DRAFT response to ACCJC

Recommendation #3: “In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the college allocate resources to create a sustainable infrastructure to support a distance education program that can deliver high quality curricula and support student access and success.”

As required by WASC in its Follow-Up report, in some significant areas the college has moved to allocate resources to create a sustainable infrastructure for distance education. (In other areas there are still lapses – and in some cases even substantial regressions in resource support and sustainability.)

“...However, critical aspects that led to the recommendation are still missing. The first is the development of a distance education plan that aligns with the college’s strategic plan and educational master plan.”

- Both faculty and distance education students were surveyed to help ascertain these constituencies needs and interests in distance education.
- This data was reviewed by the college’s Academic Senate, working in consultation with its subcommittee on Distance Education Committee. The Senate then drafted and approved a broad statement regarding the current status as well as future vision for distance education at the college. This statement by the Academic Senate can provide some initial basis for beginning a distance education plan.
- The college’s Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness has contributed significant data underscoring the present status of distance education at the college, and additional work by faculty and administration has begun to flesh out other aspects for a plan.
- (However development of a distance education plan suffers from serious impediments. When both trained instructional and technical support staffing as well as a physical presence for distance education are established at the college, the rudiments for a Distance Education Plan should become easier to envision. At this point this plan remains very much an incomplete and inadequate work-in-progress.)

“A plan, verbalized by the vice president of instruction, to hire an English faculty member and assign that person .40 to support DE, is the only official staffing plan when the current part-time faculty resource instructor leaves at the end of December... There are forty sections of online courses in the fall 2011 catalog, and every instructor, online or onsite, will be getting a Moodle course shell for spring 2012. The college still needs to develop a plan and dedicate sustainable and adequate resources to support student access and success online.”

- The college has continued to provide regular trainings for faculty in both technical areas (the Moodle learning management system) and distance education pedagogy (@One).
- The Library and Counseling departments have established an online presence, with designated staffing to support distance education needs, thereby providing distance education students some access to these services. The Library is also on the verge of joining the MARINet
consortium which will greatly expand services and access for distance education students in all areas of the county. The Tutoring program is piloting course embedded services to distance education students this summer.

- (Over the last year the college committed slightly over 50% FTE to a faculty reassigned time position, an instructional coordinator with strong distance education training who offered support and bolstered the development of strong pedagogy for distance education instruction. However this position lapses at the end of Spring term, and the college has no further commitment and no clear strategy for continuing this level of support for distance education pedagogy. **While this could be accomplished either through an administrator trained in distance education pedagogy or through substantial year around faculty reassigned time, the college has no effective instructional support person for distance education from summer 2012 and forward – a critical period as the college works to meet its accreditation goals.**

- (While a classified staff position to support distance education has been under negotiation for a long time, there appears to be no one ready to work over summer 2012 – a critical time for faculty training as the college completes its migration to Moodle in Fall 2012, and when Moodle will stand alone as the college’s only learning management system. **This points to a potential disaster for a number of Fall term courses.**

- (The Online Writing Center has expanded its service model to encompass the entire college rather than simply the English & Humanities department. These expanded services could provide a boon to distance education students, however additional Instructional Specialist staffing would be required to make this possibility a reality. This could perhaps best be accomplished by remodeling and reallocating current IS staffing rather than adding an additional IS position – however the challenges for accomplishing this are not modest.)

“**While there is a line item in the budget currently, it only covers hosting for Moodle and the faculty member who is leaving. The only budget plan mentioned in interviews, outside the .40 staffing, was writing some grants.**”

- The college allocated an annual budget of almost $30,000 to support faculty trainings, technical support, etc.

- (However other resources are required in addition to a budget. Though with no staffing it remains a moot point, an office space on the Kentfield campus should be made available should a trained faculty administrative instructional support coordinator &/or classified staff person become available to staff it – ISs could perhaps also be used for this duty if their job was restructured. This physical presence will be critical for supporting faculty and student needs in distance education. A similar situation exists on the IVC campus where a dedicated space and staffing will need to be identified. Should these office spaces somehow find staffing, funds also will become necessary for several office computers, phones, etc.)