# Foothill College Distance Education Plan

Fall 2022 through Spring 2025

## DE Planning and the Foothill College Mission and Values

### Our Mission Statement

Believing a well-educated population is essential to sustaining and enhancing a democratic society, Foothill College offers programs and services that empower students to achieve their goals as members of the workforce, as future students, and as global citizens. We work to obtain equity in achievement of student outcomes for all California student populations and are guided by our core values of honesty, integrity, trust, openness, transparency, forgiveness, and sustainability. Foothill College offers associate degrees and certificates in multiple disciplines, and a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene.

*Approved by Planning & Resource Council (PaRC) in April 2017; Approved by Board of Trustees in May 2017*

### Our Vision

Foothill College educates students from diverse backgrounds that represent the demographics of the Bay Area, with particular attention to underserved and underrepresented populations. Foothill students master content and skills critical for their future success. They develop and act upon a sense of responsibility to be stewards of the public good.

*Adopted by Planning & Resource Council (PaRC) in Fall 2014*

### Foothill College Offers:

- an associate in arts or associate in science degree, or specialty certificate;
- bachelor's degrees in dental hygiene and respiratory therapy;
- preparation for transfer to another college, university, or post-secondary institution;
- career education, training, and services;
- basic skills, English as a Second Language (ESL), leadership skills and student development; and
- student support services to promote student success.

### Foothill College's Success Is Measured by the Following Quality Indicators:

- Access: Educational Opportunity for All
- Student Success: Completion of Student Goals
- Pedagogy, Scholarship, and Support of Learning
- Climate for Learning
- Fiscal and Enrollment Stability
- Reputation: Innovation and Distinctiveness

### Distance Education Planning Group Membership

#### Student Representative

(Assigned by ASFC and COOL)

*Committee On Online Learning Approved April 2023*

Staff
Akemi Ishikawa
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## Foothill College Distance Education Planning Group: Roles and Responsibilities

In the temporary absence of an official distance education committee or work group, the role of Foothill's Distance Education Planning Group is to advise the Administrative Cabinet, Academic Senate, and other shared governance entities on technology, policy, and current effective practices related to teaching and learning in a technology-mediated environment, with the primary goal of ensuring students taking and faculty teaching online courses are successful and receive educational experiences and support services equivalent to (or better than) the on-campus experience.

## How Should This Plan Be Used?

The Distance Education plan should be used to:
1. Guide decision-making and policy to ensure federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to distance education are met.
2. Guide decision-making to ensure the infrastructure supporting quality online teaching and learning is sufficiently funded and is aligned to our college mission and goals.
3. Inform resource allocation.
4. Plan professional development opportunities (in collaboration with the Office of Equity) that support campus equity goals related to online teaching and learning.
5. Support student and faculty success in online teaching and learning.

## Plan Methodology

The development of Foothill College's Distance Education Plan 2022-2025 was shaped by the college's Strategic Vision for Equity, College Mission and Values, and informed by the current Technology Plan. But it was also shaped by two other major factors: changes to the governance structure at Foothill that eliminated a key planning body, the Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC), and the COVID pandemic.

The 2017-2020 Distance Education Plan was developed by a large committee drawn from the now-defunct Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC), the Committee on Online Learning (COOL), and the Curriculum Committee. Within this structure, the 2017-2022 plan identifies DEAC as "the advisory group with primary oversight of the delivery of Foothill's distance education programs" (p. 2). The loss of this committee created a vacuum for input and oversight. This vacuum was exacerbated by the dramatic reliance on the online learning ecosystem during the COVID pandemic. Prior to Spring 2020, Foothill's Distance Education program was seen as a strategic initiative that allowed Foothill College "a means to expand enrollment without impacting facilities on campus" (Foothill College 2017-2020 Distance Education Plan). Primary goals of the 2017-2020 Distance Education plan focused on strengthening an already robust program, drawing on over 20 years of online course delivery. Challenges facing the program included migrating from the Etudes platform to the Canvas course management system, implementing quality guidelines in each division, developing online student services, and addressing the persistent, racially predictable, disproportionate success rate in online courses. Discussion of the progress made on the 2017-2020 goals and challenges follows in the "Assessment of Progress" section.

This plan is dependent upon realistically examining what we have gained and lost due to our pandemic response. The abrupt reliance on the online ecosystem to serve and support *all* courses and services in March 2020 drastically impacted the work of Online Learning, shifting online course delivery from an enrollment strategy to a survival strategy. This shift was, at once, a watershed moment for online learning, a paradigm shift for how we, albeit temporarily, viewed teaching with technology, and a traumatic event with lasting repercussions for our campus. As we recover from the trauma of the COVID pandemic, it is important to rationally examine the gains made during the rapid shift to a virtual campus, while also realistically assessing which facets of emergency remote teaching may have been necessary during the pandemic but may not serve our mission and goals moving forward.

Ensuring this plan represented the diverse voices of online learning stakeholders proved challenging. In the absence of DEAC, in Spring 2022, diverse groups representing distance education stakeholders from across campus met to assess our current distance education ecosystem. The groups used the Online Learning Consortium's Distance Education Quality Scorecard to assess the following areas of our online learning ecosystem:
- Institutional and Administrative Support
- Technology Support
- Course Development and Instructional Design

- Teaching and Learning
- Faculty Support
- Student Support
- Evaluation and Assessment

To formulate this plan, we used results from the group assessments, along with data from the faculty, staff, and student survey completed by the Technology Task Force in Spring 2022, and data from Institutional Research evaluating student success rates by modality

Lastly, the work of the Technology Task Force, and their development of overarching guiding principles resonated with this group. To closely align with the Technology Task Force, we have adopted and adapted their guiding principles as follows.

## Guiding Principles

### Equity

Distance Education planning is grounded in the Strategic Vision for Equity and the Online Equity Affirmation. Mindful of our goal to "create a college community where success is not predictable by race," we commit to prioritizing online learning resources and practices that support all students, potential students, faculty, and staff, especially those most affected by systemic inequity, as well as faculty and staff actively working to ameliorate inequity. We believe this can be achieved through inclusive engagement in teaching and learning.

### Sustainability

Given the fast-paced, dynamic nature of teaching with rapidly evolving technologies, we commit to planning that is ever-mindful of the human, financial, and environmental costs of adopting and supporting innovative technology products. Educational technology decisions must be made in a holistic manner, with an awareness of the existing online learning ecosystem, with a conscientiousness towards the limitations of finite resources—including professional development funding for training faculty to use new tools—and a commitment to adopt tools that support our equity mission and enhance student engagement (Brzezinska , 2017; Cohn, 2021; Granić, 2022).

### Centering and Empowering Humans

We commit to the value that Online Learning technology centers the users. We believe that educational technology serves the humans who use it, and therefore our online learning ecosystem must be designed around, and in direct response to, the end users' needs. We commit to prioritizing solutions bundled with the necessary training and professional development that will empower and improve the lives of students, faculty, and staff, and equip our community with the agency to produce meaningful and innovative learning experiences.

### Transparency and Inclusion

We commit to the notion that distance education planning is transparent, deliberate, structured, and inclusive of diverse voices and constituencies. We value the principles of shared

governance, diversity, equity, and inclusion when creating a vision and strategic plan for distance learning investments. We commit to communicating the planning calendar and decision-making structure to the campus community, and ensuring representatives from student, classified professional, faculty, administrator, and affinity group constituencies are present in the decision-making process. Further, we commit to soliciting input and feedback from the campus community, utilizing a variety of mechanisms, and communicating the results of planning efforts.

## Innovation

We recognize the leadership role that Foothill College has played in shaping distance education and commit to planning that is informed by innovations in educational technology, equity-based practices, and principles of anti-racism related to online learning theory and practice.

## Assessment of Progress: Review of the 2017-2020 Distance Education Plan

The previous Distance Education Plan concluded in 2020. Due to the loss of DEAC and the disruption caused by the pandemic, the college did not reconvene a work group until Spring 2022. Though much has changed since the 2017-2020 plan was written, many elements are still applicable today. Institutional Research reviewed the 2017-2020 plan against the current status of Online Learning and in its overview, concluded:

> The core value of the distance education program is educational access for students by supporting technology-mediated delivery of high-quality instruction and providing students with a convenient and cost-effective system for achieving their educational goals. Many general education courses are offered in DE mode because online learning offers great educational opportunities to students who seek alternatives to attendance on campus due to scheduling conflicts, child-care, work, or other commitments. Students worldwide can now pursue a high-quality college education without the challenges of travel and relocation. The distance education program increases educational access for students by supporting technology-mediated delivery of high-quality instruction and providing students with a flexible, convenient, and cost-effective system for achieving their educational goals. Distance learning provides educational opportunities that are not limited to the time and space constraints of traditional classes. By offering technology-mediated educational opportunities to students, Foothill College maximizes use of limited resources and broadens the population of students that are served. The distance education program supports hybrid and traditional courses as well as fully online courses. By allowing for more flexibility through hybrid offerings, Foothill College can increase enrollment. Traditional courses can be enhanced in access and efficiency by providing course content, student activities, and assessment online per instructors' and students' needs. Furthermore, online students had a higher success rate than face-to-face students, when given a choice in course modality (Finkelstein, 2022).

This overarching message of increased access, high-quality instruction, and increased enrollment remains true today. The 2017-2020 plan outlined ten goals. It is important to note

that all but one of the plan's goals are ongoing needs rather than finite projects with a clear completion. Here is a quick overview of the progress towards those goals.

## Goal #1: Legal Compliance

Limited progress was made on this goal. The 2017-2020 plan outlined several areas of compliance, including accessibility, regular and effective contact (now referred to as regular, substantive interaction), copyright, and FERPA, and set a goal that at least 50% of all online classes would meet state and federal regulations by 2019. Progress on this goal was hindered by the lack of a formal campus policy supporting movement toward the goal. To date, faculty are not required to meet these guidelines or have their online material reviewed.

To make progress on this goal, we need both training and oversight. Accessibility compliance has been a federal requirement for decades, and now there's software to make the process less onerous, yet we have no systematic way of training faculty or implementing a compliance process without personnel. In addition, this is an ongoing goal. As new courses are developed or new instructors are hired, every course needs to be evaluated to ensure it is compliant. New federal regulations now codify regular and substantive interaction (RSI) in online courses, and mandate that campuses routinely verify RSI is occurring. Meeting this goal will require a process for ensuring compliance and the personnel to complete the verification.

## Goal #2: Student Preparation

Some of the benchmarks outlined in this goal have been met, including extensive work with faculty on developing welcome messages, providing a robust orientation/welcome module, and offering readiness tutorials and Canvas orientation to students.

Other benchmarks have not been addressed, such as creating a sample online course for students to "try" Canvas before taking an online course or measuring the actual number of faculty using welcome messages and an orientation module. Moreover, this is not a finite goal, but an ongoing need as each new term begins and as new students enter the college. Recent studies have shown that online students do better when they have a sense of belonging (Peacock et al., 2020).

## Goal #3: Course Quality

Like Goals 1 & 2, this is an ongoing need. While we have provided extensive professional development opportunities, especially during the pandemic, a small subset of faculty teaching online routinely attend training. Studies of student success in online courses clearly demonstrate that ongoing professional development is critical to success (Lay et al., 2020; Popova et al., 2022).

Through our rigorous Peer Online Course Review (POCR) program, faculty engage in professional development with a cohort of peers based on the CVC-OEI's Course Design Rubric and the Foothill Online Equity Affirmation. Faculty refine existing online courses to incorporate research-based practices in online course design, regular and substantive interaction, and

accessibility to support student success (Baldwin & Ching, 2021; Baldwin et al., 2018). Currently, 11% of all faculty (face-to-face and online) have aligned their courses to the quality standards, falling short of the 20% obligation set by the CVC-OEI. Due to the POCR program, Foothill College is one of 23 CVC Exchange Teaching Colleges (California Virtual Campus-Online Education Initiative, 2022).

The 2017-2020 plan also called for integrating ALLY to support accessibility compliance. This tool is both expensive and inconsistent. This portion of the goal is unmet, but alternatives have been implemented, including the creation of a video series on accessibility, the integration of Pope Tech within Canvas, and ongoing work with the Disability Resource Center to pinpoint opportunities for joint training.

### Goal #4: Reduce the Equity Gap

Another ongoing goal, the reduction of disproportionate impact remains an important focus. In collaboration with the Office of Equity and Online Learning, faculty developed the Online Equity Affirmation, which outlines strategies for creating inclusive and culturally responsive online courses. These strategies have been incorporated in our local Peer Online Course Review (POCR) process.

The prior plan called for a concerted effort to assess data and collaborate with counselors to support student success. To this end, Program Review now includes analysis of student success data, however a focused discussion of student success in online courses and collaboration with counseling has not occurred.

### Goal #5: Leverage the CVC

Resources from the CVC-OEI are also ongoing. We continue to participate in CVC-OEI Consortium meetings, utilize tools supplied by the CVC-OEI, such as Canvas, Studio, and Pope Tech, and are an important participant in the statewide Course Exchange.

### Goal #6: Migrate to Canvas

This is a rare goal with a finite and measurable benchmark. We fully migrated to Canvas, and we no longer support Etudes. That said, we still have some courses that use Canvas as a "pass-through" to publisher or other web-based systems of instruction which circumvents best online learning practices as well as RSI guidelines.

### Goal #7: Promote Division Quality Standards

This goal was met. The J2W student evaluation is being used in online courses. Resources have been created to support course development; the Peer Online Course Review process has been approved by Academic Senate. These are important gains but promoting course quality is an ongoing need.

## Goal #8: Parity of Student Support Services

The indirect benefit of the forced move to online learning during the COVID pandemic was the rapid development of online student services. We have made remarkable gains in this area since Spring 2020, but still have work to do in creating and maintaining parity.

## Goal #9: Integrate Emerging Technologies

Like most of the 2017-2020 goals, integrating emerging technology is an ongoing need in online course delivery. In 2019, we integrated Studio, which allows faculty to create, host, and caption video assets from within Canvas. Since its integration, Studio has been widely adopted by faculty. Users have uploaded over 50,000 media assets, representing over 6,000 hours of video content. In 2019, we also integrated Pronto, a communication platform allowing students to connect to other students in their classes. In 2021, we added Play Posit, a video tool that incorporates interaction.

The 2017-2020 plan also called for wider adoption of a video conferencing platform, with a goal of increasing the use of CCC Confer by 10 faculty. The pandemic adoption of Zoom blew this goal out of the water. In 2020 we moved to a district Zoom subaccount, providing more control of our video conferencing tool, and integrated Zoom's LTI directly within Canvas, allowing faculty to create secure conferencing links for each of their classes.

## Goal #10: Develop Effective Practices to Support Student Success

This goal is ongoing. To date, we have developed workshops and learning communities focused on effective practices, including learning communities focused on the following:

- Online Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain
- Equitable Grading Practices
- Course Design Elements
- Humanizing
- Aligning to the CVC Course Quality Rubric
- Integrating Video
- Using Rubrics
- Online Assessment Techniques

We have developed yearly showcases for sharing effective practices and course design, and we worked with Administration to fund summer learning communities. We have developed a series of short videos, our Tuesday Tips, which focus on effective design and practices within Canvas.

## Major Challenges

Finally, the 2017-2020 plan identified five major challenges:

1. Migration to Canvas
2. Upholding quality standards
3. Providing equitable student services
4. Addressing the achievement gap

5. Complying with legal requirements

Of these five, the migration to Canvas is the only item that can be removed from the list of major challenges facing online learning. Added to these challenges are two more:
1. Adequately training faculty new to Canvas and/or online learning, including new federal and state mandates for ensuring every course is fully accessible, and every course includes regular and substantive interaction
2. Representation and input for online learning in shared governance after the demise of DEAC

## 2020-2022 – Campus Progress During the Covid Pandemic Shutdown

The COVID pandemic posed many hurdles for distance education. In a few weeks' time, we had to ensure all faculty and staff had access to laptops and their necessary software. For faculty, many of whom had never taught online in the past, Online Learning had to provide Canvas training for everyone that was quickly accessible for minimal functioning. This was particularly complex because of Canvas' constraints for some lab and hands-on courses, as well as the support that faculty needed to manage being fully online for the first time. Since so much time and effort have been devoted to the pandemic response, other areas of Online Learning that are essential for the distance learning ecosystem to be healthy and functional were put on hold, including completing this plan.

There were some silver linings within our pandemic response. All faculty became more familiar with Canvas and the tools that bring equity to a wider range of students on campus. There was campuswide recognition of the value of remote instruction and Zoom, which Foothill expanded to meet the needs of the campus. New modalities (hybrid with synchronous and asynchronous elements, and fully online synchronous) were established in response to students' needs. Since everyone across campus was forced to collaborate online, there was a revitalized awareness of the need for support, collaboration, and new course materials that adapt to the online environment. More faculty started to actively participate in online related professional development and many of the campus groups have been rethinking the value of remote options.

One project that received concerted attention at the beginning of the pandemic was the Student Support Portal. Completing the Portal helped ensure that all students had access to online student support services. While providing online students more access to student services had been a major goal, up to March 2020 progress on creating online access was slow. The move to a virtual campus jump-started and super-charged creating online access to many student services.

### Needs Assessment

The needs assessment was developed by the Technology Task Force to survey the current needs of employees and students. The survey received a 6% response rate from students and a 17% response rate from employees.

| 2022 Tech Needs Survey | Employees | Students |
|---|---|---|
| **Received Survey** | 1268 | 9586 |
| **Completed Survey** | 212 | 596 |
| **Response rate** | 17% | 6% |

## Students
- 70% of respondents use a laptop most often for classwork
  - 10% of students reported that their device did not meet their needs
  - Of those who felt their devices did not meet their classwork needs, the most frequently reported reason was that their device was "slow," or "cannot run many things at once," or "limited processing power," or inability to connect to web applications or web-based software.
- The three most frequently used apps are Canvas (65%), Google Apps (40%) and Outlook/Email (27%)
- When asked about usage of the Foothill Mobile App[1]
  - 23% were not aware of/did not use the mobile app
  - 22% used it to search for classes
  - 16% used it to search for the campus map

## Faculty
- 41% of respondents were FT faculty
- 24% of respondents were PT faculty
- 98% of FT faculty respondents used Canvas
- 88% of PT faculty respondents used Canvas

## Major Takeaways Regarding Faculty
- When asked "There are parts of Canvas that I could be using better," 80% of FT faculty respondents agreed, 78% of PT faculty agreed.
- When asked "How well does Canvas meet your teaching needs," 81% of FT faculty respondents reported that it "meets most of my needs" or "all of my needs" and 77% of PT faculty respondents reported that it "meets most of my needs" or "all of my needs."
- Of those who use their personal devices for work: 57% were PT faculty respondents and 29% were FT faculty respondents.

# Summary of the Findings from the DE Plan Summit

In the Spring of 2022, a DE Summit was held to assess the previous DE plan, identifying areas that were existing/satisfactory or non-existing and needing development. In attendance were

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[1] Top three responses to "Have you used the Foothill College mobile app for any of the following? Check all that apply.

administrators, faculty, staff, and student representatives from across the campus. The following eight areas were reviewed: Instructional Support: Policy, Instructional Support Resources, Technology Support, Course Development: Instructional Design, Online Employee Support, Online Student Support, and Evaluation and Assessment at the Course and Institutional Level.

## Institutional Support: Policy

The Online Education Office works effectively with the DRC, Office of Equity, COOL, and Academic Senate to support students and faculty. Most recently, we have adopted Simple Syllabus, which will improve accessibility and consistency in communication with students regarding courses. With the support of COOL, the Academic Senate passed a resolution to adopt Simple Syllabus campus wide, a definition of regular and substantive interaction, which is also being mandated by the US Department of Education, as well as the Online Equity Affirmation, a document that provides guidelines to promote online learning that is socially just, focusing on the roles of racism and socioeconomic disparity, as these are two of the biggest contributors to online equity gaps. Duo, a two-step authentication software, has been implemented to ensure all students, faculty and administrators who access and complete courses have their identities confirmed.

Though the pandemic cemented the value of online learning and the need for a robust online ecosystem, the return to campus has eroded some stability. Messaging, funding, and processes have been inconsistent regarding the value of online education. In addition, Foothill is in the initial stages of replacing its former governance structure and awaiting a permanent president, so the policies regarding communication, scheduling, systems for monitoring compliance for Title 5, continuous improvement, and faculty interaction all need to be improved or addressed. The loss of DEAC has been detrimental in areas where governance is key, such as resource allocation and planning. COOL is highly effective, but its purview is faculty-based.

## Institutional Support: Resources
Though the college depended heavily on the Online Learning Office during the pandemic and provided state and federal emergency funds to enable all faculty to move their courses online, resources in the form of permanent staffing, updated hardware, software licenses, and training have been dependent on grant-based or short-term funding. For example, faculty work for one-year release time positions rather than a full-time permanent role, as the Online Learning Office has not been chosen for the faculty prioritization process. As the pandemic slowed and face to face and hybrid courses started to be offered, it became clear that the campus needs more data on scheduling classes by modality to meet students' needs and minimize achievement gaps.

## Technology Support
A technology plan is in the development phases that should address security measures. The campus adopted Canvas as its course management system, which is nationally recognized as a dependable system that tracks downtime, offers campus support, and aligns with national

privacy and regulatory systems. Our campus technology systems are compliant with (ITMS) Information Technology Management Standards, which include emergency planning. The pandemic also demonstrated that we need ongoing upkeep of technical support documentation for faculty, staff, and students, particularly more data on student tech support needs.

## Course Development: Instructional Design

Foothill has a self-paced, asynchronous six-hour Canvas Certification course that is the minimum all faculty must complete to be given an online shell for their course. There is also an optional and compensated Peer Online Course Review course that lasts six weeks and offers faculty the opportunity to align their course to the CVC-OEI rubric and the Foothill Online Equity Affirmation. This course is robust, time-intensive, and includes many important conversations around equity, accessibility, title 5, and pedagogy. The peer element is crafted to be positive and collegiate.

There is a gap between these two Canvas professional development training courses for employees that needs to be filled for several reasons, including accreditation, compliance, consistency, course quality, and most importantly, student learning and equity. Currently, deans are often dependent on last-minute part-time hires who need to get certified quickly. While new faculty who complete Canvas Certification might technically have the basic tools and resources to put some content in the Canvas shell and set up the basics of the course, an understanding of the pedagogical foundation in using the LMS tools effectively is often not present. Too few faculty return to Online Learning for support or to update their course content or delivery, too few faculty take advantage of support from the instructional designer to ensure course content and activities support learning, and too few faculty have their courses checked to ensure they are accessible.

Additional professional development is required to fully meet our online course quality goals, and more importantly, to eliminate the disproportionate impact of online learning. There are new guiding documents like the Online Equity Affirmation that have been adopted by the Academic Senate as a lens through which faculty should be creating their courses. And the campus is embarking on the 13-55 project, which tasks the whole campus to address the 13 equity issues the campus faces.

## Online Employee Support

Currently, online faculty are only required to engage with Online Learning during the certification process, which is designed to take about six hours. In a recent survey of online faculty training across the CCC system, most campuses require between 40-60 hours of training to teach online, with routine follow-ups every few years. Foothill's requirements are woefully low, which impacts both faculty and student success. To support quality courses, there needs to be a more robust process for faculty to be trained in Canvas and receive the support they need to effectively teach in any modality. Even if they teach face-to-face, they will need to use MyPortal, Canvas, and Active Roster for student communication, grades, and census. As we saw

with the pandemic, the needs of the college may change quickly, so it is vital that *all* faculty are trained in how to use Canvas, design an effective course that is accessible, and deliver quality course experiences to students.

Both the Online Learning office and the Equity Division's office of Professional Development are now offering flexible, robust, ongoing, and varied professional development opportunities regarding online teaching and learning. Faculty and staff also have access to the Online Learning Support Office hours, the Online Faculty Handbook, Canvas support and Technology support, which are strategically advertised in various places in MyPortal, Canvas, and the Foothill College website.

Though training is made available to all faculty, it is not required or normalized into the onboarding process for faculty to learn about legal and ethical concerns like Fair Use policies, intellectual property, or concepts like stereotype threat, microaggressions, or culturally responsive teaching. Part of why the training is not widely attended is cognitive and work overload in the first few weeks of teaching, coupled with a lack of incentive or requirement for ongoing professional development in online teaching tools and practices. This is yet another reason a redesigned (expanded) Canvas training with mentor or other support is so vital.

## Online Student Support

Currently, students have access to online support for Canvas, MyPortal, and Student Services on the Online Learning website, in Canvas, the college mobile apps, and in MyPortal. On the website, the Student Canvas Hotline is highlighted. There is a student Canvas Orientation on the website, which is offered as a self-paced course, a series of videos, or a live orientation.

Foothill's new bookstore system, Follett, has streamlined the purchasing of textbooks and digital adoptions for students. However, some instructors note that they have had difficulty using the system (e.g., textbook adoptions are inputted but not showing). OER text adoption has been promoted through the Office of Equity through workshops and training for faculty, and resolutions have been passed by Academic Senate to support expanding OER adoptions as they close the equity concerns over high-cost textbooks. The online class schedule has also implemented a system to include highlighting sections of courses that are low-to-no cost for textbooks.

## Evaluation and Assessment: Institution

There is not an overarching, comprehensive process for ensuring the quality, accessibility, and/or compliance to Title 5 in all online courses. Beyond the optional POCR process and individual teaching evaluations via the J1W, no process exists for analyzing online courses via a program review or other assessment method that could apply specific established standards.

Title 5 requirements are regularly assessed in the curriculum review process, but there is not yet a campus-wide process in place to ensure requirements for regular and substantive interaction and accessibility are being met. All administrators, faculty, and staff now have

access to institutional level course success, retention, and other quantitative data in MyPortal Student Success Analytics. However, there is not a system in place to apply this information and act towards institutional continuous improvement in the online eco-system.

## Evaluation and Assessment: Course Level

No assessment of online course shells or delivery is currently used before instruction. In fact, assessment of online course quality is done only through an HR evaluation. Part-time online faculty are reviewed quarters one and two using the J1W. If a full-time faculty member is teaching both online and face-to-face, their online courses may not ever be looked at with our current system of evaluation. Though the J1 was recently revised as (J1W) to capture the effectiveness of faculty presence and engagement in the online classroom, there has not yet been collaboration between Online Learning and faculty to ensure those administering a J1W are aware of the most current federal and state regulations. For example, there is no evaluation for accessibility in the J1 or J2.

Currently, for full-time and part-time faculty, student evaluations, called J2s, are given during the faculty evaluation process. For online student evaluations, an anonymous survey is included in the course for students to complete that has both a quantitative and qualitative component. Though the dean will review the quantitative results of the student evaluation with the faculty, the qualitative comments are not shared with the dean, limiting the usefulness of the student evaluation.

Additionally, it was noted by deans that a J2 does not automatically include both modalities of online and face-to-face courses. Therefore, faculty may not be getting a consistent picture of how students are experiencing their online courses. If there is a student complaint, a dean may opt to have a J2/J2W administered. The J2/J2W's feedback is given in quantitative form to the faculty member by the dean, but it does not automatically include qualitative feedback from the dean.

The college supports Peer Online Course Review (POCR), which reviews a faculty member's online course shell in Canvas over several weeks. Faculty learn how to design courses that align with the CVC-OEI guidelines and are compensated for completing a full course review and alignment. Faculty align their course to the CVC-OEI guidelines including accessibility, student engagement, and course design, and the Foothill Online Equity Affirmation. In POCR, peer reviewers are trained, normed, and supported to ensure consistent use of the CVC-OEI course design rubric tool and the Foothill Online Equity Affirmation. This training is optional; 58 faculty who teach online have completed POCR out of approximately 535 faculty teaching face-to-face and online at Foothill (as of end of spring 2021).

The Online Equity Affirmation was circulated and now has been approved by Academic Senate as a foundation and lens from which Foothill online courses should be designed, delivered, and assessed. Various groups on campus (13-55, COOL, POCR, Academic Senate, SLOs, Program Review) are in conversation about how to encourage faculty to adopt and integrate these guidelines.

*Committee On Online Learning Approved April 2023*

While there is encouragement via Tuesday Tips and Announcements for faculty to connect with students before the start of the course (pre-course contact), there is no formal mechanism to assess (J1) whether this is happening. Yet research shows that pre-course contact by the instructor fosters a sense of belonging which has been shown to support student success and retention.

## Issues & Goals

Based on the 2017-2020 plan which outlined ten goals and the feedback from the DE Plan Summit which assessed eight categories of self-study, evidence was consolidated into 11 Issues and for each a corresponding goal has been identified.

| Issue Evidence | Issue | Goal |
|---|---|---|
| AP 4105 and Title 5 updates are delayed; lack of infrastructure for discussing and offering advice around curriculum and articulation issues; lack of support for hardware needed to teach some subjects online; no forum for discussing software needs with ETS; Campus Factsheet does not include any visible data for Online Learning. | Institutional communication and planning around DE, including governance structure, is lacking. | **Goal #1:** Work with Administration and stakeholders to develop a committee representing all stakeholders to support DE decision-making. Should include cabinet, admin, classified, and faculty from Senate and FA. Needs clear charge and guidelines for collaborating with COOL, OL, and Tech committee to ensure quality teaching and learning are supported, but also to ensure guidelines and regulations have sufficient input (for example, changes to Title 5) |
| Uncertainty of future course offerings/modalities for students and faculty.<br><br>Anecdotal reporting of student experience indicates the need for more data on student experience and satisfaction in online courses.<br><br>We see the same cohort of faculty attend PD | More data tailored to OL including student data about their user experience in online courses, their preferences in online learning, and scheduling is needed. | **Goal #2:** Work with IR to develop robust and regular surveys, including surveys to gauge satisfaction with technical help.<br><br>Ideas:<br><br>Exit survey for students when they drop a course<br><br>Post enrollment survey to identify students' decision- |

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| (Professional Development) time after time; therefore, we know many faculty are not attending. Hearing from students could bring a new faculty audience to PD about course quality and student satisfaction. | | making process when choosing a course.<br><br>Exit survey on student satisfaction, designed to measure belonging and support. |
| Aligning to the CVC-OEI rubric, satisfying requirements for regular and substantive interaction, and most importantly, creating equitable formative assessments that support student learning requires additional integrations to Canvas that support interaction and assessment. Faculty struggle to make original content when online tools (hardware and software) do not allow for strategies like annotation of texts, interactive lab work, diagramming, and using formulas. This leads to over-dependence on textbook content, which often isn't accessible. In addition, faculty are often unaware that innovative tools are available and could improve the student experience. | Course delivery technology and a robust set of tools in the online ecosystem are not prioritized; there is not adequate funding for interactive elements in the course management system for tools tailored to STEM, nor for innovation; there is not a robust system in place for testing online resources and SaaS tools to ensure they are accessible and meet district security and privacy guidelines. | **Goal #3:** Work with Administration to develop a robust budget that addresses the needs of innovative online learning. |
| To meet federal requirements for accessibility, regular and substantive interaction and improve equitable outcomes across courses, current online learning | OL needs more staff and resources to support faculty to develop and maintain high quality, equity-minded online pedagogy. | **Goal #4:** Work with Administration to create a sustainable budget for staff that includes sufficient and ongoing funding for meeting state and federal regulations, and |

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| support, training, Peer Online Course Review (POCR) and professional development depends on Faculty Online Coordinators. These positions are presently funded with one-time funds. Canvas and technology use have grown along with technical support needs, further indicating a need for more support. | | supporting POCR, Instructional Design, and faculty coordinators |
| The newly created Technology Adoption Rubric calls for all software to be vetted (in alignment with state and federal standards), but we do not currently have the expertise, personnel, or process in place to vet all software | Processes are needed to ensure the online ecosystem is secure, students' data and privacy are protected, and all software/tool are accessible | **Goal #5:** Once funding is in place for personnel, work with ETS, DRC, and De Anza to develop a robust process for testing new tools and resources. |
| Canvas certification is six hours, well below the state average, and outcomes look only at a tiny fraction of a course; Title 5 now requires that all material be 100% accessible from the time it is made available to the class, and we do not have adequate training for accessibility, nor oversight to ensure material is accessible; Only about 10% of faculty are engaged in ongoing professional development to support quality online courses. | Training for all members of the campus community using Canvas with additional focus on effective online teaching needs to be redesigned. | **Goal #6:** Redesign Canvas Certification and develop additional learning communities to support continual improvement in course quality, reduce/eliminate disproportionate impact in online courses. |

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| Changes to Title 5 mandate that faculty receive adequate training, courses are accessible, and RSI (Regular and Substantive Interaction) are monitored. | Need for processes to ensure all courses meet minimum requirements | **Goal #7:** Course quality, RSI, POCR, and accessibility need a collegial process to support continuous commitment to growth and oversight. |
| Though we do not have data, students often report to online faculty that they do not have a working or reliable computer that can handle required software downloads or other plug-ins or functionality to perform in the course. | There is an ongoing need for student support. Students need information about skills and technology required to successfully access and complete their online courses, including skills to access library and tutorial resources. | **Goal #8:** Include messaging about tech requirements in the Class Schedule, where students and their counselors can see the requirement before enrolling in the course. Implement a syllabus tool campus-wide to provide pre-course information; continue the use of student technology ambassadors to support students (funding); Provide funding to increase training and tutorial materials for students and faculty to access library resources and tutoring services online. |
| Messaging to students about various types of support (tech ambassadors, emergency funds, Wi-Fi help, computer loans, etc.) has been inconsistent, outdated and sometimes conflicting. | There is an ongoing gap for online students in student services, and institutional communications to provide clear and timely information about support services, and a structure to create a sense of belonging to the campus community. | **Goal #9:** Collaborate with Marketing to remove information silos between students and faculty so that faculty and staff are aware of the messaging that is reaching students; Build additional online student spaces for clubs and student groups such as Canvas shells and increase access to Pronto to those groups. |
| Online success rates continue to be lower than in person courses, but we do not have processes in place to critically examine this phenomenon. | The program review process needs to include a meaningful review of course modality offerings and associated success rates by department. | **Goal #10:** Collaborate with faculty, the Office of Instruction, and Institutional Research to build in Program Review assessments that include examining student success by course modality and consideration of additional support services needed for both students and faculty to |

| | | close success gaps between modalities. |
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| Ongoing professional development is a key component of successful online courses, and a key component of creating more equitable online experiences for students. We have anecdotal and narrative evidence that faculty and staff are interested in the following professional development topics:<br>copyright<br>stereotype threat<br>microaggressions<br>culturally responsive teaching and learning | Onboarding and training of all employees needs improvement in implementing policies about using online content, as well as integrating equity goals into courses. | **Goal #11:** Work with faculty, the Office of Professional Development to create training for all employees in college policy on intellectual property as it relates to Online Learning as well as stereotype threat, microaggressions and culturally responsive interactions to ensure these address college equity goals. |

## Summary of Goals

The overarching goals of the DE plan are to center high-quality distance learning in all campus decision making processes. The first goal (Goal #1) is to establish a committee representing all stakeholders to support decision-making regarding Distance Education (DE). This committee will be composed of the Vice President of Instruction, Dean of Online Learning, representatives from Faculty Senate and FA and the COOL co-chairs. The committee's charge would be to collaborate with COOL, OL, and Tech committees to ensure quality teaching and learning, while also ensuring sufficient input regarding regulations such as changes to Title 5. Bringing together administration and faculty in this way would increase communication which is paramount to enabling Foothill to easily address changes in regulations that require broad campus and financial support, such as the need for ongoing technology training and the new requirements related to RSI.

It is important to note that the decisions made by the new committee described in Goal #1 need to be data driven. Therefore, the second goal (Goal #2) is to work with Institutional Research (IR) to develop robust and regular surveys to gather feedback and gauge satisfaction with technical help. Surveys, such as exit surveys for dropped courses, post-enrollment surveys, and exit surveys on student satisfaction, aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning and identify areas for improvement in technical support. These goals seek to promote collaboration, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability in DE, resulting in better outcomes for students and faculty.

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The next two goals are budget related: To work with the administration to develop a comprehensive budget that addresses the needs of innovative online learning (informed by the IR surveys) and create a sustainable budget for Online Learning staffing. Both goals rely on ample communication and representation in the governance/advisory group outlined in Goal #1.

Goal #3 aims to ensure that there is sufficient funding for DE initiatives and programs, including the integration of new tools and services. Additionally, this goal seeks to promote collaboration with ETS to develop a system for testing new tools and services to ensure that the budget is allocated to the most effective and useful resources. By creating a robust budget, the administration can provide the necessary resources for DE to succeed and grow.

The second budget-related goal (Goal #4) is to work with the administration to create a sustainable budget for staff that includes sufficient and ongoing funding for Peer Online Course Review, instructional design, and faculty coordinators. This goal aims to provide financial support for personnel, ensuring that the necessary staff members are in place to support DE programs and initiatives and to meet ongoing mandates for ensuring all learning material is accessible, and all online courses include Regular Substantive Interaction. Additionally, this goal seeks to promote ongoing funding to maintain the quality of online courses, peer review processes, and instructional design support. This includes both full-time staff assigned to the Office of Online Learning and faculty rotating into Online Mentorship roles. Once funding is in place for personnel, the goal is to work with ETS, DRC, and De Anza to develop a robust process for testing new tools and resources. This process aims to ensure that the budget is allocated to the most effective resources and that the personnel have access to the necessary tools to support DE programs and initiatives.

Goal #6 is to redesign the Canvas Certification process and develop additional learning communities that will support continual improvement in course quality, while also reducing or eliminating disproportionate impact in online courses. This goal seeks to ensure that faculty have the training to ensure online content is accessible to all students, regardless of their background or learning needs. Goal #7 builds on the initial work in Canvas Certification, recognizing that there is a need for a collegial process that will support continuous commitment to growth and oversight in the areas of course quality, RSI (Regular and Substantive Interaction), POCR (Peer Online Course Review), and Accessibility. By establishing a process that supports continuous growth, the goal ensures that the online courses provided are of the highest quality and meet the requirements of Title 5.

Finally, Online Learning has goals that aim to increase collaboration and awareness between students, faculty, and support staff. This is achieved through four goals. Goal #8 supports developing clear and transparent information for students, so they are supported while taking online courses. The goal includes implementation of a web-based syllabus tool, funding and training for student technology ambassadors, and development of training and tutorial

materials to access library resources and tutoring services online. Goal #9 supports student-centered communication and community-building with the LMS, including additional online student spaces for clubs and student groups, and increased access to Pronto for those groups. Goal #10 supports collaboration between the Office of Instruction and Institutional Research to build Program Review assessments that include examining student success by course modality and close success gaps between course modalities. Goal #11 focuses on collaboration with the Office of Instruction and the Office of Equity to ensure there is robust and frequent professional development for online instructors that will have an impact on our campus equity goals.

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