

**Operating Plan for
Distance Education at
Houston Community College**

Last Revised 9/15/06

**(Note special addendum outlining chair
responsibilities at end of document)**

**Distance Education Department
Houston Community College**

Operating Plan for Distance Education at Houston Community College

I. Introduction:

The Distance Education Department (DE) at HCC presents a great many opportunities to fulfill its mission when aligned with the Strategic Plan for 2003-2006, "Student Success: Opening Doors—Closing Gaps." With DE, HCC has already realized very significant growth in enrollment and revenue, the innovative use of technology, and the ability to offer educational opportunities to students who traditionally have not been able to attend classes.

However, there are many players in distance education throughout the country, both academically-based and business-based, moving aggressively in this field. HCC must continue to respond and develop a quality distance education programs and opportunities not only to remain competitive with the field, but also to provide the community college student of the 21st century what he/she requires and demands. We must take full advantage of the opportunities presented through technology and our high-quality, multidisciplinary faculty to:

- Allow faculty and students more readily interact with educational and instructional technology.
- Provide a large variety of internet-based, video, and broadcast distance education courses from both the academic and workforce departments.
- Expand access to new and existing students.
- Expand access to existing and developing technologies appropriate to the successful delivery of quality HCCS courses.
- Retain and/or increase student population and strengthen efforts to increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of minority students.
- Provide distance education courses anytime, anywhere.
- Provide distance education courses at the same tuition as their on-campus counterparts.
- Prepare for future growth in student population to "Close the Gaps" in Texas.
- Eliminate the barriers presented by location and time.
- Help alleviate the constraints caused by limited classroom and facility space.
- Take advantage of emerging market opportunities.
- Develop partnership opportunities with local secondary schools and participate in consortia with local and statewide colleges, universities, corporations, and industry.

The DE program and faculty still require the continued support and necessary incentives sufficient to encourage further development from all colleges of the Houston Community

College System. It must be organized and supported in a way that promotes further growth in enrollment and quality service to its clientele.

This operating plan presents a means for Distance Education to function and interact within HCC that will help provide for the maintenance, support, and planned growth of the program.

II. History:

Distance Education has a lengthy and progressive history at HCC. Starting in 1986 with courses offered over PBS on Channel 8, DE expanded to videotape, cable TV, print-based, computer modem, and most recently, web-based courses.

Administratively, Distance Education has passed through many hands. It began under the original centralized administration, then became a major department under the College Without Walls (CWW), was transferred back to the system under Educational Development when CWW was dissolved, and finally was transferred to Southeast College as a “hub” program under a reorganization in 1996. Since that reorganization, it became increasingly clear that the current organization provided few incentives for the remaining colleges to support DE. In addition, funding of the program at the college level has greatly limited growth and development. The general feeling was that resources existed system-wide that could be brought together to better support Distance Education.

Therefore in 1999, a Task Force on Distance Education was appointed and charged with examining these resources and recommending changes. Their membership is listed below.

In 2001, a Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education was appointed and charged by Dr. Charles Cook, Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, and Stephen Levey, Executive Director of Distance Education & HCCTV, to review current strengths, weaknesses, and plans for improvement for DE, specifically in response to issues brought to light by the SACS Self-Study Committee. This Committee was further charged to make policy and procedure recommendations related to these identified issues. Their membership is also listed below.

1999 Task Force on Distance Education

Pat Barden
Roger Boston
Linda Comte
Margaret Forde
Vince Hamilton
James Patterson
Sylvia Ramos
Manuel Reyes

2001 Faculty Curriculum Comm. For DE

David Ross, Co-Chair
Mark Tiller, Co-Chair
Gisela Abels
William Askew
Evelyn Ballard
Linda Daigle
Michael Edwards
Michael Golden

James Vasquez
Pat Williamson

Donald Green
Michael McCormick
Marina Nathan
Helen Orman
James Patterson
Beverly Perry
Glenn Perser
Ed Reasoner
Sara Saderion
Karen Saenz
Nora Jo Sherman

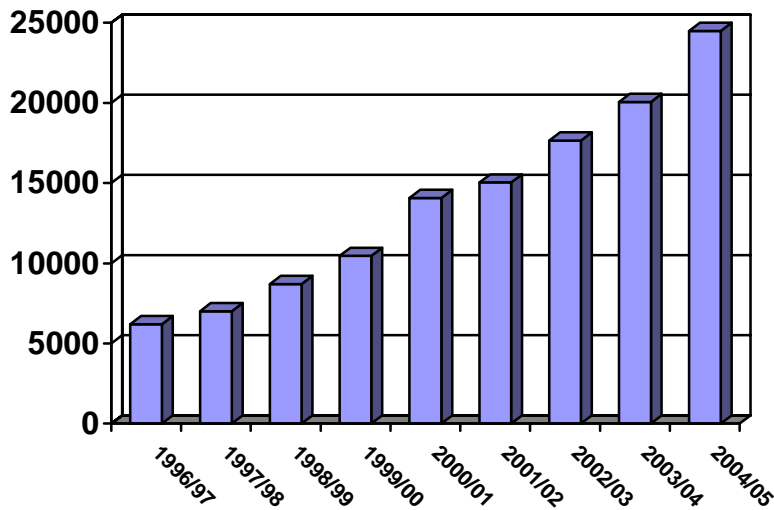
Pat Barden, DE Staff
Stephen Levey, Exec. Dir., DE

The findings and recommendations of the Task Force on Distance Education (1999) and the Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education (2001), together with many ongoing, established, and successful practices of the DE Department form the basis for much of this operating plan.

In addition to the Faculty Curriculum Committee, several other notable events/milestones have occurred since the 1999 Task Force met. They include, but are not limited to:

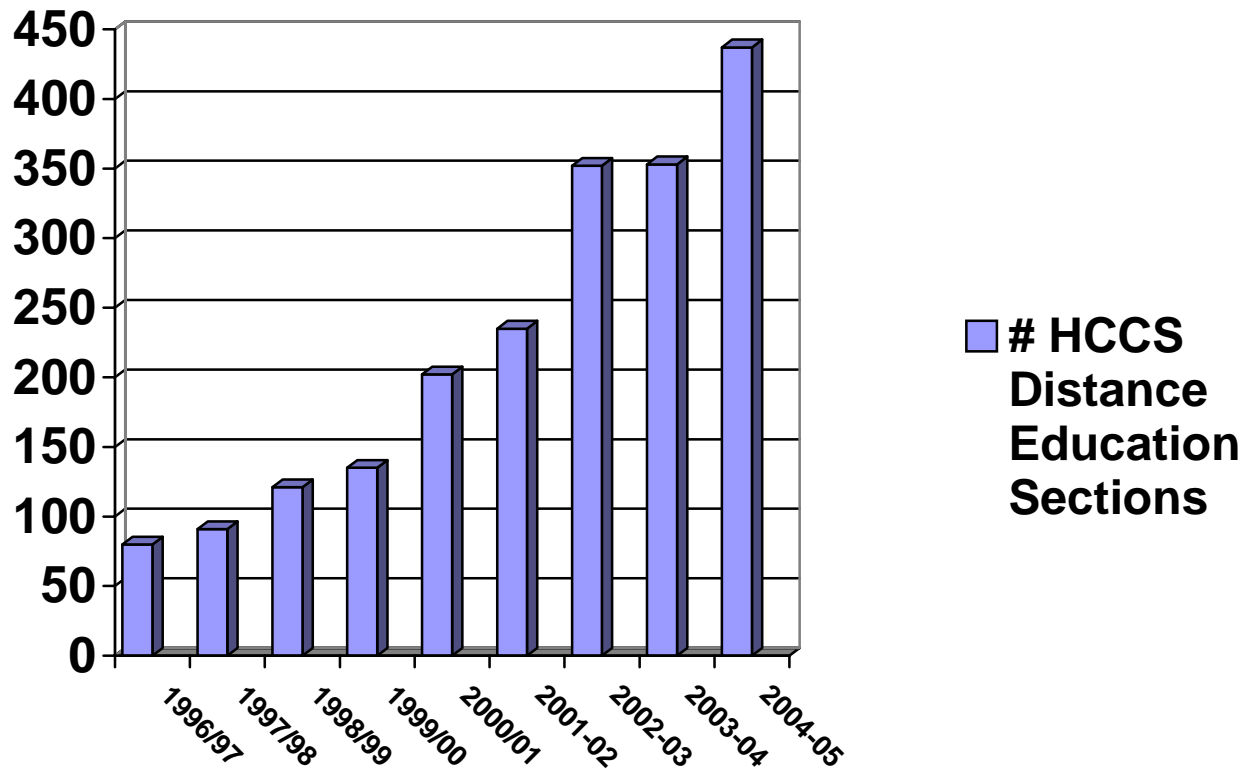
- In 2000, an Executive Director was recruited and hired to head the DE program, grow enrollment, and provide leadership on an institution-wide basis.
- Course enrollment has grown dramatically over the past five fiscal years (1996/97 to 2001/02). The following chart (*Fig. 1*) tracks enrollment growth to include the last five years:

**Figure 1: Distance Education Enrollment
(duplicated headcount)**



- There has also been a significant growth in number of distance education sections offered to students. The chart below (Fig. 2) demonstrates that growth.

Figure 2: Number of Distance Education Sections Offered by HCCS
(tabulated by single semester with largest # of courses offered during each academic year)



- Workforce enrollment headcount revenue had previously been directed to the “home college” of the instructor. However, starting in the Fall/2000 semester, all headcount revenue (tuition and state reimbursement) for academic distance education enrollment was directed to the college of the instructor teaching the DE course. This provided a significant revenue-based incentive for each college to grow their distance education offerings. Further, it provided more incentive for faculty to increase their professional skills in the area of instructional technology.
- The Distance Education Department now also meets with Academic and Workforce Deans, faculty who teach distance education courses, and the department chairs of departments that teach DE courses. The purpose of these meetings is to announce and discuss new and existing policies, procedures, and issues.

- An Instructional Resources & Technology Advisory Committee was established to provide direction and counsel to both the Distance Education Department and the Instructional Media Center on various issues. Members will be replaced on a biannual basis. Also, DE and IMC representation on the Advisory Committee is as staff and not members of the Committee itself. The current membership of that committee is listed below:

IRT Advisory Committee Roster
March, 2004

Lorah Gough
Stephen Levey

Instructional Media Center, Co-Chair
Distance Education, Co-Chair

Faculty

David Ross	SWC	Academic Faculty
William Askew	NWC	Academic Faculty
Madeleine Wright	CE	Academic Faculty
June Woest	SEC	Academic Faculty
Mike Edwards	NEC	Academic Faculty
Joe Irwin	SWC	Workforce Faculty
Jordan Carswell	NWC	Workforce Faculty
Robert Hume	CE	Workforce Faculty
Rich Rosing	SEC	Workforce Faculty
Nora Jo Sherman	NEC	Workforce Faculty
Doug Rowlett	CIC/IDC Rep.	
Mary Beth Schillaci	DE Faculty Liaison	
Mark Tiller	Academic Dean	
Ed Geiger	Workforce Dean	

Administration

Judy Cantwell	Libraries
Larry Wright	Information Technology
Angela Berweiler	Student Services/Counselor
Charles Cook	VC for Educational Development
Madeline Burillo	Director, ACT Ctr., Cont. Educ.

III. Mission:

The following mission statement has been reviewed and approved by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, the Academic and Workforce Deans, the Distance Education Advisory Committee, and the Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education.

The mission of the Distance Education Department of Houston Community College System is to collaborate with college and system offices to provide students with a comprehensive array of credit and non-credit courses, programs, and associated services. These are delivered via technology, maximizing accessibility by removing the barriers of location and time. Distance Education courses and services of the highest possible quality should be delivered to students in a timely, customer-oriented, and cost-efficient manner.

IV. Definition of Distance Education:

Distance Education includes any HCC course where instruction takes place via the Internet, teleconference, videotape, or other technologic means and the physical contact hours account for no more than 15% of the course for reviews and testing only, with the exception of orientations and labs for those courses that have a lab requirement. All newly developed distance education courses require department and discipline chair (if academic) approval.

V. Strategic Goals:

Strategic goals for the DE Department are outlined in the table below (*Fig. 3*). Specific reference is made in the left-hand column of the table to the related component supported by that goal in “Building a Learning College, HCCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2003” to tie the DE Department’s activities specifically to supporting overall strategic direction of Houston Community College System. These goals have been reviewed and approved by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, the Academic and Workforce Deans, the Distance Education Advisory Committee, and the Southeast College administration.

Figure 3: Strategic Goals of Distance Education

Related Element in “Building a Learning College, HCCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2003”	System-Wide Goals
Mission Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mission of the Distance Education Department and its activities must be consistent with the mission and strategic plan of Houston Community College System.
Obj. 4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will serve all colleges of the System equally with all services offered.
Mission State. #1 Obj. 2.4 Obj. 4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will encourage and support the development and use of distance education throughout the colleges and system.
Outcome #2 Outcome #6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will foster the growth of revenue streams to the HCCS colleges and the departments within the colleges participating in distance education course delivery.
Obj. 4.2.2 Obj. 3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will establish course development, production, policies, and processes to help respond to faculty and other content expert needs in a timely and complete way.

Obj. 2.4.3 Obj. 2.4.5 Obj. 2.4.6 Obj. 2.4.9, Obj. 2.4.10 Obj. 4.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will maintain a comprehensive student services component delivered through dedicated services specifically designed to address the needs of distance education students.
Goal 3.3 Obj. 1.1.1 Obj. 1.1.3 Obj. 1.3.1 Obj. 1.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will promote the evaluation of courses from both within and outside the System to improve the quality of HCCS Distance Education programs and services.
Obj. 5.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will implement short- and long-term marketing plans to increase student enrollment.
See <i>Note</i> below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will comply with SACS (section 4.7 of the Criteria for Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) and THE-CB guidelines for distance education programs.
Obj. 4.2 Obj. 3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will participate in the continual upgrade of the technological infrastructure of HCCS.
Obj. 3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For program improvement purposes, the Department will assess contributions to the HCCS institutional effectiveness and quality efforts by conducting a comprehensive program review every 4 years. This process will identify strengths, weaknesses, and plans for improvement.
Obj. 3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will support professional development and continuing education of Distance Education and HCCS staff, faculty, and associated community partners.
Obj. 3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will maintain close working relationships with the academic, workforce, and student services deans, department chairs, and discipline committees of HCCS.
Obj. 3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will recruit HCCS faculty to participate in distance education course development and delivery.
	<p><i>Note: The Distance Education Department successfully completed the THE-CB Review in February, 2001. Distance Education was noted as being especially effective, with special note made of the Online Orientation Program.</i></p>

Related Element in “Building a Learning College, HCCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2003”	Department-Related Goals
Obj. 3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will maintain an Advisory Committee for Distance Education that represents a cross-section of HCCS areas and interests.
Obj. 3.1 Obj. 3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will support the development, maintenance, and growth of the number and variety of courses, certificate, and degree programs in the academic, workforce, and contract training/continuing education areas.
Obj. 4.2.2 Obj. 4.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will use distance education technologies that remove the barriers imposed by location, time, and limited access.
Obj. 4.4.1 Vision Statement, Item #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will establish and maintain professional business relationships, partnerships, and consortia with other colleges, universities, schools, and companies to deliver and receive distance education products and services.
Obj. 3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will stay abreast of and advise on copyright, fair use, and intellectual property issues that apply to distance education.
Obj. 3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will establish and maintain a leadership role in professional associations and consortia to increase the visibility and prestige of the HCCS Distance Education program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When appropriate, the Department will review, evaluate, and revise the strategic goals and plans of distance education at HCCS.

VI. Products Deliverable Through Distance Education:

- Academic credit courses leading to a degree.
Note: Distance Education has applied to SACS for a Substantive Change to allow HCCS to offer all general requirement courses for the A.A. and A.A.S. in general studies via distance education.
- Workforce credit courses leading to a degree or certificate.
- Workforce continuing education courses (CEU).
- Contract training.
- Continuing education (non-state-reimbursed CE).
- Developmental and literacy courses.

VII. Customer Base:

- On-campus students who take part of their program on campus.
- Off-campus students who take all of their courses or program through distance education. These students can be in-district, in-state, out-of-state, or international.

- Contract students who take all of their courses through specific company contracts.
- HCCS faculty, administration, and staff.

VIII. Delivery Methods:

- Web-based/internet courses.
- Courses provided over broadcast or cable television.
- Videotape courses.
- Courses offered via videoconferencing systems.
- Print-based courses. *

* Print-based courses have been phased out and are no longer offered starting in the Spring/02 semester.

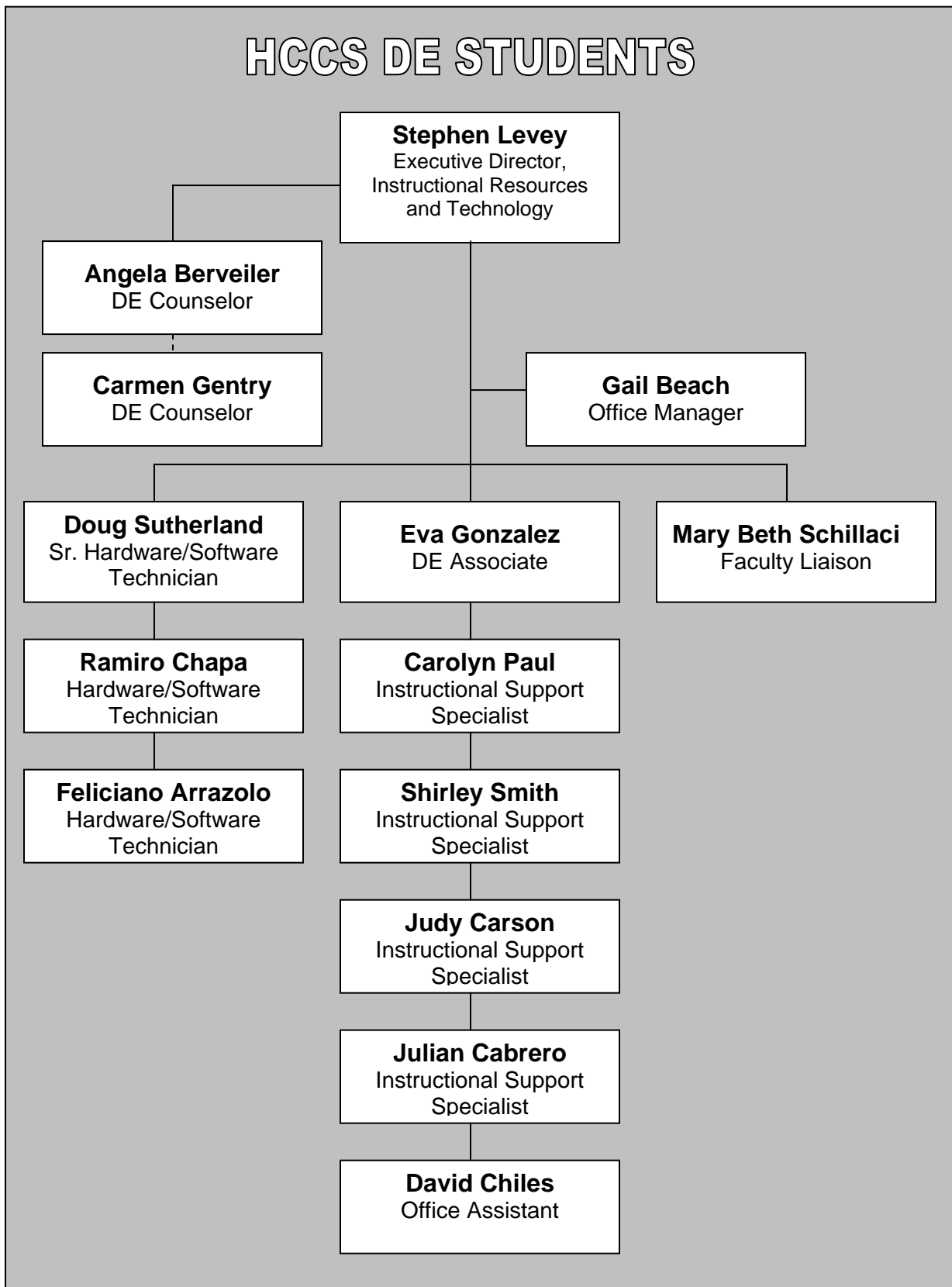
IX. Organization:

The organization of the Distance Education Department must reflect its system-wide responsibilities to faculty, administration, and students. Its structure and reporting lines must encourage its development and support by integrating it with existing instructional and support structures of the colleges and systems. Therefore, continual communication with deans, department chairs, discipline committee chairs, faculty, students, and college and system departments at all levels is essential.

It is important to also note that the DE Department has continually been migrating away from being a “stand-alone” department as it was under the College Without Walls. Rather, DE has endeavored to be highly integrated with the colleges. The components of this operating plan are directed toward that goal of integration. Nearly all of the instruction and support provided to students, besides that it is delivered primarily via technology, is done in an identical way as is done with the more traditional on-campus classes. Many references are made to that throughout this plan.

The DE office takes a leadership role for the HCC System to facilitate, enhance, and grow on- and off-campus distance learning activities by providing the coordination and support that all colleges and faculty need to successfully develop and deliver distance education courses. At the top of this organizational chart and central to the mission of DE are the HCCS students. They are the primary beneficiaries of our courses and services. That role is supported and illustrated in the following organizational chart (*Fig. 3*).

Figure 3: Organizational Chart, Distance Education, HCCS



X. Roles and Responsibilities:

The following section outlines various roles and responsibilities for groups such as the Distance Education Department, Discipline Committee Chairs, Workforce Program Chairs, Department Chairs, and other key personnel. Further, it also provides basic information on issues/questions such as faculty evaluations and SEOI, how faculty get involved in teaching distance education courses, overloads, how DE courses are listed in the HCCS schedule, which faculty teach which courses, the number of courses each faculty should teach, student loads, and other issues. Much of this information was discussed, reviewed, and agreed upon by the consensus of the Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education (2001).

In addition to the roles and responsibilities listed below, all HCCS Distance Education courses are reviewed by the Gulf Coast Regional Higher Education Council and submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board annually.

1. Distance Education Department

In addition to the above-listed Strategic Goals, the Distance Education Department should be responsible or have shared responsibility for the following:

- A. Where appropriate, schedule on-campus orientations for distance education students and faculty.
- B. Promote the development of required on-line orientations offered by faculty teaching Internet courses.
- C. Provide accountability reports and statistics in areas such as enrollment, finances, retention, and SEOI.
- D. Coordinate the allocation of funding for the development of distance education courses.
- E. Provide stipends for new courses developed through HCCS facilities and training.
- F. Provide updates and training opportunities for DE faculty and college administration.
- G. Serve as a consultant to colleges, faculty, and administration in all aspects of distance education.
- H. Follow all current institutional overload policies.
- I. Perform a program review every four years to improve program quality, effectiveness, and efficiency toward the on-going goal of continuous improvement.

2. Testing:

- A. It is also the responsibility of the DE Dept. to provide quality testing services for distance education students. Most distance education courses use the DE department testing services.

- According to college policy, all final exams must be no longer than two hours.
- Instructors must notify the department of the number of tests they wish to provide and weeks in which these should occur.
- Testing staff in the DE office coordinate these requests and a testing schedule results.
- Instructors provide either one master copy of a test or a class set of tests.
- These tests are inventoried and provided to students over a faculty-designated three-day testing weekend.
- Unless otherwise noted on the DE website or DE Student Handbook, testing is provided on Friday evenings at Central College. Saturday testing is at Westgate. Sunday testing is at Eastside. (*see student handbook, online at <http://distance.hccs.edu/> for more details on testing times*).
- Faculty and part-time proctors work to ensure fair testing conditions.
- Limited on-line testing facilities (proctored) are available.
- All participating faculty who make use of DE on-site testing services, are required to proctor at least one examination for each section of each course taught, if that course requires testing services. A set of “Distance Education Department Guidelines & Procedures for Proctors at Testing” is available at http://distance.hccs.edu/links/proctoring_procedures.pdf.
- Homework assignments will not be accepted during testing unless the assignment is integral to the examination.
- Distance Education cannot administer any make up exams to students unless the Instructional Support Specialist in DE receives written notification from the instructor. This notification must include the student's name, course name, CRN #, and test # at least one week in advance of the examination. Emails are recommended.
- A detailed outline of each instructor’s make up exam policy must be included in the course syllabus.
- Proctoring, exam, review, and lab schedules are updated regularly on the DE website.

Note: - It is very important that makeup exams be considered just that - makeup examinations. They are not to be used as "alternate" testing dates to the scheduled exam date. Please have students avoid missing exams unless absolutely necessary.

3. Exam Reviews:

- A. The course instructor should notify the DE Department of all scheduled examination reviews.
- B. The DE Dept. will schedule rooms for DE course examination reviews.

4. Colleges:

Note: See addendum outlining specific Department Chair responsibilities at end of document.

- A. Offer and schedule all distance education courses through the regular departmental structure. Enter all distance education courses into PeopleSoft w/ assistance from DE as necessary.
 - B. Faculty are responsible for providing an on-line orientation for all Internet courses offered as of the Summer/02 semester. On-campus orientations may also be offered for the same course at the faculty's discretion.
 - C. Assign and pay faculty according to system-wide load formulas.
 - D. Follow all current institutional overload policies.
 - E. Evaluate all faculty teaching distance education courses.
 - F. Provide negotiated workload time as deemed appropriate for development of new distance education courses.
 - G. Through the Discipline Committees/Workforce Programs, be responsible for the overall quality standards of all distance education courses. (*see "The Role/Relationship between Discipline Committees/Workforce Programs and Distance Education" below*).
 - H. Provide student support services for distance education students. This is a shared responsibility amongst DE counselors and other student services personnel throughout the system. Orientation, training, and other updates will be provided by the Distance Education Counselors.
5. Libraries:
- A. Provide library services that meet distance education student needs in fulfilling course assignments and that enrich academic programs.
 - B. Support the information needs of distance learners by providing comprehensive online library services and learning resources equivalent to those offered for on-campus students and courses.
6. The Role/Relationship between Discipline Committees/Workforce Programs and Distance Education:
- A. The Discipline Committee/Workforce Program is responsible for establishing overall quality standards of all distance education courses that:
 - Ensure appropriateness of distance education modality to course content.
 - Ensure integrity of course content for all courses offered via distance education.
 - B. Discipline Committee/Workforce Program assures that:
 - Classes meet basic criteria for other courses offered throughout HCCS and that the course is suitable for the medium selected. DE must provide input for this suitability in the form of a checklist provided to all Discipline Committees and Workforce Programs. Therefore, in addition to Discipline Committee/Workforce Program requirements for on-campus course offerings, the following criteria are recommended by the DE Department for all distance education-delivered courses:

- The plan for the distance education course is coherent and complete.
- Preferably, an on-campus (in-classroom) version of the course is offered at HCCS (although a new distance education course can also be offered even if it is not a current on-campus offering).
- If used with on-campus department courses, an appropriate departmental final should also be administered for distance education courses.
- The course provides for appropriate faculty/student and student/student interaction.
- The academic standards for this distance education course are the same as those for the equivalent course offered elsewhere at HCCS. The course is comparable to traditionally-delivered courses in rigor, depth, and breadth.
- Student outcomes and learning objectives for the distance education course are the same or comparable to student learning in the equivalent course offered elsewhere at HCCS.
- The technologies used in the distance education course provide for faculty accessibility, support, student interaction, and instruction. Faculty should be able to respond to student inquiries within 24 hours.
- Course and faculty evaluation will be performed as prescribed by HCCS to ensure educational effectiveness. Revisions will be documented and reviewed to ensure course standards are met.
- Support services such as instructions on the use of the technology, accessing library services, student services and information on instructor availability should be made available in the course.
- Discipline Committee/Workforce Programs are responsible for reviewing all distance education courses created by groups or faculty other than HCCS. (e.g., publisher-produced courses).
- Workforce courses must meet all Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) requirements.
- Discipline Committee/Workforce Program must identify how to assess the effectiveness of distance education courses compared to their on-campus versions and do so.

7. Faculty Evaluation for Distance Education Courses:

- A. The Faculty Curriculum Committee (2001) identified that Department Chairs are responsible for the ongoing quality of all courses in their area of instruction.
- B. It is the role and responsibility of department chairs to perform evaluations of their faculty who teach distance education courses just as it is their responsibility to evaluate faculty who teach on-campus courses. It is not the role of the Distance Education Department to do so.
- C. Following the official date of record of each semester, the DE Dept. will place all department chairs in the online courses of their faculty that teach those

courses. This will be done for course/faculty evaluation purposes. The department chairs will have WebCT “student” status.

D. Also, to further promote high-quality evaluation practices, discipline chairs may also request access to distance education courses. However, without prior faculty approval, discipline chair access to courses will only be provided into:

- Distance education courses that are being taught for the first time and during that first semester of it being offered.
- Distance education courses or sections that are being taught by faculty who are new to teaching DE.
- Distance education faculty or courses that have received a significant number of complaints from students or others. The nature of these complaints will be discussed first between the appropriate department chair, discipline chair, a representative of the DE Dept., and/or the faculty teaching the course prior to discipline chair access being provided.

Once provided access, the discipline chair must minimally provide a written observation of the course to both the faculty teaching the course and their department chair. The observation should include the criteria outlined on the Evaluation Checklist for Faculty Teaching Distance Education Courses, found at http://www.distance.hccs.edu/faculty_eval_materials/intro_fac_eval_criteria.html

E. It is the department and discipline chair’s responsibility to approve all new distance education courses produced by their faculty prior to offering those courses to students. An approval form is available on line at the Distance Education website (<http://distance.hccs.edu/de-staff/instructions.html>).

E. It is the responsibility of the DE Dept. to recommend criteria for department chairs to include in the DE faculty evaluation process. Therefore, in addition to instruments used for faculty teaching on-campus courses, the following criteria are recommended by the Distance Education Department for all distance-delivered courses:

Note: The Distance Education Department recommends that evaluation of faculty teaching distance education courses should be based on content, presentation, student performance, interaction, and design, as they are with courses taught on-campus. The “Evaluation Checklist for Faculty Teaching Distance Education Courses” is available at the following website:

http://distance.hccs.edu/links/DEfac_eval.pdf.

- The learning outcomes of the course are appropriate to the scope of the degree or certificate awarded by HCCS and should be comparable to on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The course provides for appropriate and adequate faculty to student and student to student interaction and support. The faculty makes him/herself adequately available to students via electronic means.
- Using electronic means, the instructor contributes as a discussion leader and is open to student views.
- The course objectives and goals, and outcomes as presented and offered by the faculty are coherent and are consistent with those presented in on-campus offerings of the same course.

- The format of the distance education course (e.g., discussions, lectures, chat, opportunities for Q&A, availability of faculty using electronic means) is conducive to student learning and encourages students to express themselves.
 - The assignments are useful and consistent with the on-campus offering of the same course.
 - If provided, online tests are administered properly and securely. There is sufficient opportunity provided for course review and student feedback in preparation for tests.
 - Appropriate online or on-site course orientation is provided to students for this distance education course.
- E. The assessment of learning outcomes must be consistent with on-campus offerings of the same course.

8. Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI):
 - A. The Faculty Curriculum Committee approved Distance Education to put SEOI on line for distance education courses only. This began in the Fall/03 semester.
 - B. Online SEOI is administered at the same time as on-campus SEOI.
 - C. SEOI reports and data are tabulated and distributed to the colleges by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) as is customarily done with all on-campus courses. At the same time, OIR provides a complete copy of all tabulated SEOI results to the Distance Education Department.
 - F. Additional questions were recommended by Distance Education for inclusion in the online and paper SEOI for DE students. They were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research SEOI Committee (David Ugwu, Ed.D., Chair, 10/01/01) and have been included in the new SEOI for DE students. The questions for the new Distance Education SEOI instrument are on the following page:

Student Evaluation of Distance Education Instruction

Part I. Evaluation of Instruction (To be completed by all students).

1. The course requirements in the syllabus were clearly stated.
2. The textbook used for this course is suitable.
3. The course made good use of mixed media, graphics, text, and other technologies.
[yes, neutral, no, no basis for judgment]

Part II. Evaluation of Instructor (To be completed by all students).

4. The instructor provided an effective orientation for this Distance Education course.
5. The instructor encouraged students to use technology to increase class interactivity/collaboration.
6. The instructor communicates clearly by way of handouts, on-line lectures, postings, WEB sites, etc.
7. The instructor is available for student consultation by phone, on-line, face-to-face.
8. The assignments were relevant to the course.
9. My grades are an indication of my learning.
10. The instructor gives timely feedback on all assignments and student queries.
11. The instructor provided at least one opportunity to practice what I learned.
(strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, no basis for judgment).

Part III. Lab Evaluation (To be completed by students enrolled in a laboratory or clinical class).

12. The instructor explains appropriate safety procedures for this laboratory/clinical.
13. The instructor links the laboratory exercises to the on-line instructional component of the course.
(strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, no basis for judgment).

Part IV. Overall Evaluation (To be completed by all students).

14. Compared to a similar face-to-face class for equal credit, the quality of my learning in this course was generally equivalent.
15. I would recommend this Distance Education course to other students.
(strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, no basis for judgment).

Part V. Library Resources (To be completed by all students).

- LR1. The HCCS library resources were adequate for the needs of the course.
- LR2. The library instruction received for this course was adequate.

9. Distance Education Textbooks:

- A. Department Chairs are responsible for ordering all textbooks for Distance Education courses using the same process as exists for on-campus classes. Textbook problems reported to the DE Department will be referred to the appropriate faculty.

10. Overloads:

- A. As must be done in all departments throughout all colleges, DE will follow existing and current HCCS policies regarding overloads. (*See also, "How Student Loads Are Distributed Among Participating Faculty" and "Determination of Distance Education Class Size."*)
- B. Enforcing this overload policy will be the responsibility of department chairs. Department Chairs will work with DE in accomplishing this goal.

11. WebCT Master Courses

- A. Along with other sources, the DE Department supports the development of WebCT master courses. These are complete, fully-developed courses for on-line delivery in DE and hybrid environments. They satisfy the curriculum requirements as set forth by the discipline and meet a standardized rubric.

12. How Faculty Get Involved in Teaching Distance Education (DE) Courses (*read this section thoroughly prior to beginning development of any new DE course*):

- A. All faculty wishing to develop a new* DE course or teach an existing DE course must acquire and review the on-line forms and instructions found at the Distance Education website (<http://distance.hccs.edu>). Once there:
- Click on the link entitled, "Faculty Resources."
 - Then click on "Getting Involved in DE."

* Note: A "new" DE course is defined as:

- An existing HCCS course offered over distance education that has not previously been offered by that faculty member.
 - An HCCS course that has never been offered either via DE or on-campus, but is in the HCCS course inventory.
- B. The DE Department uses a once-a-year application process by which faculty apply for development/training grants to create new DE courses or teach existing or master courses for the following school year. For application forms, see <http://distance.hccs.edu/de-staff/instructions.html>. The application period for the following academic year begins November 1 and typically ends near the end of March.

Example: For new distance education courses intended to be offered to students in the Fall/06, the application period for development of those courses is November 1, 2005 through the end of March, 2006.

These application dates are used because they are in advance of the publication deadlines for entering courses into HCC class schedules, which are now published annually. It also enables the DE Department to clearly project and budget appropriate funding required during the next fiscal year for course development/training stipends. If applications are submitted past the deadline, stipend funding may not be available. However, courses can be developed without stipend funds.

- C. Faculty should complete the course development form and present it to their department chair. Department chair signoff is required for all DE course applications. Discipline committee chair signoff is also required for academic courses.
- D. The form must then be forwarded to the DE Department for acknowledgement and consideration for grant/stipend funding. Course development stipends are not necessary to develop a DE course. However, all departments must notify the DE Department of the planned development and subsequent offering of any DE course. The DE Department reserves the right to deny approval or development of a particular course based on need, enrollment trends, equitable distribution of sections across colleges, and other factors.
- E. The DE Department will evaluate applications for stipend funding. Part of its role is to evaluate course applications and grants/stipends for DE courses based on need, enrollment trends, equitable distribution of sections across colleges, and other factors. A schedule for submitting applications to meet semester deadlines is on the course application form.
- F. All new courses must be developed using the WebCT course management system. DE cannot provide technical support for any course not developed using WebCT.
- G. A new DE instructor will be approved for development of one course only during his/her first semester of DE teaching. Only one section of that course is recommended for the first time teaching this course.
- H. Following application approval, the instructor submitting the application will be notified and course development will begin. The Instructional Media Center and the individual colleges (through their Curriculum Innovation Centers) provide training in WebCT and other related topics. See <http://www.hccs.edu/system/InsDev/IT/ICRC/technology/certification.htm> for more information.
- I. A course review, performed by department and discipline chairs, is required prior to offering any new course to students. No course development stipends will be provided to faculty until the course has been approved by the department chair and discipline chair. For chair approval forms, see <http://distance.hccs.edu/de-staff/instructions.html> and follow the appropriate links. It is highly recommended that the department and discipline perform this post-development review according to the following schedule:

For a course to be first offered in any: The Dept. and Disc. Chair must review by:

Fall semester
Spring semester

August 1
January 4

If the course review and approval is not completed by the deadlines above, and the course is already included in the HCC Course Schedule, the course will be offered to students pending department chair/discipline chair approval.

No new DE courses will be first offered to students in any summer semester.

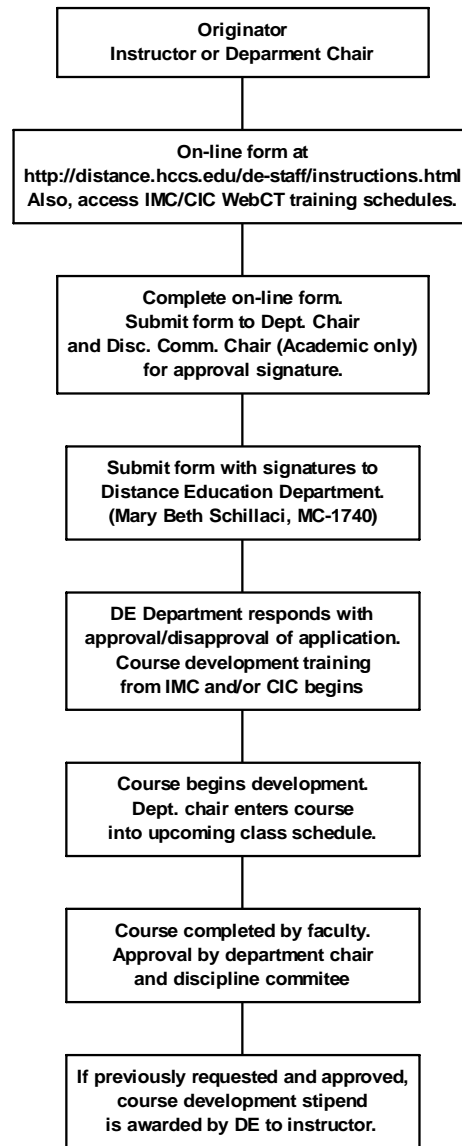
- J. Starting with DE courses to be offered in the Fall/06 semester, applicants wanting to develop and/or teach a new DE course must provide documentation showing they have completed the basic Faculty Certificate in Technology. Information on this certificate program can be found at <http://www.hccs.edu/system/InsDev/IT/ICRC/technology/certification.htm>

Faculty who have taught an online, WebCT distance learning course at HCC for at least three semesters in the last three years are waived from this requirement.

All courses for this certificate program are offered through the Instructional Media Center and Curriculum Innovation Centers at each of the colleges. For application approval, certificates or other documentation showing that faculty have completed or placed out of the above courses must be provided. These courses are part of the basic Faculty Certificate in Technology track.

- K. The same training requirements apply to new DE faculty teaching existing courses including master courses.

Figure 5: Flow Chart Outlining Course Development Application Process



13. How DE courses are listed in the HCCS schedule:

- A. Department Chairs are responsible for entering all courses in the course schedule with assistance from the DE Department as needed.
- B. DE has a responsibility to monitor course entries in upcoming course schedules. It is required that department chairs notify DE of all courses entered. Following this notification, DE is responsible for entering orientation information in the course schedules.
- C. Courses should be listed only under the DE section in schedule.

- An individual entering class information has the option to enter a comment under an on-campus class to direct to DE for “additional sections.”
- D. A separate CRN number must be established for each section of each course in the DE schedule listings, just as it is done for on-campus classes. This will be implemented in the Spring/02 semester. Students enrolled in sections that do not “make” will be handled in the same manner they are on campus (i.e., the class will be cancelled and students will be transferred to another section if there is available space). Department chairs of cancelled classes will be responsible for “callbacks.” Split classes will be processed by department chairs at their college’s Registrar’s Office.

14. Which Faculty Teach Which Distance Education Classes?

- A. For new courses: Department chairs make this decision within each of their own colleges.
- B. For existing courses: Department chairs make this decision within each of their own colleges.
- C. DE will keep abreast of enrollment in DE courses and notify department chairs and deans when more or fewer faculty/sections are required.

15. How Student Loads Are Distributed Among Participating Faculty When Multiple Departments Are Involved:

- A. Department chairs determine the number of sections they want each faculty to teach.
- B. DE should monitor enrollment in each section and temporarily cap a section as needed during registration. This is done to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst all instructors teaching a particular course.
- C. For low-enrollment courses, department chairs must collaborate to decide which college will offer these courses.
- G. All must be aware that, in most cases, PeopleSoft will list lower CRN #'s before higher ones in the Course Schedules. This may have an impact on enrollment in these courses.

16. Number of Courses Each Faculty Member Should Teach:

- A. The consensus of the Faculty Curriculum Committee and Academic Deans is that this is clearly a decision between faculty, dept. chairs, and deans, subject to enrollment trends and student demand.

The Faculty Workload Guidelines, approved in August, 2004, created a guideline indicating that F/T faculty should be limited to teaching 60% of their regular fall/spring load in DE. The Dean’s rationale is to avoid one

instructor becoming a full-time, exclusively DE instructor, and to require some on-campus presence for all F/T faculty. This guideline can be overridden by agreement of faculty, department chairs/deans subject to enrollment trends and student demand for DE courses.

This guideline applies to academic department only.

This guideline does not apply to summer semesters, only fall and spring semesters.

This guideline does not affect teaching distance education courses as overloads. All courses taught as an overload can be distance education courses. (*See also, Sec. 10, "Overloads"*)

This guideline does not apply to P/T faculty.

- B. The DE Department reserves the right to temporarily cap sections when necessary to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst DE instructors.

17. Virtual College of Texas:

- A. Houston Community College is a member of the Virtual College of Texas (VCT) – a collaborative of the majority of community colleges in Texas. Through the VCT, students can register at HCC to take online credit and non-credit courses offered by other member community colleges in the state.
- B. Courses taken through VCT are usually ones not currently offered through the DE program at HCC.
- C. Students wishing to take courses through the VCT should be directed to contact the Distance Education Department. They will be appropriately advised and referred by DE instructional administrative staff. A listing of appropriate staff is available at www.distance.hccs.edu/contact_us.htm Faculty and other academic administration should also contact DE for more information.
- D. When an HCC student wishes to register for a VCT course offered through another Texas community college, the course syllabus and any other relevant course information will be provided to the appropriate HCC discipline for review and approval to ensure that the VCT course requirements and curriculum conform to those established for that same course at HCC.
- E. Additional information on the VCT can be found at www.vct.org/

18. Determination of Distance Education Class Size:

- A. The recommended class size for Internet-based classes is 30. The academic departments and the workforce programs will set the class sizes for DE courses across all colleges. It is important that they be consistent for identical course offerings across the system.

B. To lower or raise a cap for a particular DE class, the discipline committee or workforce program should make that recommendation to the appropriate Workforce Deans' or Academic Deans' Council and to the Executive Director, Instructional Resources and Technology for approval. This is consistent with the process for on-campus classes and with SACS.

* Distance education courses that have more than 30 students enrolled and that also require on-campus labs, should schedule two sections of the lab. One should be scheduled on a weekday evening and one during the weekend to accommodate student schedules. The class itself will be considered one section but the lab will be taught twice and the instructor will be paid for two labs.

Note: Also see notation on separate CRN numbers for each distance education section in "How DE Courses Are Listed in the HCCS Schedule."

19. Distance Education Student Complaints & Grievances:

A. Academic Complaints:

- Academic DE student complaints and grievances are handled in exactly the same fashion as students enrolled in on-campus classes. The HCC Student Handbook outlines those procedures and they are also available online at: http://www.hccs.edu/students/handbook/student_life.pdf
- Student complaints should first be directed to the professor of the specific distance education course. Academic complaints first directed to the Distance Education Dept. will be referred to the professor and, if necessary, their direct supervisor for resolution. This will be done along with an explanation to the student that their first line of contact is the professor and/or supervisor. The Distance Education Dept. does not have a direct decision-making role in resolving student complaints involving academic or instructional issues. The Department's role is to encourage and facilitate communication between student, professor, and any other academic staff or administrators.

B. Non-academic Complaints:

- All other complaints should be directed to the Distance Education Dept. for either resolution or referral to the appropriate authority.

20. Instructional Media Center (IMC):

- A. The IMC and DE are now part of a larger department entitled Instructional Resources and Technology. Stephen Levey, Executive Director, Instructional Resources and Technology has responsibility for this department.
- B. The IMC supports the development of web-based courses through their faculty internship program, support of the Faculty Certification in Technology

program, specified allocation of IMC staff resources, and many other activities. Technical training on WebCT for faculty, staff, and administration is provided by the IMC. Colleges also provide this WebCT training for faculty and staff through the Curriculum Innovation Centers located at each college.

- C. The IMC, along with DE staff, assists faculty in creating on-line orientations for web-based distance education courses.

21. Information Technology.

It is the responsibility of Information Technology to work collaboratively with DE to:

- Provide responsive and reliable backup and recovery support services for all Distance Education course servers.
 - Ensure that students, faculty, and staff have ready access to all distance education materials on a 24/7 basis.
 - Provide reliable tape backup services.
 - Secure a reliable redundant backup “hot site” for all servers identified by DE.
- Provide and manage email accounts for all on and off-campus distance education faculty and staff.
 - Upgrade email applications and capabilities periodically.
 - Maintain email services for students and faculty on a 24/7 basis. Minimize downtime.
- Provide network resources and bandwidth capacity necessary to support distance education courses.
 - Actively partner with DE to anticipate and plan for future technology needs to better serve students in:
 1. Video streaming.
 2. Audioconferencing.
 3. Live teleconferences delivered via IP.
 4. Effective delivery of images and multimedia to students for instructional purposes.
 5. Internet 2 usage.
 6. Wireless communication.
 7. Other new technologies.
- Participate in the continual upgrade of the technological infrastructure of Distance Education at HCCS.
 - Ensure that PeopleSoft applications support the instructional needs of students and faculty and the administrative requirements of faculty and DE staff.
 - Provide advice on the purchase of new hardware, software, and other systems to be used for the effective delivery of distance education to students.

- Provide more incentives for faculty to increase their professional skills in the area of instructional technology.
 - Provide site licenses for popular software/applications that have a significant impact on the delivery of quality distance education. Of particular significance are those applications that increase class interactivity and collaboration.
 - Provide training opportunities for faculty and staff in all appropriate areas of technology development.
- Promote the use of technology as a means of delivering distance education to underserved students.
- Provide collaborative support to all online library functions that support DE students.
- Provide collaborative support to all online student services support functions.
- Provide collaborative support for all online testing services provided to distance education students.
- Provide quality security for all technology-driven services of Distance Education.
- Provide quality telephone service to/from all areas of Distance Education.
- Provide quality and responsive 24/7 “Help Desk” services for all staff, faculty, and students who access Distance Education services.

22. HCCTV:

- A. Produces video segments in support of distance education courses.
- B. Produces and airs HCCS telecourses.
- C. Provides master control services for all cable TV distance education broadcasts.

ADDENDUM

Specific Distance Education Guidelines for Department Chairs (excerpted from DE Operating Plan)

Evaluations

The Faculty Curriculum Committee (2001) identified that Department Chairs are responsible for the ongoing quality of all courses in their area of instruction. Therefore, it is clearly the role and responsibility of department chairs to perform evaluations of their faculty who teach distance education courses just as it is their responsibility to evaluate faculty who teach on-campus courses. It is not the role of the Distance Education Department to do so.

However, it is the responsibility of the DE Dept. to recommend criteria for department chairs to include in the DE faculty evaluation process. Therefore, in addition to instruments used for faculty teaching on-campus courses, the following criteria are recommended by the Distance Education Department for all distance-delivered courses. The evaluation checklist to be used for evaluations can be found at the following website: http://distance.hccs.edu/links/DEfac_eval.pdf

Note: The Distance Education Department recommends that evaluation of faculty teaching distance education courses should be based on content, presentation, student performance, interaction, and design, as they are with courses taught on-campus.

- The learning outcomes of the course are appropriate to the scope of the degree or certificate awarded by HCCS and should be comparable to on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The course provides for appropriate and adequate faculty to student and student to student interaction and support. The faculty makes him/herself adequately available to students via electronic means.
- Using electronic means, the instructor contributes as a discussion leader and is open to student views.
- The course objectives and goals, and outcomes as presented and offered by the faculty are coherent and are consistent with those presented in on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The format of the distance education course (e.g., discussions, lectures, chat, opportunities for Q&A, availability of faculty using electronic means) is conducive to student learning and encourages students to express themselves.
- The assignments are useful and consistent with the on-campus offering of the same course.
- If provided, online tests are administered properly and securely. There is sufficient opportunity provided for course review and student feedback in preparation for tests.
- Appropriate online or on-site course orientation is provided to students for this distance education course.

- The assessment of learning outcomes must be consistent with on-campus offerings of the same course.

Overloads

- Department Chairs will follow all existing and current HCCS policies regarding overloads for Distance Education courses just as they would for all on-campus courses. Department Chairs will work with DE in accomplishing this goal.

WebCT Master Courses

- Along with other sources, the DE Department supports the development of WebCT master courses. These are complete, fully-developed courses for on-line delivery in DE and hybrid environments. They satisfy the curriculum requirements as set forth by the discipline and meet a standardized rubric.

How Faculty Get Involved in Teaching Distance Education Courses

(read this section thoroughly prior to beginning development of any new distance education course):

- All faculty wishing to teach a new* distance education course must acquire and review the on-line forms and instructions found at the Distance Education website (<http://distance.hccs.edu>). Once there:
 - Click on the link entitled, “Faculty Resources.”
 - Then click on “Getting Involved in DE.”
- * Note: A “new” distance education course is defined as:
 - An existing HCCS course offered over distance education that has not previously been offered by that faculty member.
 - An HCCS course that has never been offered either via DE or on-campus, but is in the HCCS course inventory.
- The Distance Education Department uses a once-a-year application process by which faculty apply for development/training grants to create new distance education courses or teach master courses for the following school year. For application forms, see <http://distance.hccs.edu/de-staff/instructions.html>. **The application period for the following academic year begins November 1 and typically ends near the end of March.**

Example: For new distance education courses intended to be offered to students in the Fall/06, the application period for development of those courses is November 1, 2005 through the end of March, 2006.

These application dates are used because they are in advance of the publication deadlines for entering courses into HCC class schedules, which are now published

annually. It also enables the DE Department to clearly project and budget appropriate funding required during the next fiscal year for course development/training stipends.

One exception to this deadline is for applications for faculty, who are new to teaching DE using existing WebCT Master Courses starting in the spring semester. The deadline for those applications is the August 1 prior to the spring semester in which the faculty wishes to teach.

- Faculty should complete the course development form and present it to their department chair. Department chair signoff is required for all DE course applications. Discipline committee chair signoff is also required for academic courses (see application form for signoff deadlines).
- The form must then be forwarded to the Distance Education Department for acknowledgement and consideration for grant/stipend funding. Course development stipends are not necessary to develop a distance education course. However, all departments must notify the Distance Education Department of the planned development and subsequent offering of any distance education course. The Distance Education Department reserves the right to deny approval or development of a particular course based on need, enrollment trends, equitable distribution of sections across colleges, and other factors.
- The Distance Education Department will evaluate applications for stipend funding. Part of its role is to evaluate course applications and grants/stipends for Distance Education courses based on need, enrollment trends, equitable distribution of sections across colleges, and other factors. New courses must be developed using HCC facilities and/or training to be eligible for stipends. A schedule for submitting applications to meet semester deadlines is on the course application form.
- Stipends for new course development are not guaranteed and are dependent on institutional funding/budgets. However, the development of new courses is not necessarily dependant on awarding stipends. New courses can be developed without stipends being awarded. Stipends will be provided until annual budgeted funding has expired.
- All new courses must be developed using the WebCT course management system. DE cannot provide technical support for any course not developed using WebCT.
- A new DE instructor will be approved for development of one course only during his/her first semester of distance education teaching. Only one section of that course is recommended for the first time teaching this course.
- Following application approval, the instructor submitting the application will be notified and course development will begin. The Instructional Media Center and the individual colleges (through their Curriculum Innovation Centers) provide training in the WebCT development application platform.
- A course review, performed by department and discipline chairs, is required prior to offering any new course to students. No course development stipends will be provided to faculty until the course has been approved by the department chair and discipline chair. For chair approval forms, see <http://distance.hccs.edu/de-staff/instructions.html> and follow the appropriate links. It is highly recommended

that the department and discipline perform this post-development review according to the following schedule:

<u>For a course to be first offered in any:</u>	<u>The Dept. and Disc. Chair must review by:</u>
Fall semester	August 1
Spring semester	January 4

If the course review and approval is not completed by the deadlines above, and the course is already included in the HCC Course Schedule, the course will be offered to students pending department chair/discipline chair approval.

No new DE courses will be first offered to students in any summer semester.

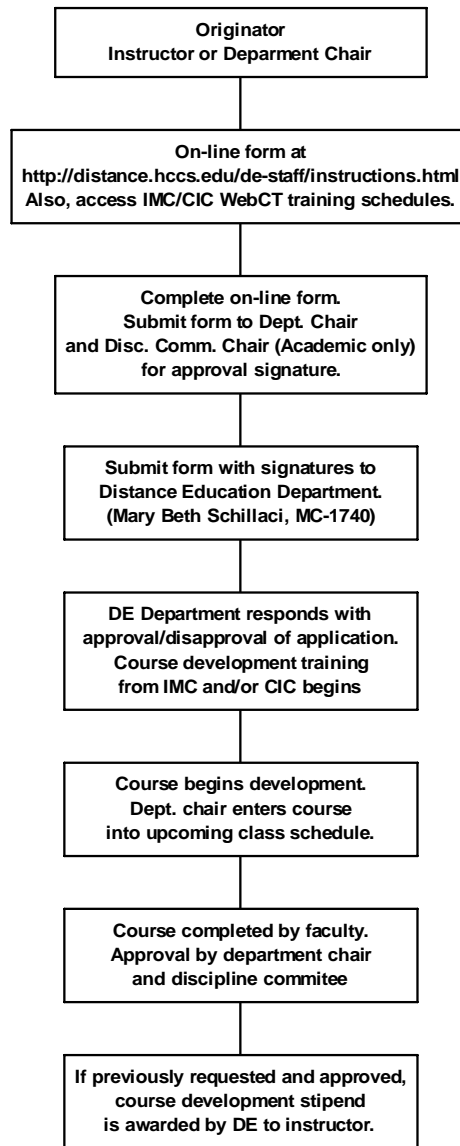
- Starting with DE courses to be offered in the Fall/06 semester, applicants wanting to develop and/or teach a new DE course must provide documentation showing they have completed the basic Faculty Certificate in Technology. Information on this certificate program can be found at <http://www.hccs.edu/title5/certification.htm>.

Faculty who have taught an online, WebCT distance learning course at HCC for at least three semesters in the last three years are waived from this requirement.

All courses for this certificate program are offered through the Instructional Media Center and Curriculum Innovation Centers at each of the colleges. For application approval, certificates or other documentation showing that faculty have completed or placed out of the above courses must be provided. These courses are part of the basic Faculty Certificate in Technology track.

- The same training requirements apply to new DE faculty teaching existing courses including master courses.

Figure 5: Flow Chart Outlining Course Development Application Process



Listing DE Courses in HCC Class Schedule

- Department Chairs are responsible for entering all courses in the course schedule with assistance from Distance Education as needed.
- Distance Education has a responsibility to monitor course entries in upcoming course schedules. It is required that department chairs notify DE of all courses entered. Following this notification, DE is responsible for entering orientation information in the course schedules.

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 - An individual entering class information has the option to enter a comment under an on-campus class to direct to DE for “additional sections.”
- A separate CRN number must be established for each section of each course in the DE schedule listings, just as it is done for on-campus classes, unless otherwise arranged. This will be implemented in the Spring/02 semester. Students enrolled in sections that do not “make” will be handled in the same manner they are on campus (i.e., the class will be cancelled and students will be transferred to another section if there is available space). Department chairs of cancelled classes will be responsible for “callbacks.”

Which Faculty Teach Which Distance Education Classes?

- For new courses: Department chairs make this decision within each of their own colleges.
- For existing courses: Department chairs make this decision within each of their own colleges.
- DE will keep abreast of enrollment in DE courses and notify department chairs when more or fewer faculty/sections are required.

How Student Loads Are Distributed Among Participating Faculty When Multiple Departments Are Involved

- Department chairs determine the number of sections they want each faculty to teach.
- DE should monitor enrollment in each section and temporarily cap a section as needed during registration. This is done to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst all instructors teaching a particular course.
- For low-enrollment courses, department chairs must collaborate to decide which college will offer these courses.
- All must be aware that, in most cases, PeopleSoft will list lower CRN #'s before higher ones in the Course Schedules. This may have an impact on enrollment in these courses.

Number of Courses Each Faculty Member Should Teach

- The consensus of the Faculty Curriculum Committee and Academic Deans is that this is clearly a decision between faculty, dept. chairs, and deans, subject to enrollment trends and student demand.

In 2004, the Faculty Workload Guidelines were established that created a guideline to limit academic, F/T faculty to teaching only 60% of their regular

fall/spring load in DE. The Dean's rationale is to avoid one instructor becoming a full-time, exclusively DE instructor, and to require some on-campus presence for all F/T faculty. This guideline can be overridden by agreement of faculty, department chairs/deans subject to enrollment trends and student demand for DE courses.

This guideline applies to academic department only.

This guideline does not apply to summer semesters, only fall and spring semesters.

This guideline does not affect teaching distance education courses as overloads. All courses taught as an overload can be distance education courses. (*See also, Sec. 10, "Overloads"*)

This guideline does not apply to P/T faculty.

- The DE Department reserves the right to temporarily cap certain sections when necessary to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst DE instructors.

Virtual College of Texas

- Houston Community College is a member of the Virtual College of Texas (VCT) – a collaborative of the majority of community colleges in Texas. Through the VCT, students can register at HCC to take online credit and non-credit courses offered by other member community colleges in the state.
- Courses taken through VCT are usually ones not currently offered through the DE program at HCC.
- Students wishing to take courses through the VCT should be directed to contact the Distance Education Department. They will be appropriately advised and referred by DE instructional administrative staff. A listing of appropriate staff is available at www.distance.hccs.edu/contact_us.htm Faculty and other academic administration should also contact DE for more information.
- When an HCC student wishes to register for a VCT course offered through another Texas community college, the course syllabus and any other relevant course information will be provided to the appropriate HCC discipline for review and approval to ensure that the VCT course requirements and curriculum conform to those established for that same course at HCC.
- More information on the VCT can be found at www.vct.org/

Determination of Distance Education Class Size

- The discipline committee/workforce program, department chairs, and deans are the primary determiners of this. To lower or raise a cap for a particular DE class, the discipline committee or workforce program should make that recommendation to the appropriate Workforce Deans' or Academic Deans' Council and to the Executive Director, Instructional Resources and Technology for approval. DE

class size should be consistent for the same classes for all colleges across the system.

Distance Education Student Complaints & Grievances

- Academic Complaints
 - Academic DE student complaints and grievances are handled in exactly the same fashion as students enrolled in on-campus classes. The HCC Student Handbook outlines those procedures and they are also available online at: http://www.hccs.edu/students/handbook/student_life.pdf
 - Student complaints should first be directed to the professor of the specific distance education course. Academic complaints first directed to the Distance Education Dept. will be referred to the professor and, if necessary, their direct supervisor for resolution. This will be done along with an explanation to the student that their first line of contact is the professor and/or supervisor. The Distance Education Dept. does not have a direct decision-making role in resolving student complaints involving academic or instructional issues. The Department's role is to encourage and facilitate communication between student, professor, and any other academic staff or administrators.
- Non-academic Complaints:
 - All other complaints should be directed to the Distance Education Dept. for either resolution or referral to the appropriate authority.

Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI)

- The Faculty Curriculum Committee approved Distance Education to put SEOI on line for distance education courses only. This began in the Fall/03 semester.
- Online SEOI is administered at the same time as on-campus SEOI.
- SEOI reports and data are tabulated and distributed to the colleges by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) as is customarily done with all on-campus courses. At the same time, OIR provides a complete copy of all tabulated SEOI results to the Distance Education Department.
- Additional questions were recommended by Distance Education for inclusion in the online and paper SEOI for DE students. They were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research SEOI Committee (David Ugwu, Ed.D., Chair, 10/01/01) and have been included in the new SEOI for DE students.