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SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROPOSAL:
DISTANCE EDUCATION

Addition of Courses that Constitute 50% or More of a Program Offered Through Distance Education

Submitted by:

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Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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**Participant List**

The following College of the Desert staff members participated in the preparation of this Substantive Change proposal:

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- Basil Augustine, Chair of Student Counseling
- Nathan Church, Director of Student Health & Disability Services
- Edwin Deas, Vice President, Business Affairs
- Adrian Gonzales, Interim Vice President, Student Affairs
- Farley Herzek, Vice President, Academic Affairs
- Tom Jones, Institutional Researcher, Academic Affairs
- Ken Lira, Director of Financial Aid
- Jojie Magbuhat, Curriculum and Catalog Specialist
- Felix Marhuenda-Donate, Chair of Distance Education
- Annebelle Nery, Dean of Admissions and Records
- Florante Roa, Director of Systems Management and MIS Operations
- Valorie Stiff, Administrative Assistant – School of Library and Learning Resources

**A. Description of Proposed Change and Justification**

**A1. Description**

This Substantive Change Proposal is submitted to ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) for approval to offer the following Associate Degrees and Certificates through the distance education mode given that 51% - 100% of the coursework can be taken online:\*

\*Traditional modes of delivery will continue as well.

Associate in Science Degrees	Associate in Arts Degrees	State Approved Certificates of Achievement
<p><i>Areas of Emphasis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of Justice</li> <li>• Agri-Business</li> <li>• Agriculture, General</li> <li>• Air Conditioning/HVACR</li> <li>• Architectural Technology</li> <li>• Automotive Technology</li> </ul>	<p><i>Areas of Emphasis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol and Drugs Studies</li> <li>• Anthropology</li> <li>• Art</li> <li>• Business Administration</li> <li>• Communication Studies</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>	<p><i>Areas of Concentration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of Justice</li> <li>• Environmental Horticulture</li> <li>• Turf Grass Management</li> <li>• Accounting</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> <li>• Computer Information System</li> <li>• Construction Management</li> <li>• Environmental Horticulture</li> <li>• Environmental Sciences</li> <li>• Environmental Studies</li> <li>• Fire Technology</li> <li>• Geology</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Natural Resources</li> <li>• Physics</li> <li>• Plant Science</li> <li>• Registered Nursing (ADN)</li> <li>• Turfgrass Management</li> <li>• Vocational Nursing (VN)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composition</li> <li>• Culinary Management</li> <li>• Digital Design and Production</li> <li>• Early Childhood Education (ECE)</li> <li>• Economics</li> <li>• Foreign Language</li> <li>• General Drafting</li> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Hospitality Management</li> <li>• Journalism</li> <li>• Liberal Arts</li> <li>• Literature</li> <li>• Mass Communication</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Philosophy</li> <li>• Physical Education</li> <li>• Political Science</li> <li>• Psychology</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Social Science</li> <li>• Sociology</li> <li>• Theatre Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer Information Systems</li> <li>• Retail Management</li> <li>• Digital Design and Production</li> <li>• Early Childhood Education-Teacher</li> <li>• Early Childhood Education-Master Teacher</li> </ul>
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## A2. Justification

Using alternative course delivery formats College of the Desert meets the needs of a diverse community of learners. “The College of the Desert is a learning-centered institution that values: diversity and inclusion”. (2011-2012 College of the Desert Catalog, p. 8.) Distance education has become a highly desirable means of course delivery to meet current student educational needs at College of the Desert. The Desert Community College District serves a sizable portion of the rural regions of Riverside County, primarily in the Coachella Valley. As a result, distance education provides a tremendous advantage for those students who have trouble getting to the campus or who have schedules that do not allow them to take classes scheduled at specific times. The distance education formats offered at College of the Desert include both online and hybrid courses. These distance education courses include a variety of media-based enhancements, pedagogical approaches, and instructional methods and techniques – including but are not limited to online discussion boards and synchronous chat. These alternatives to traditional on-campus instruction make our online modes of delivery increasingly popular.

## A3. Relationship to Institutional Mission

Our mission states: “College of the Desert provides excellent educational programs and services that contribute to the success of our students and the vitality of the communities we serve.” Our vision indicates that: “College of the Desert will be a center of collaborations and innovations for educational enrichment, economic development and quality of life in the Coachella Valley and surrounding communities.” (2011-2012 College of the Desert Catalog, p. 8).

In spring 1998, the first online classes were delivered by College of the Desert; students were enrolled in four different courses. As of fall 2009, the enrollment in fully online sections had grown to 2,658 students. DE courses are among the first to fill during each term’s registration period and the demand shows no sign of decreasing. In order to address this student need, the number of courses offered in DE format has steadily increased over the years which enables students to complete more program, transfer, and degree requirements fully online.

## A4. Rationale for Change

In the Desert Community College District specifically, the growth and demand for online learning has steadily increased. This growth reflects a nationwide trend. Allen and Seaman (2008) summarized the results of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's survey of 2,500 institutions of higher learning in *Staying the Course, Online Education in the United States* and reported 3.9 million students enrolled in two- and four-year colleges and universities were taking at least one online course in 2007 (p. 5). Dobbs, Waid, del Carmen (2009) and others report that online learning fills an obvious need for many due to its convenience, accessibility, and flexibility and most students surveyed were satisfied with their online experience. Most agree that the flexibility and convenience of DE courses contribute to their popularity.

Each term a significant number of courses are offered in DE formats. There are three major reasons for the proposed change:

- Students' desire for Internet-based distance learning, as evidenced by the rapid and continued growth of distance education locally, statewide, and nationwide.
- To serve students who find it difficult to attend traditional face-to-face classes.
- The evolution of distance education from tele-courses to Internet-based modalities.

College of the Desert acknowledges this as a major step in the diversification of the instructional offerings in that it provides the opportunity for learners to earn or to complete a variety of existing state-approved certificates of achievement, areas of emphasis, transfer, and degree-applicable requirements fully online. Being able to complete 50% or more of Certificates of Achievement and Associate Degree requirements online in a format serves the needs of College of the Desert's diverse student population. It also creates the need for College of the Desert to file a substantive change report to the commission. (Attachment A.)

#### **B. Description of Educational Programs to be Offered**

All courses and programs proposed to be offered through the distance education mode are already offered through the traditional on-campus mode of instruction. There are no differences in the basic requirements between the distance education delivery and on-campus version of the courses and programs. In addition, the college has procedures in place to ensure that the rigor, breadth, objectives, learning outcomes, and academic quality of courses and programs offered in the distance education mode meet the same standards as those offered in the traditional on-campus mode. The College of the Desert Curriculum Committee separately approves each course proposed for delivery via distance education to ensure the following criteria are met:

- Regular effective contact is maintained between the instructor and students through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, study sessions, field trips, library workshops, threaded conferencing, chat rooms, telephone contact, email, or other activities.
- Effective pedagogical techniques appropriate to the distance education mode are utilized to ensure that the quality and rigor of instruction mirrors that of the on-campus version of the course.
- Appropriate technology is used to achieve the objectives of the course.
- Multiple measures are used to achieve and assess student learning, including reading, writing, critical thinking assignments, and multiple evaluations.
- All delivery methods used are accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws.

#### **C. Processes Which Led to the Request for the Change**

The online course offerings that comprise 50% or more of the requirements for the degrees, certificates and areas of concentration listed above were each approved by the curriculum committee and District Board of Trustees. The College realized that it needed to submit a substantive change application in light of the fact that several of the College's degrees and certificates appeared to be offering 50% or more credits of the coursework online. The offering of courses, programs, transfer patterns, and degrees through distance education modalities directly correlates to



the institution's mission and vision of being "a center of collaborations and innovations for educational enrichment..." (2011-12 College of the Desert Catalog, p. 8). Further, the distance education modality provides learners with access to innovative and flexible learning opportunities. Planning for the scheduling and development of distance education courses is discussed at the college department level and has been integrated into department unit plans, budgeting, and program review.

### **C1. Assessment of Needs and Resources Which Have Taken Place**

All departments at College of the Desert participate in ongoing planning through the process of creating annual unit plans through the program review process. The departments and all faculties participate in authentic assessment to determine learning and learner needs, to assess the areas for improvement, and to implement change where appropriate to advance the institution's effectiveness. Through advisory boards and industry partners, faculty obtains feedback on trends and curricular needs. As a result, faculty and departments have made adjustments to course offerings and scheduling to optimize student enrollment and to maximize options for learners.

The college's instructional and student support services are increasingly providing equivalent support services to distance education students. A student can register for classes, request counseling, request financial aid, and attend class via any internet-connected computer at times most convenient to the student. In addition, computers with internet access are available on campus for student use.

The resources needed to schedule an increasing number of distance education courses have come from the general fund. Additionally, the College of the Desert's Information Technology Department is responsible for all non-instructional aspects of online and distance education:

- Online, hybrid and web-enhanced course set-up and maintenance; upgrades and training; and backup and implementation in conjunction with the host provider (Blackboard)
- Online support training including use of the technical aspects of the Blackboard Learn system as well as streaming media, and video conferencing via one-to-one and workshop training opportunities.
- Maintenance of servers and software licenses for online-related instruction.

The Information Technology Department also provides support for many other software applications, such as Excel, PowerPoint, and a wide variety of software applications that support the instructor in and out of the classroom. A 24/7 Help Desk, Blackboard Student Services (was *Presidium*), is available to assist both faculty and students with technical support.

The School of Library and Learning Resources in conjunction with the Academic Senate's Faculty Development committee provides online training for instructors through the Online Teaching Academy offered at the beginning of each semester and at sessions during the semester. A full time faculty member has release time to serve as Distance Education department Chair, assist faculty with support needs and be available to assist faculty who are new to online teaching. Distance education resources for students are available through links on the Online Classes link on the College of the Desert homepage. Distance education resources for faculty are available through Blackboard Learn system.

### **C2. Anticipated Effect of the Proposed Change on the Rest of the Institution**

Increasing the number of courses that can be taken online has not significantly increased the college's costs. Offering classes online provides an alternative option for both students and faculty. On campus, it increases the capacity of the college to offer more sections "on ground" and to serve more traditional students by freeing up classroom space. Several campus departments and offices already offer support for online students. For example, all registration services are available through WebAdvisor and students have online access to the college bookstore and to library databases.

College web pages provide contact information for online student inquiries. Total student enrollment in College of the Desert online courses during the 2010-2011 academic year was 3,677. It is anticipated this number will continue to increase as more opportunities in distance education

courses become available.

### **C3. Statement of the Intended Benefits that will Result from the Change**

The intended improvement for College of the Desert in developing and offering distance education courses is that it provides the college with the capacity to serve the entire community. Distance education provides accessibility for those living away from the college and provides improved accessibility for those with family responsibilities, such as parents with young children at home, or those who must keep a full-time job and therefore cannot attend classes on campus consistently. This attracts more students and gives the College the ability to serve more students without requiring additional facilities. Another benefit students report is that they can revisit the lectures and presentations again and again as available and if necessary for better understanding. Students also report more student-teacher interaction as they use email to correspond about their courses.

### **C5. Description of the Preparation and Planning Process for the Change**

All College of the Desert courses and programs are developed and approved following the Academic Senate curriculum approval process:

- Instructional program review occurs every six years
- Instructional department program review updates are submitted yearly
- Course, program development and revision are completed by faculty with discipline and department approval, college administration review and Board of Trustees approval
- Curriculum Committee review process for existing individual courses and programs on a regular basis through the comprehensive program review process
- Curriculum Committee approval of new courses or changes to existing courses prior to Board approval
- A separate approval process for all courses offered through distance education which includes the requirement that faculty members provide sound rationale for delivering the class through online or hybrid instruction as well as an explanation for the effective replacement of “seat time”
- Board of Trustees approval for all courses and programs
- State Chancellor’s Office approval for all new noncredit courses and state-approved programs.

Transfer courses are submitted through the articulation process for approval for IGETC (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Credit), California State University Breadth and University of California Transfer Credit Approval (US-TCA).

College of the Desert faculty members led the process of conducting an exhaustive search for a learning management system (LMS). All of the major vendors have been reviewed. Blackboard (Bb) was selected. The selection of the LMS was an inclusive process that has enabled faculty to review several different systems and to check their viability for use with *Datatel* the college’s administrative system, capacity and capability, technical training, and ease of use for students and faculty.

## **D. Evidence of Institutional Support to Demonstrate the Continuance of Quality Standards**

### ***D1. Evidence of Sufficient and Qualified Faculty, Management, and Support Staffing***

#### **Faculty**

College of the Desert faculty members teach courses through distance education by the following requirements:

1. Faculty member has previously taught a hybrid or online course
2. Completed online training through the institution or other online training programs
3. The course to be offered through distance education delivery has been approved for Distance Education by the college’s Curriculum Committee
4. Scheduling of the course through distance education is approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee

#### **Administration**

Administration for Distance Education is provided by the Dean of COD's School of Library and Learning Resources. A faculty member experienced in online teaching and learning has release time to support and serve as Chair of Distance Education at the College of the Desert. The Chair is directly involved with and supports those faculty members who teach courses online. The College distributes its hybrid and online offerings through the Blackboard Learn system. Blackboard, Inc. hosts, upgrades and maintains the Learn system. COD's Information Technology department facilitates the offering of Distance Education for College of the Desert by managing the contracts and technical issues with Blackboard, Inc. and Blackboard Student Services (*was Presidium*). The School of Library and Learning Resources in conjunction with the Academic Senate's Faculty Development Committee also provides the college professional/ pedagogical training services. They also schedule on campus training for faculty on topics of interest related to distance education training. A new Library and Learning Resources facility is in the planning stages; this facility will provide additional assistance and support for faculty members who teach online.

#### **Other Support**

Information Technology (IT) Help Desk is available to assist faculty with hardware related issues and there is 24/7 support for both faculty and students through Blackboard Student Services (*was Presidium*) a contracted service that assists with technical issues that arise in the distance education learning environment. Staff from the departments of Information Technology and Disabled Students Programs and Services is also available to assist faculty with the use of media, disabled-student compliance issues, the upload and revision of classes each term, and technical aspects of teaching online.

#### **Advisory Committees**

College of the Desert faculty members participate in Academic Senate committees which are chaired by faculty members. These committees deal with various aspects of distance education such as curriculum approval, technology specifications, educational and professional policies, and funding faculty development opportunities. The Academic Senate is the official voice of the Faculty on educational and professional matters.

### ***D2. Evidence of Appropriate Equipment and Facilities, including Adequate Control over any Off-campus Site***

College of the Desert provides the support and facilitation of all distance education offerings. The current learning management system (LMS) being used is Blackboard. The LMS is fully supported through a contractual agreement. All technical problems relative to the LMS and delivery of courses is handled by Blackboard and the COD Information Technology department. All course materials are password protected and compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Office of Disabled Students Programs & Services provides assistance to faculty in making all Distance Education offerings 508 compliant and is included in the curriculum approval process for all new DE proposals.

#### **Student and Faculty Support**

Online students wishing to do their work on campus have access to computer labs in any one of the various learning labs on campus and in the education centers at Indio and Mecca/Thermal. Additionally, computers for student use are available in the Library. Faculties have access to computers in their offices, computers labs, and through the Faculty Resource Center.

#### **Library**

The library has an extensive web presence to support distance education learning. The library website serves as a portal to information resources such as books, periodicals, and Internet resources. Online access to electronic books is available. Students and faculty have access to over one dozen online databases, including the EBSCOhost, NewsBank, Literature Resource Center, and Country Watch.

#### **Financial Aid**

College of the Desert provides extensive financial aid information online via the college website, including application and eligibility requirements, important deadline dates, forms and specific information on the various financial aid programs. Online students can make appointments or discuss via telephone their financial aid questions or issues. Financial Aid Office is open Monday through Thursday 9am to 6pm and Fridays from 9am to 2pm.

#### **Academic Advising and Counseling**

Academic advising and counseling requests are available for all current and prospective College of the Desert students through the college's Counseling Department. The department provides counseling and advising to students enrolled in both online and on campus classes. During a counseling appointment, the students receive educational, career, and personal counseling as it pertains to their academic success. The Counseling website is helpful to online students by providing information on counseling

appointments, the matriculation process, orientations, success workshops, and prerequisite information. Individual appointments, group workshops, online counseling, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) are all available to current and prospective College of the Desert students through this service.

### **Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS)**

All courses and services offered in a distance education format are Section 508 and ADA compliant. Courses that are newly proposed to be offered via distance education or that use technology as a method of instruction are reviewed by the College of the Desert's Senate Educational Technology Committee to ensure accessibility and Section 508 /ADA compliance standards. The College's institutional websites are also 508 and ADA compliant. College of the Desert currently offers services to distance education students with a disability through a combination of email, U.S. Mail, video relay, and telephone. In addition, DSPS counseling is provided via live online academic advising services, with live video capabilities.

### ***D3. Evidence of Fiscal Resources including the Initial and Long Term Amount and Sources of Funding for the Proposed Change***

College of the Desert has a five-year financial plan that allocates significant resources in support of online instructional delivery. Specifically, the plan calls for approximately \$115,000 annually to be allocated for ongoing equipment license fees, maintenance and upgrades. In addition, nearly \$40,000 is allocated annually for online library databases as well as \$10,000 for 24/7 support for our students and faculty.

Sustaining distance education over time is accomplished within the context of the college's five-year financial planning process. College of the Desert projects ongoing college costs by identifying estimates of how much enrollment growth is necessary to fund ongoing costs and to fund new projects and services while factoring in potential cost increases such as salary schedule step increases and increases in utilities, health-care costs, etc. This model incorporates these budget assumptions and the College Planning Council's recommendations to forecast long-term implications.

Distance Education recommended priorities are reviewed for alignment with the college's mission and goals. These recommendations receive a final review by the president and vice presidents for adjustments, approval by the CPC, and incorporation into the annual budget development process.

As outlined in the College of the Desert College Planning Council Handbook the financial planning process is designed to identify the overall effectiveness of each program unit including Distance Education in relation to required resources. It is not zero-based budgeting but rather an ongoing process of assessment and evaluation of Distance Education's alignment with the college's mission and goals. Grant funding from federal Title V, the state Basic Skills Initiative and other sources could potentially provide additional fiscal support of online instruction.

### ***D4. A Plan for Monitoring Achievement of the Desired Outcomes of the Proposal***

Student learning outcomes are required for every new and revised distance education course outline requiring Curriculum Committee approval. College of the Desert conducts analysis of student learning outcomes for every course, both live and online, every semester. All distance education courses are reviewed through the regular program review process by the instructional departments, disciplines and curriculum committee.

### **E. Evidence that the Institution Has Received All Necessary Internal and External Approvals**

All courses, degrees, and certificates offered by College of the Desert have been approved by the College of the Desert Curriculum Committee, which requires that all courses being proposed for distance education, whether as a hybrid or fully online, undergo a separate review and approval by the curriculum committee. Each course proposed for distance education delivery must demonstrate that it is designed to ensure regular and effective contact in hybrid and online classes has been developed to serve this process. Following approval of the curriculum committee, the course is submitted to the Board of Trustees.

### **F. Evidence that Each Eligibility Requirement Will Still Be Fulfilled**

#### **CERTIFICATION OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH**

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION****1. Authority**

College of the Desert is part of the Desert Community College District. College of the Desert is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is approved under regulations of the California State Department of Education and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. This substantive change proposal meets the requirements of these authorities.

**2. Mission, Vision, Values**

Distance Education is guided by the mission/vision/values statements of the College of the Desert. The DCCD Board of Trustees approved mission/vision/values statement is as follows:

**Mission:**

College of the Desert provides excellent educational programs and services that contribute to the success of our students and the vitality of the communities we serve.

**Vision:**

College of the Desert will be a center of collaborations and innovations for educational enrichment, economic development and quality of life in the Coachella Valley and surrounding communities.

**Values:**

College of the Desert is a learning-centered institution that values:

- Student Success: Student learning and growth are central to all we do.
- Diversity & Inclusion: We embrace the diversity of our community and uphold the dignity and worth of the individual.
- Integrity: We are open, honest and reliable.
- Respect: We value the thoughts, words, and actions of our students, colleagues, and community.
- Dedication: Our faculty, staff and administrators are responsible leaders who effectively implement programs in support of student learning and efficient college operations.
- Professionalism: We are current in our areas of expertise and embody high standards of conduct.
- Communication: We communicate with authenticity in pursuit of broad understanding, effective dialog, and inclusive decision-making.
- Lifelong Learning: Learning is essential to living, for students, faculty and staff.

The College of the Desert mission statement appears in published material including the College of the Desert Catalog, the published Schedule of Classes, and the COD website – all places where information about the Distance Education program is located.

**3. Governing Board**

College of the Desert, Desert Community College District is governed by a publicly elected five-member Board of Trustees, joined by a non-voting student trustee. Members are elected for four-year terms, and these terms are staggered to ensure continuity. The Board members have no employment or personal financial interest in the institution. The Board holds monthly meetings open to the public with notices and agendas widely posted in advance.

**4. Chief Executive Officer**

The appointment of the College of the Desert President is approved by the Board of Trustees. The President reports directly to the Board of Trustees.

**5. Administrative Capacity**

The College of the Desert administration is adequate in number, experience and qualifications to provide the appropriate administrative oversight necessary to support the college's mission including Distance Education. In addition to the President, administrative appointments include Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, and Student Affairs, a Dean for each of the five schools (Applied Sciences & Business; Arts & Sciences; Communication & Humanities; Health Sciences & Education; Library & Learning Resources), a Dean of Admissions and Records, and a Dean of Student Services, a Director of Facilities Services, a Director of Fiscal Services, and an Executive Director of Human Resources. (Attachment B.)

**6. Operational Status**

Founded in 1958, the college has been operational since it opened its doors in 1962. Currently, there are over 10,000 students enrolled in classes and with a student body that is over 55% Hispanic, COD is a federally recognized Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Many students are actively pursuing vocational certificates, associate degrees, and/or transfer to four-year institutions. A smaller proportion of students have other goals, including personal and/or academic skills development and career enrichment. Like many institutions of higher education, the College of the Desert is reaching out to students beyond the boundaries of its campus and education centers. By providing courses online Distance Education many student benefit from not having to come to our campus or education centers at predetermined times.

## **7. Degrees**

To meet its stated mission, College of the Desert offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees and a variety of certificates, primarily in business, management, health sciences, early childhood education and technology fields. The institution has over 31 degree and/or certificate programs. The requirements for each of these programs can be completed entirely at College of the Desert and most can be completed at least 51% online; six associate degrees and five certificate programs can be completed fully online. (Addenda A.)

## **8. Educational Programs**

College of the Desert's Associate degree programs and distance education offerings are congruent with the college's mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, and are conducted at appropriate levels of quality and rigor. The Associate degree programs meet California Code of Regulations, Title 5 curriculum requirements and, when combined with the general education component, represent two years of full-time academic work. Course outlines in both online and face-to-face courses meet predetermined student learning outcomes achieved through class content, assignments, and activities, and all course outlines are subject to periodic, rigorous program review. College of the Desert also offers 52 career/technical certificates.

## **9. Academic Credit**

College of the Desert awards academic credit both online and face-to-face based on accepted practices of California community colleges under California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 55002.5. Detailed information about academic credit is published in the college catalog.

## **10. Student Learning and Achievement**

Board-approved Institutional Outcomes (IOs), Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Program Outcomes (POs) including General Education, Career & Technical Education, Basic Skills and Student Services have been published in the college catalog beginning with the 2010-11. Course outlines of record contain appropriate course-level SLOs. Course-level SLOs are achieved and assessed by a variety of methods and instructors of all courses offered are actively engaged in SLO assessment. Coordinated by department and discipline faculty and by administrators, every course, regardless of its location and delivery system, must follow the course outline of record.

## **11. General Education**

All degree programs require a minimum of 18 units of general education to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. Students must demonstrate competency in writing, reading, and mathematical skills to receive an associate degree. The institution's general education program is scrutinized for rigor, quality, delivery mode, etc. by the Academic Senate's Curriculum Committee, and appropriate constituencies; the district adheres to the approved requirements for math and writing effective at the state level.

## **12. Academic Freedom**

College of the Desert supports academic freedom; faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as ensured by Board Policy 4030. The institution prides itself on offering an open, inquiring, yet respectful and transparent educational experience, evidencing our commitment to intellectual freedom and independence of thought.

### 13. Faculty

College of the Desert has approximately 112 full-time faculty and approximately 350 adjunct faculty. All faculty members must meet the minimum requirements for their disciplines based on regulations for the Minimum Qualifications for California Community College Faculty established in California Code of Regulations, Title 5. Many hold terminal degrees. Clear statements of faculty roles and responsibilities including distance education exist in the faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement and the Faculty Handbook. These responsibilities are entrusted primarily to full-time faculty and include participation in curriculum, program review, the development of student learning outcomes, and assessment of student learning.

### 14. Student Services

College of the Desert prides itself on strong student services programs, providing a comprehensive array of services for all its students, as well as support services for those students requiring preparation for college-level work. Each department works to support the mission of the college and the academic success of our students whether online or in person. Student support services at College of the Desert are being increasingly made available in an online format. The registration process is now almost exclusively conducted online. The Student Counseling Department is implementing an online appointment system, whereby students can schedule an appointment with a counselor and detail the type of information sought. Information regarding the matriculation process is available through the web. The availability of online student support services complements and enhances the offering of degrees and certificates that can be largely completed online, thereby strengthening the College's adherence to ACCJC Standard 2B.

### 15. Admissions

College of the Desert has adopted and adheres to admissions policies consistent with its mission as a public California community college and in compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 5. Student admission supports the COD mission statement and ensures that all students are appropriately qualified for the program and course offerings including those offered online. Information about admissions requirements is available in the College Catalog, the Class Schedule, and on the college website. Students are encouraged to apply online. Regarding authentication, all COD students receive a student ID # and Web-Advisor ID and password when they complete the application. Distance Education students at the College of the Desert are required to sign into the Blackboard Learn system and Web-Advisor which requires an ID and password.

### 16. Information and Learning Resources

College of the Desert provides long- and short-term access to sufficient print and electronic information and learning resources through its library and programs to meet the educational needs of Distance Education students. The library is staffed to assist students in the use of college resources. Internet access and online computer search capabilities are available without charge to students in the library, student support programs, and in computer labs. The institution is committed to enhancing its learning resources, regardless of location or delivery method.

### 17. Financial Resources

The College of the Desert has a publicly documented funding base that is reviewed and revised on an annual basis. The College Planning Council includes a Budget Subcommittee charged with ensuring that financial resources needs are addressed in developing plans pertaining to educational programs, support services, and facility needs.

College of the Desert has a five-year financial plan that allocates significant resources in support of online instructional delivery. Specifically, the plan calls for approximately \$115,000 annually to be allocated for ongoing equipment license fees, maintenance and upgrades. In addition, nearly \$40,000 is allocated annually for online library databases as well as \$10,000 for 24/7 support for our students and faculty.

Sustaining distance education over time is accomplished within the context of the college's five-year financial planning process. College of the Desert projects ongoing college costs by identifying estimates of how much enrollment growth is necessary to fund ongoing costs and to fund new projects and services while factoring in potential cost increases such as salary schedule step increases and increases in utilities, health-care costs, etc. Annual budget adjustments are based on projected costs and needs assessments of all departments at College of the Desert.

All departments participate in ongoing planning through the process of creating annual unit plans through the program review process. The departments and all faculties participate in authentic assessment to determine learning and learner needs, to assess the areas for improvement, and to implement change where appropriate to advance the institution's effectiveness. Through advisory boards and industry partners, faculty obtains feedback on trends and curricular needs. As a result, faculty and departments have the opportunity to make adjustments to Distance Education course offerings, scheduling, and student/faculty support to optimize student enrollment and to maximize options for learners.

#### **18. Financial Accountability**

The Desert Community College District regularly undergoes and makes publicly available an annual external financial audit for the district and its educational centers by a contracted certified public accountant. The audit is conducted in accordance with the standards contained in Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The auditors also follow the audit manual issued by the State Chancellor's Office. The Board of Trustees reviews these audit reports on a regular basis. The Vice President of Business Services supports appropriate and effective utilization of the COD budget for all programs including Distance Education.

#### **19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

College of the Desert has a comprehensive planning and institutional effectiveness process that was approved by the College Planning Council and the Board of Trustees and is published for Distance Education and all at COD to follow. College Planning Council is an advisory committee to the President on college-wide issues, and serves as the primary policy and planning recommendation group for the college, thereby establishing the charges to other units and committees in accomplishing specific tasks including but not limited to the following areas: classified staff development, Datatel implementation, diversity, health & welfare, safety, non-instructional programs, student equity, accreditation, bookstore, food service, strategic planning and facilities. Through the work of the College Planning Council, its four subcommittees, and various task forces, the college and distance education is in a constant state of review and improvement. Annually generated Administrative, Student Services, and Academic Program Review documents, along with our Educational and Facilities master plans, drive institutional planning. The college and district systematically evaluate how well and in what ways COD is accomplishing its purpose, including assessment of student learning and documentation of institutional effectiveness.

#### **20. Public Information**

The College of the Desert publishes a catalog and a schedule of classes that contains online classes offered at the college. These documents, along with college websites and other appropriate publications, publicize accurate and current information about Distance Education, the institution's mission and goals; admission requirements and procedures; academic calendar and program length; rules and regulations affecting online students, programs and courses; degrees offered and degree/graduation requirements; costs and refund policies; available learning resources; grievance procedures; names and academic credentials of faculty and administrators, names of Board of Trustees members; and all other items relative to attending or withdrawing from the institution and its online courses.

#### **21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

The Desert Community College District Board of Trustees provides assurance that College of the Desert adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission (including the Distance Education & Correspondence Education Manual), describes the college in identical terms to all its accreditation agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. All disclosures by the institution will be complete, accurate and honest.

#### **G. Evidence that Each Accreditation Standard Will Still be Fulfilled**

##### **CERTIFICATION OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION**

The Accrediting Commission of Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 8-10, 2011 reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited College of the Desert Monday, March 14 through Thursday March 17, 2011. The Commission took action to reaffirm accreditation with a requirement that the College complete a Follow-Up Report. The Commission asks that the Follow-Up Report be submitted by October 15, 2012.

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#### **Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**



**The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.**

The proposed substantive change strongly supports the College of the Deserts mission and vision, which calls for providing “excellent educational programs and services that contribute to the success of our students and the vitality of the communities we serve” with an emphasis on being a “center of collaborations and innovations for educational enrichment”. Offering degrees and certificates that can be completed primarily online is in direct congruence with College’s values which state in part that, “We embrace the diversity of our community” and that “We are current in our area of expertise and embody high standards of conduct”.

#### **Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services**

**The institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated student learning outcomes. The institution provides an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.**

##### **A. Instructional Programs**

The proposed substantive change represents an institutional adaptation to the changing learning needs of community college students. Increasingly, community college students face competing demands, including care of children and other family members, employment or search for employment, and in some cases personal challenges that may preclude them from attending classes offered in the traditional, on-campus format. For these students, completing their studies primarily online may be the only means to achieve their educational goals. The proposed substantive change enhances the ability of the College to meet ACCJC Standard 2A.

##### **B. Student Support Services**

Student support services at College of the Desert are being increasingly made available in an online format. The registration process is now almost exclusively conducted online. The Student Counseling Department is implementing an online appointment system, whereby students can schedule an appointment with a counselor and detail the type of information sought. Information regarding the matriculation process is available through the web. The availability of online student support services complements and enhances the offering of degrees and certificates that can be largely completed online, thereby strengthening the College’s adherence to ACCJC Standard 2B.

##### **C. Library and Learning Support Services**

More than a dozen online databases are available for the use of College of the Desert students who, like most contemporary community college students, conduct the majority of their course-related research online. Further, College of the Desert Library is beginning to offer live reference assistance services online. There is, therefore, a strong congruence between the changes in instructional delivery embodied in the proposed substantive change and the manner in which library and learning support services are provided by College of the Desert.

#### **Standard III: Resources**

**The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes, including stated student learning outcomes, and to improve institutional effectiveness.**

#### A. Human Resources

College of the Desert has sufficient human resources to support the proposed substantive change. The Dean of the School of Library and Learning Resources provides administrative oversight for Distance Education. Online instructors are provided opportunities for extensive training via collaborations between the School of Library and Learning Resources and Academic Senate. Additionally, a faculty member serving as Chair of Distance Education and a full time Director of Educational Technology both provide on-site support for online instructors. Professional development opportunities focused on improving online instruction methods and approaches are provided to faculty members on an ongoing basis.

#### B. Physical Resources

Offering courses and programs online actually reduces the strain on physical resources from the standpoint of reducing the number of classrooms required to deliver instruction. The College has a Technology Learning Center that provides regular workshops including open workshops staffed by knowledgeable IT trainers. The TLC is a 12-station training facility used to facilitate the College's online instructors.

#### C. Technology Resources

The technology required to implement the proposed substantive change is already in place. College of the Desert ensures and provides technical support and facilitation of all distance education offerings. The current learning management system (LMS) being used is Blackboard. The LMS is fully supported through a contractual agreement. All technical problems relative to the LMS and delivery of courses is handled by Blackboard and the COD Information Technology department. All course materials are password protected and compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Office of Disabled Students Programs & Services provides assistance to faculty in making all Distance Education offerings 508 compliant and is included in the curriculum approval process for all new DE proposals.

The College has a Technology Plan that was approved by the College Planning Council on October 22, 2010. This plan includes a comprehensive review of our resources and a commitment to further support Distance Education going forward.

#### D. Financial Resources

The College has sufficient financial resources to support implementation of the proposed substantive change. College of the Desert has a five-year financial plan that allocates significant resources in support of online instructional delivery. Specifically, the plan calls for approximately \$115,000 annually to be allocated for ongoing equipment license fees, maintenance and upgrades. In addition, nearly \$40,000 is allocated annually for online library databases as well as approximately \$10,000 for 24/7 support for our students and faculty.

Sustaining distance education over time is accomplished within the context of the college's five-year financial planning process. College of the Desert projects ongoing college costs by identifying estimates of how much enrollment growth is necessary to fund ongoing costs and to fund new projects and services while factoring in potential cost increases such as salary schedule step increases and increases in utilities, health-care costs, etc. Annual budget adjustments are based on projected costs and needs assessments of all departments at College of the Desert.

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#### **Standard IV: Leadership and Governance**

**The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.**

Implementation of this proposed substantive change for distance education is a significant step toward “continuous improvement of the institution”, in that it makes many of the courses and programs offered by the College more available to students for whom coming to campus for all of their classes poses a constraint.

**H. Student Success and Retention Data for Distance Education Programs**

The College of the Desert’s online courses have been developed and are taught by our regular full-time and adjunct faculty. Each faculty member is hired under the same quality criteria as applied to the hiring of faculty that teach any course offered by the college. Once hired, the College of the Desert provides all faculty, adjunct and full-time with access to further extensive professional development opportunities in online teaching.

**Definitions**

Definition for Success: Percentage of students who earned a grade of A, B, C, or Cr/P in course out of total enrolled in course (enrollment grade of A, B, C, D, F\*, CR, NC, W, I\*, P, NP, DR). Excluded grades: IP, RD, UG, UD, XX.

Definition for Retention: Percentage of students retained in course until the end of term (grade of A, B, C, D, F\*, CR, NC, I\*, P, NP) out of total students enrolled in course (enrollment grade of A, B, C, D, F\*, CR, NC, W, I\*, P, NP, DR). Excluded grades: IP, RD, UG, UD, XX.

**Online versus Face-to-Face Enrollment & Outcomes**

Enrollment for the College of the Desert online courses is displayed by academic year below:

<b>COD Online vs. Face-to-Face Enrollment</b>				
		F2F	Online	Total
Academic Year10-11	Count	56,063	5,045	61,108
	Percent	91.70%	8.30%	100%
Academic Year09-10	Count	57,640	5,322	62,962
	Percent	91.50%	8.50%	100%
Academic Year08-09	Count	54,927	4,840	59,767
	Percent	91.90%	8.10%	100%
Academic Year07-08	Count	50,806	4,111	54,917
	Percent	92.50%	7.50%	100%
Academic Year06-07	Count	46,786	3,075	49,861
	Percent	93.80%	6.20%	100%

The number of enrollments in online courses has continued to grow. Online courses represented 6.2%, 7.5%, 8.1%, 8.5%, and 8.3% of the total enrollments for the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 academic years respectively.

Outcomes for online and face-to-face course during the academic years of 2006-07 through 2010-11 are displayed below as evidence of the effectiveness of line instruction when compared to face-to-face.

<b>COD Student Success and Retention Data</b>				
Term	Instructional Method	Success %	Retention%	Sample Size
Spring 2011	Online	55.00%	73.50%	2,501
Fall 2010	Online	56.60%	74.10%	2,476
Spring 2010	Online	58.80%	73.70%	2,253
Fall 2009	Online	59.50%	75.60%	2,243
Spring 2009	Online	56.00%	71.20%	2,144

Fall 2008	Online	58.60%	74.70%	1,914
Spring 2008	Online	54.00%	68.20%	1,593
Fall 2007	Online	53.10%	69.20%	1,540
Spring 2007	Online	64.60%	79.70%	1,196
Fall 2006	Online	65.80%	81.00%	1,155

COD Outcomes for Online and Face-to-Face Classes Aggregate of Academic Years 2006-2007 to 2010-2011			
		N	Mean%
Success	F2F	266,222	70.80%
	Online	22,393	59.60%
Retention	F2F	266,222	86.40%
	Online	22,393	74.80%

Note:

Aggregate online success % for all California Community Colleges (2005-2010) = 54.4%

Aggregate online retention % for all California Community Colleges (2005 – 2010) = 77.1%

**About COD**

- Accreditation
- Educational
- Master Plan
- Facilities
- Master Plan
- Measure B
- Bond
- Measure CC
- Bond
- Student
- Success
- Scorecard

**COD Website Information**

- Acceptable Use
- Accessibility
- Directory
- Disclaimer
- Emergency
- Notification
- Media Room
- Privacy Policy
- Report Problem



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Employment - Support COD

**Social Media**



**Off-Campus Sites**

- Coachella Library
- Desert Hot Springs
- Indio
- Mecca / Thermal
- PaCE
- Palm Springs
- Other West Valley
- Locations