measured in terms of the following data points:**

1. The number of under-served students who take DE classes.
2. The number of under-served students who successfully progress and graduate or transfer to baccalaureate institutions.
3. Data for under-served students taking online versus non-online courses and programs.
4. The number of programs that can be completed through DE.

**Goal #3: Assist faculty to identify and implement strategies which use appropriate and effective technologies and pedagogies.**

There is a need to provide formal and informal ongoing support and other resources to online<sup>[m]</sup> DE faculty. Research in online learning is constantly evolving as new technologies and strategies are developed, tested, and adapted to varied contexts. While faculty often pursue independent development opportunities, a more systematic and structured approach is needed.

**In order to foster appropriate use of distance learning pedagogies and technologies and encourage development of innovative approaches to distance teaching, opportunities must be provided for faculty to learn and make choices about a range of ways in which they can enhance interaction with students.**

The College will support training and certification for faculty teaching DE courses by promoting and funding training opportunities and encouraging collaboration to establish common skills and practices. The College will also encourage coherent and quality course design through trainings and publications, the promotion of best practices, and the open availability of course materials<sup>[n]</sup> to faculty.

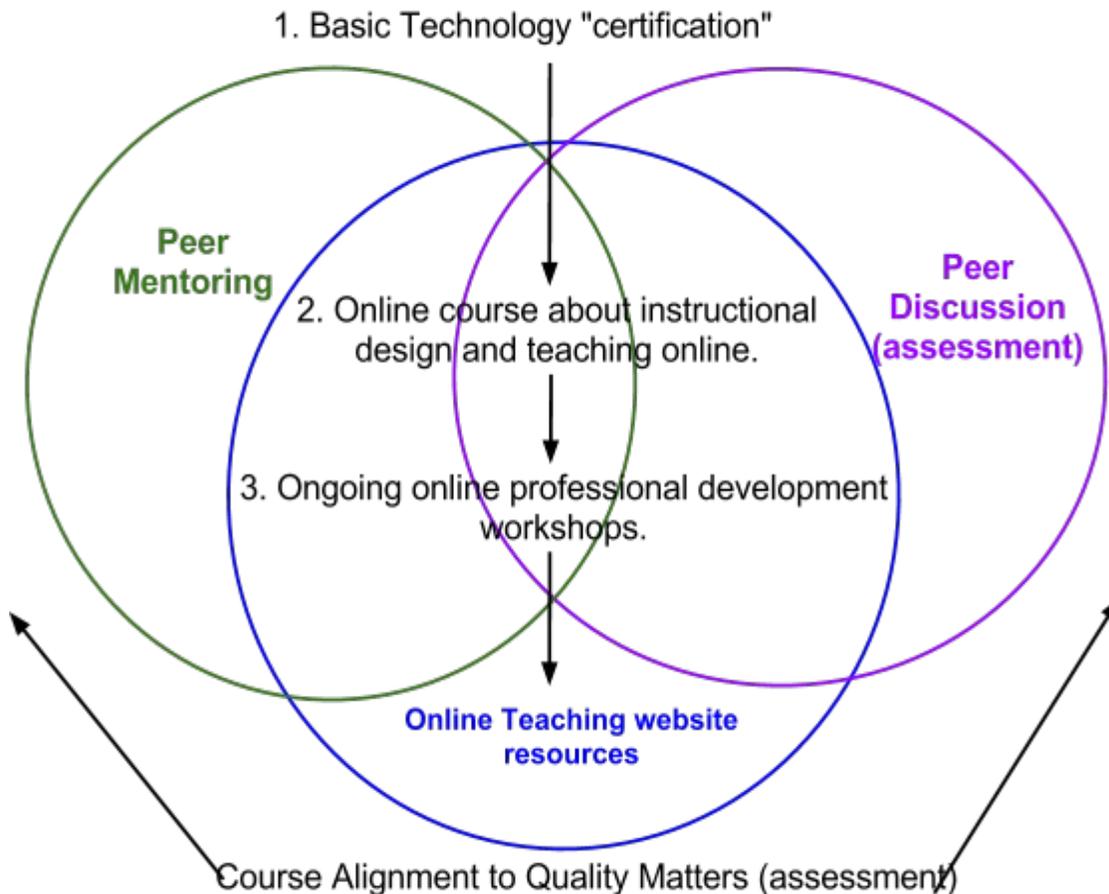
This goal is in alignment with the College's Strategic Plan #5, which is to recruit, renew, and retain a qualified, effective, and diverse faculty, staff, and leadership.

### **Objectives**

1. Create DE faculty and student guides with administrative procedures and other pertinent information.<sup>[o]</sup>
  1. Develop the *iTeach @ Leeward* web site<sup>[p]</sup> to include best practices and documentation of procedures and policies.
2. Create and implement a systematic online course design, delivery process, and assessment process for faculty development.
  1. Develop a Basic Technology "certification."
    1. Establish baseline technology skills (minimum and desired levels) required to teach online.
    2. Work with division chairs to educate and recruit faculty for the certification process and/or mention remediation opportunities

3. Provide training and assessment of baseline minimum technology skills to certify faculty technology skills before beginning the process to teach online<sup>[a]</sup>.
2. Develop a systemic online course design process<sup>[a]</sup> that fosters appropriate interaction between instructor and students and among students and content.
3. Develop both regularly scheduled and periodic online training workshops for faculty in the areas of pedagogy and the use of technology tools.
  1. Provide faculty development initiatives to implement strategies and pedagogies to enhance online instruction.
  2. Provide faculty development initiatives for emerging methodologies and technologies.
4. Provide faculty development initiatives on how to teach and facilitate online learning.
  1. Develop an open online course<sup>[s]</sup> about instructional design and online teaching (*iCourse Design*).
  2. Provide remediation opportunities for current faculty to enhance their online teaching/courses<sup>[a]</sup>
3. Create and implement an ongoing, systematic course assessment process.
  5. Create a rubric based on *Quality Matters*.
  6. Create assessment training for faculty to provide feedback for online courses.  
<sup>[u]</sup>
4. Establish funding for a comprehensive online faculty development program, including stipends for faculty to develop quality online courses using a rubric.
5. Develop a community of inquiry for online faculty.
  1. Develop and implement a peer mentoring process.
  2. Develop and implement an informal peer discussion process for faculty to exchange methods, approaches, technologies, data, and ideas aimed at improving the effectiveness of online courses.

## Systematic Online Course Design and Delivery Process



### **Assessment**

The assessment of educational opportunities can be measured in terms of the following data points:

1. Online faculty survey about assessment and improvement of online courses.
2. Course evaluations and student focus groups.
3. Distance faculty and course evaluations.
4. Percent of new online courses created and assessed using the course design and implementation framework and assessment process.
5. Number of faculty completing each level of professional development initiatives.
6. Course assessments based on the *Quality Matters* rubric completed by faculty teams through a peer review process.
7. Completed assessment tools, which will provide feedback of each online course.
8. Percent of online courses assessed.

**Goal #4 - Provide on-going support for faculty and students to enhance distance learning with technology.**

### **Objectives**

Provide the support and services necessary to faculty and students for successful distance learning. This goal includes objectives that ensure student access to existing college services as well as services designed to meet the special needs of distance education <sup>[M]</sup>students.

1. Create an online community for DE students.
  1. Create online student orientation for DE with information about successful DE student characteristics, skill levels, and responsibilities, frequently asked questions, and testimonials.
  2. Create on-demand learning support services for DE (for example, the library, tutoring, counseling, help desk, and disability services).
  3. Create online student services for DE (for example, application, financial aid, registration, counseling, payment, and transcripts).
2. Create an online readiness assessment for students interested in DE<sup>[w]</sup>.
3. Create and institutionalize an introductory course on how to succeed in an online course<sup>[x]</sup>.
4. Create and disseminate a systematic process that transitions from face-to-face teaching to advanced online course delivery.
5. Identify DE courses in the college catalog, web site, and other public materials.
6. Create an online complaint form and process for students to submit complaints or grievances to the Dean of Student Services.

## **Assessment**

The assessment of educational opportunities can be measured in terms of the following data points:

1. A customer satisfaction survey for all services that are immediately emailed to students after receiving support services. (Objectives 1b and 1c)
2. Student survey after the completion of a DE course (and possible connection to an online readiness assessment).
3. Course evaluation of introductory course on how to succeed in an online environment.
4. Student success data comparing students who took an introductory course on how to succeed in an online environment versus those who did not take the course.
5. Survey/focus group with DE faculty who used a systematic process.
6. Student evaluations on courses using the University's eCAFE for courses that have followed a systematic process for DE.

## **Goal #5 - Develop and implement strategies to increase Distance Education faculty and staff recruitment and retention efforts.**

### **Objectives**

1. Develop and formalize criteria, qualifications, and procedures needed for the recruitment and selection of personnel involved in offering DE.
2. Involve personnel with experience in DE in the recruitment and selection of new personnel. All faculty hiring committees will have personnel with DE experience.
3. Revise the current "Leeward CC Distance Education Guidelines" and create DE standards aligned with national standards. These standards will be approved by the applicable governing groups and will be used for hiring faculty and designing and assessing DE courses.
4. Create, establish, and develop performance evaluation policies and procedures that specifically address the systematic evaluation of faculty.

[c]gmwalker:

the Federal DOE and the accrediting agencies do NOT regard hybrid courses as DE. In the proposed Leeward DE plan could you revise the "Definitions" section (pp. 2-3) to reflect that?

[t]wongjona:

like to suggest another word instead of "remediation" because of its connotations