ANGELINA COLLEGE DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

FACULTY EDITION

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Contents

Distance Education at Angelina College

Mission Statement

The mission of Angelina College is to provide quality educational opportunities and services to aid students in reaching their full potential. The college will assist a diverse student population to prepare for a rapidly changing and highly technological world through quality educational programs and services. These objectives are embodied in the college's offerings through distance education. The program will extend course accessibility to the community and beyond through distance learning.

The mission of the Office of Distance Education is to provide access to educational opportunities and service to students in a twelve (12) county service area and beyond. The Office of Distance Education will assist a diverse student population to prepare for a rapidly changing and highly technological world through coordination of off-campus teaching centers, the delivery of internet courses through selected learning management systems (LMS) and enhanced instruction through a variety of delivery methods. Additionally, the office oversees the delivery of courses to concurrent high school and Early College High School (ECHS) students.

Angelina College Distance Education Options

Angelina College currently offers hundreds of distinct distance education courses taught by numerous instructors. Currently, we offer three types of distance learning courses:

Online (internet) Course – Students take an online course using any computer that has Internet access and that meets the minimum technical requirements. Online course materials and assignments are typically provided via Blackboard; however, they may be presented using another learning management system. The expected requirements for an online student to travel to campus are limited to orientation and/or taking exams in a proctored setting at one of our AC campuses or another secure location approved by the Office of Distance Education.

Hybrid Course – Hybrid classes combine the best elements of traditional face-to-face instruction with online instruction. Most courses meet once per week in person with the remainder of instruction occurring online. Another type of hybrid is a lecture/lab class, which has an in-class lab and an online lecture portion. When teaching a hybrid course, instructors must integrate both the face-to-face and online components. To minimize or omit the online component is no different from failing to hold required class meetings in a face-to-face class.

ITV Course – Interactive Video Conference instruction meets during regularly scheduled class times. This technology allows the instruction to be delivered simultaneously to many sites.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Distance Course Definitions

Fully Distance Education Course (Online) – A course which may have mandatory face-to-face sessions totaling no more than 15 percent of the instructional time. Examples of face-to-face sessions include orientation, laboratory, exam review, or an in-person test.

Hybrid Course – A course in which a majority (more than 50 percent but less than 85 percent), of the planned instruction occurs when the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place.

Responsibility for Quality

Courses offered in the Distance Education format are comparable to face-to-face courses in regard to syllabi, learning outcomes, assessment, and course materials. The Vice President and Dean of Instruction is responsible for assuring the quality of all Angelina College distance learning courses with assistance from the Distance Learning Coordinator. The Division Directors are responsible for the quality of distance learning courses within their respective divisions.

Angelina College will evaluate online/distance courses' effectiveness, including student learning outcomes, enrollment, retention, and faculty satisfaction.

Each instructor is responsible for properly documenting student learning outcomes based on the institutional requirements.

Online course effectiveness will be evaluated on an ongoing basis using the following:

- Institutional Rubrics (same as face-to-face courses) that are discipline specific will be used to evaluate student success on predetermined assignments. These assignments will be uploaded by the appropriate persons into the WEAVE Online system to insure the documentation of effectiveness (See Appendix A).
- Student satisfaction surveys will be administered each semester to determine student satisfaction with the course. It is understood that this survey is not scientifically valid due to the fact that the survey is "optional," and therefore should not be used in the faculty evaluation process.
- Evaluation procedures for enrollment, retention, and faculty satisfaction are the same as for face-to-face courses.

Faculty Qualifications and Development

The same faculty qualifications will be applied to Angelina College Distance Education instructors as to all instructors who teach in a traditional face-to-face setting within Angelina College. Although the instructor's specific duties differ, the goal of quality education remains the same.

Online Course Approval

Angelina College extends an invitation to all programs to expand their course offerings through Distance Education. Faculty interested in developing or conducting a course must submit a request to the Distance Education Coordinator and to his/her Division Director. The basic framework of course development must be complete prior to submission to the Angelina College master schedule.

Minimum Expectations for all Online Courses

To ensure consistent and quality elements in all of the AC online courses, distance education instructors must include (at a minimum) the following in their online course(s):

- Course information posted in Blackboard or other Learning Management System.
- A COMPLETE syllabus as defined by the Angelina College syllabus template
- Expected response time from the instructor
- Attachments in a "user friendly" format (i.e. PDF, html) that do not require special software to open
- Course calendar

Course Content Policy

It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide, maintain, and update all materials used in a distance education course or any course which uses Angelina College's Learning Management System (LMS). The Office of Distance Education can facilitate in the deployment of Instructor content if the instructor wishes it, but the Office of Distance Education, or IT department for that matter, is in no way obligated to maintain course content. This includes E-Packs, external links to web sites, publisher provided content, or any other form of course content. It is the responsibility of the individual instructor to obtain training in the use of these forms of course content if he or she wishes to include such content in his or her classes.

The Office of Distance Education is responsible for problems which may arise with Angelina College's LMS, training instructors in the use of the college's LMS, and facilitating the use of the LMS.

Course and Instructor Review Policy[1]

It is the policy of Angelina College that all distance learning courses be in compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' *Principles of Accreditation*. To ensure this, each distance learning course, regardless of mode of instruction (ITV, Online, Hybrid, or other form of distance instruction), will be reviewed to make certain it is in compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation.*

Course Review Process

The College District has a recognized need for regular evaluation of the instructional process. Evaluation is needed not only for compliance with the standards of accrediting agencies, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but also for the College District to have a regular and continuing measurement of the performance of instructors. The College District shall have defined performance standards for achieving objectives it hopes to attain in instruction. Such an evaluation plan calls for input from the instructor as the provider of instruction, from the student as the receiver of instruction, from the division director as the supervisor of groups of faculty members, and Distance Education as facilitator of the course and associated technologies.

The goal of the evaluation of instruction is to assess the conditions in which instruction is given, the teaching abilities and techniques of the instructor, and how well or poorly the instructor associates with, guides, and counsels learners to a successful educational experience.

Quality instructional services are defined as those which provide for the mastery of a body of knowledge and skills, along with principles of scholarship and citizenship. Instructional standards that support quality instructional services include:

- Mastery of the instructor's discipline;
- Clear instructional presentation to learners;
- Effective organization of course materials and activities;
- Clear communication that encourages learner response and thinking;
- A rapport with learners that stimulates the learning process; and
- Instructional techniques and assignments that enhance the learning process.

These instructional standards are what the evaluation process attempts to measure by providing a summary of instructional effectiveness.

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[1] This policy conforms with the Angelina College Policy and Procedures manual, Policy DLA (Revised 06/2012), p. 158.

Distance education courses will be reviewed using the following rubric:

Interaction and Communication

Deficient	Adequate	Exemplary
Course offers limited opportunity for interaction and communication student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to-content.	Course offers some opportunities for interaction and communication student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to-content.	Course offers ample opportunities for interaction and communication student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to-content.

Course Goals

Deficient	Adequate	Exemplary
Course goals are not clearly defined and do not align to learning objectives.	Course goals are defined but may not align to learning objectives, or are not clearly defined.	Course goals are clearly defined and aligned to learning objectives.

Organization

Deficient	Adequate	Exemplary
Much of the course is under construction, with some key components identified such as the syllabus. Clear organization and navigation is lacking.	Course is organized and navigable. Students can understand the key components and structure of the course. Improvements could be made.	Course is well-organized and easy to navigate. Students can clearly understand all components and structure of the course.

Course Design

Deficient	Adequate	Exemplary
Course design does not present and communicate course information clearly.	Course design presents and communicates course information clearly.	Course design presents and communicates course information clearly throughout the course.

Content

Deficient	Adequate	Exemplary
Content is poorly organized, not in sync with course calendar and difficult to find.	Content is easy to find, organized, and in sync with course calendar.	Content is easy to find, organized, and in sync with course calendar. Content has a variety of appropriate access points.

Training for Online Faculty

The Office of Distance Education will develop and support infrastructure for faculty support in the form of training. Faculty/staff members will receive appropriate training *prior* to embarking on distance learning activities. Faculty teaching LMS based courses

will initially receive basic training either directly from the LMS Company or from the Office of Distance Education. Faculty teaching ITV will receive orientation/training on equipment the semester prior to teaching the video conference format after scheduling is submitted. Faculty teaching off-campus will receive orientation on off-campus resources (teaching centers) and processes. Additionally, training for Distance Education opportunities will be offered regularly throughout the school year and summer.

It is the responsibility of the Office of Distance Education to provide training and support to all Angelina College instructors in the use and creation of distance learning classes, including but not limited to online and interactive television. The Office of Distance Education shall accomplish this by providing regular training sessions on the use of these and other technologies, as well as in current pedagogy, best practices, and other subjects which would aid the Office of Distance Education in carrying out these responsibilities.

Training sessions will be held, at a minimum, once monthly and division directors will be informed of the time, place, and subject of these training sessions. Training can also be requested by current faculty members or by their respective division directors on a specific topic, technology, or LMS function by coordinating with the Office of Distance Education.

Virtual Campus Hours and Virtual Office Hours

Flexibility is the key to ensuring that faculty are able to meet the needs of AC students, are allowed the time to prepare adequately for distance learning classes, and are allowed to execute instruction through a variety of delivery methods.

According to current Angelina College policies and procedures,: "Full-time faculty are expected to spend a minimum of 35 hours per week on campus or at off-campus duty stations as scheduled each semester to meet the teaching schedule, divisional duties, and student needs."

Distance Education at Angelina College recognizes that time spent online in a Learning Management System qualifies as time spent at an off-campus duty station. Distance Education further recognizes that online instruction involves many hours of work each week building and maintaining courses, responding to students, grading assignments, and performing other online instructional activities that are comparable to those performed by a face-to-face instructor in an on-campus classroom or in his/her on-campus office. Therefore, the following principles shall apply in determining faculty workloads for instructors who teach online or hybrid courses:

Faculty are allowed to count 1 hour of Virtual Campus Hours for each credit hour of a course that is taught fully online (3 Virtual Campus Hours for a 3 credit hour course)

toward satisfying the 35 hour requirement as mandated by the current policies and procedures handbook.

Faculty are allowed to count one-half hour of Virtual Campus Hours for each credit hour of a hybrid course that is taught partially online (1.5 Virtual Campus Hours for a 3 credit hour course) toward satisfying the 35 hour requirement.

Faculty are allowed to count one hour of Virtual Campus Hours toward satisfying the 35 hour requirement for each internet laboratory course taught.

Faculty who are enhancing a face-to-face course with instruction in a learning management system or other instructional software are allowed to count one hour of Virtual Campus Hours toward satisfying the 35 hour requirement for each enhanced course taught.

Virtual Campus Hours shall not exceed one-half of the 35 hour minimum workload requirement (17.5 Virtual Campus Hours per week).

In order to meet the needs of Angelina College students, faculty who teach online, hybrid, or online-enhanced courses are encouraged to hold Virtual Office Hours. Virtual Office Hours are defined as hours when faculty are available to respond to student needs other than meeting with them physically in the faculty member's office on campus. The medium of communication (e-mail, chat, phone, etc.) and scheduling of Virtual Office Hours is left to the faculty member who best knows the needs of his/her students. No more than half of the five required weekly office hours (Regulation DJ, AC Policies and Procedures) should be Virtual Office Hours. Virtual Office Hours should be posted and published with regular office hours according to Regulation DJ.

Posting of Virtual Hours
All hours must be approved by your immediate supervisor and posted accordingly.

Faculty will need to be available for electronic discussion with students during his/her virtual hours. Faculty are NOT required to be in a chat room during virtual hours, but must be available for electronic communication.

A faculty member's virtual hours shall be posted on his/her office door and included in the posted course syllabus.

Faculty-Student Communication
Communication between students and faculty is critical for student success and retention. Faculty should communicate with students through email, telephone, discussion board, instant messaging, or other electronic modalities as frequently as possible. All messages from students to faculty should receive a reply within forty-eight hours Monday through Friday during business hours (with a goal of twenty-four hours).

Some night and weekend accessibility to the instructor is strongly encouraged, and left to the discretion of the faculty member.

Intellectual Property

Angelina College reserves the right of ownership of all electronic documents, programs, curriculum, etc. developed using the College's resources. If any question arises concerning this matter, the information will be referred to the College District intellectual property committee per Angelina College Board Policy and Procedures Manual (rev. 3/05). Instructors are responsible for appropriately attributing instructional material in the variety of distance education modalities to comply with copyright laws.

Fair Use and Legal Use of Copyrighted Materials in Distance Education Courses

Copyright guidelines related to Distance Education shall be developed and maintained by the office of Distance Learning Activities in accordance with copyright laws (U.S. Copyright Act, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, Fair Use Policy and the 2002 TEACH Act) and College copyright policies. The guidelines will be available on the Angelina College Library home page.

Faculty Responsibility for Copyright

Instructors of distance education courses are responsible for ensuring that all instructional material and delivery methods for distance education courses are in compliance with copyright laws and College copyright policy.

Online Course Backups

It is required that faculty make backups of their courses in Blackboard. Training for archiving courses will be provided by the Office of Distance Education.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Federal law (section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) mandates "reasonable accommodations" for post-secondary students with disabilities that substantially limit some major life activity. Compliance with these laws is mandatory. All students should be advised at the beginning of each course of their responsibility to contact Special Student Support Services with their documented disability information to ensure the appropriate accommodations can be made.

Legal Requirements

Both state and federal law require community colleges to operate all programs and activities in a manner which is accessible to students with disabilities. Accordingly, as the system develops its capacity for creation of technology based instructional

resources and the delivery of distance learning; it must proceed with the needs of all students in mind, including the unique needs of students with disabilities.

At the federal level, requirements for access for persons with disabilities were first imposed on recipients of federal funding by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794) and its accompanying regulations set forth at 34 C.F.R. 104. Similar requirements were later imposed on all public entities, regardless of whether or not they receive federal funding, by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12100 et seq) and the regulations implementing Title II of the ADA which appear at 28 C.F.R. 35.

In particular, the Section 504 regulations and the regulations implementing Title II of the ADA contain nearly identical provisions stating that recipients of federal funds and public entities in providing any aid, benefit or service, may not afford a qualified individual with a disability an opportunity to participate that is not as effective as that provided to others. (See 34 C.F.R. 104.4 (b)(1) (iii) and 28 C.F.R. 35.130(b) (1) (iii)). Title II recognizes the special importance of communication, which includes access to information, in its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. 35.160 (a). The regulation requires that a public entity, such as a community college, take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with persons with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

The United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for ensuring that all educational institutions comply with the requirements of all federal civil rights laws, including Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. As a result, the opinions of OCR are generally accorded considerable weight by the courts in interpreting the requirements of these laws.

There are also state laws and regulations which require community colleges to make their distance education offerings accessible to students with disabilities.

Basic Requirements for Providing Access

The following are general principles that should be followed in ensuring that distance education courses are accessible to students with disabilities. They represent the general concepts of the ADA and its regulations but do not provide a detailed legal analysis of the ADA requirements. Persons utilizing this document who are unfamiliar with the ADA may wish to consult the campus ADA Coordinator or DSP&S Coordinator for further interpretation. In the remainder of this document, specific guidelines will be provided for resolving access issues with respect to particular delivery modes commonly used in distance education.

1. One of the primary concepts of distance education is to offer students "Learning anytime, anywhere." Therefore, all distance education resources must be designed to afford students with disabilities maximum opportunity to access distance education resources "anytime, anywhere" without the need for outside assistance (i.e. sign language interpreters, aides, etc.).

2. Distance education resources must be designed to provide "built-in" accommodation where possible (i.e. closed captioning, descriptive narration) and/or interface design/content layout which is accessible to "industry standard" assistive computer technology in common use by persons with disabilities.

3. Whenever possible, information should be provided in the alternative format preferred by the student (i.e. sign language interpreter, closed captioning, descriptive narration, Braille, audio tape, large print, electronic text). When choosing between possible alternative formats or methods of delivery, consideration should be given to the fact that methods which are adequate for short, simple or less important communications may not be equally effective or appropriate for longer, more complex, or more critical material (Example: Use of a telephone relay service may be an acceptable method for a faculty member to respond to a brief question from a deaf student during his/her office hours, but probably would not be appropriate as a means of permitting that same student to participate in a class discussion in a course conducted by teleconference.) Issues concerning accommodation should be resolved through appropriate campus procedures.

4. Adoption of access solutions which include assigning assistants (i.e. sign language interpreters, readers) to work with an individual student to provide access to distance education resources should only be considered as a last resort when all efforts to enhance the native accessibility of the course material have failed.

5. Access to distance education courses, resources and materials include the audio, video and text components of courses or communication delivered ITV, compressed video, Local Area Network/Wide Area Network (LAN/WAN networks), Internet, telephone or any other form of electronic transmission. Access to resources and materials include the audio, video, multimedia and text components of Web sites, electronic chat rooms, e-mail, instructional software, CDROM, DVD, laser disc, video tape, audio tape, electronic text and print materials. Where access to Web sites not controlled by the college is required or realistically necessary to completion of a course, the college must take steps to ensure that such sites are accessible or provide the same material by another means that is accessible.

6. Distance education courses, resources and materials must be designed and delivered in such a way that the level of communication and course taking experience is the same for students with or without disabilities.

7. After the adoption date of these guidelines, any distance education courses, resources or materials purchased or leased from a third-party provider or created or

substantially modified "in-house" must be accessible to students with disabilities unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity or result in undue financial and administrative burdens on the College.

8. Divisions are encouraged to review all existing distance education curriculum, materials and resources as quickly as possible and make necessary modifications to ensure access for students with disabilities. In the event that a student with a disability enrolls in an existing distance education course before this review is completed, the college will be responsible for acting in a timely manner to making any requested modifications to the curriculum, materials or resources used in the course, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity or result in undue financial and administrative burdens on the College.

9. In all cases, even where the College can demonstrate that a requested accommodation would involve a fundamental alteration in the nature of the instructional activity or would impose an undue financial and administrative burden, it must nevertheless provide an alternative accommodation which is equally effective for the student if such an accommodation is available.

10. Ensuring that distance education courses, materials and resources are accessible to students with disabilities is a shared college responsibility. All college administrators, faculty and staff who are involved in the use of this instructional mode share this obligation.

Distance Education and New and Emerging Technologies

Angelina College Faculty are encouraged to explore new technologies that may enhance delivery of distance education instruction as they become available. The selection, incorporation, and use of these technologies should be guided by the same student learning outcomes for non-distance education courses. The Faculty must maintain all professional and ethical standards which govern faculty dedication to the delivery of high quality and academically sound courses and accomplishes the college's mission.

Points of Contact and Chain of Command

The Institution will have clear and consistent points of contact and chain of command for faculty and staff concerning different Distance Education issues.

Issues involving instruction, including enrollment, student conduct, pedagogy, or any other area involving instruction, should be reported to the appropriate Division Director. Issues related to technology, including the college's LMS, interactive television connections, training needs, equipment failure, or any other area related to delivery of instruction, should be reported to the Coordinator of Distance Education. Issues

involving classes at off-campus teaching centers should be reported to the appropriate Extension Director, the Coordinator of Distance Education, and the appropriate Division Director.

Instructor Drops and Distance Education

If an instructor drops a student from his or her class, or blocks a student from accessing the class materials posted on Angelina College's Learning Management System (LMS), it is the responsibility of that instructor to inform faculty LMS support and student LMS support of this action so that those staff members do not inadvertently add or unblock the student from that class.

Distance Education and Privacy

Angelina College complies with all of the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). We are committed to protecting the privacy of a student's educational record regardless of delivery method. All state and federal laws and regulations and Angelina College regulations and policies concerning the privacy of student records shall apply with equal force and effect to distance learning student records. The Angelina College Records Office is the point of contact for all FERPA related issues, and all employees are informed and trained of their responsibilities of unauthorized release of confidential records or information. Because an online environment creates a record of student activity, it is subject to FERPA privacy rights, unlike verbal exchanges in a physical classroom.

Identity Verification in Distance Learning Courses

The identity verification process for online courses protects student's privacy through the use of a secure portal, with a secure login and password. Access to distance learning courses and live or recorded webcasts shall only be granted via secure password to students who are properly enrolled.

Angelina College secures student personal information from unauthorized access, use or disclosure. Angelina College secures the personally identifiable information students provide on computer servers in a controlled environment protected from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. These measures include Secure Socket Layer (SSL) software during the transmission of information, which encrypts this data. However, Angelina College cannot guarantee that student submissions to the college's website, any content residing on the college's servers, or any transmissions from the college's servers will be completely secure.

Security, Privacy and Academic Integrity

Student identification procedures will be instituted to ensure academic integrity on all assignments. Students will be required to submit all assignments through the password-protected LMS system. All online exams will be administered in such a way as to ensure academic integrity. These may include password protected exams, face-to-face exams, or proctored online exams.

Faculty Responsibility

Faculty and staff understand and carry out a commitment to confidentiality, integrity, and security to protect the privacy of students who participate in distance learning activities. Students' records, both in digital or analog forms, are kept private by the instructor, except in cases where the administration or staff access the course with legitimate educational interest under FERPA guidelines.

Student Responsibility

It is the student's responsibility to keep his or her password and other personal information confidential. This includes their student identification number, passwords, or any other information which could conceivably compromise their privacy or lead to identity theft.

Concurrent Students

Concurrent students have the same rights and responsibilities which are afforded to regular Angelina College Students with the following exceptions:

1. Angelina College Instructors, staff members, and administrative officials *may not* comment on student performance to the parents of any concurrent student as all employees of Angelina College are bound by the rules set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Angelina College Instructors, staff members and administrative officials *may* discuss concurrent student performance with the counselor representing that student's or students' High School.
3. Angelina College Instructors, staff members and administrative officials *may* discuss concurrent student performance with the Director of Concurrent Enrollment.

The Establishment of New Distance Education Locations

The Institution will have clear policies and timelines that facilitate the establishment of new Distance Education locations and the hiring of personnel to teach at those locations.

Policies and timelines regarding the establishment and staffing of any new Distance Education locations are contained within the Angelina College Master Plan.