Best Practices for Distance Education Courses

In accordance with Title V, the following is a list of best practices and guidelines for “Regular, Timely and Effective Student/Faculty Contact” in online/distance education courses:

Best Practices

1. Communications: clear and comprehensive communication regarding online course policies is critical to student success and faculty effectiveness. Accordingly, it’s imperative that the following are addressed explicitly in the course syllabus and/or introductory email/announcement. These communication guidelines are the same for all teachers. Communication should include but is not limited to:

   • Relevant dates, course schedule, and deadlines.

   • Faculty expectations and requirements for minimum student participation (quantity and quality) for all sections of the course.

   • Timely evaluation of student work.

   • Faculty/Student Communication Process: A response time of 24-48 hours, Monday through Friday is desirable but may vary based on course requirements and extenuating circumstances. Clarify whether or not the instructor will be available after hours or on weekends and holidays. (Faculty are not required to be available on weekends or holidays.)

   • Methods of regular, timely, and effective student/faculty contact that will be employed in the course (as described below)

2. Effective Student/Faculty Contact: it has been clearly shown that lack of regular, timely, and effective contact between students and instructors is a major factor in student attrition and poor performance in online courses. Depending on class design and instructor preference, the faculty may employ one or more methods of regular, timely, and effective student/faculty contact in all online, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses.

Distance Education Webpages on the COM website:
http://www.marin.edu/distance/index.htm

From DSPS: Easy Tips: Basic Web Accessibility for college of Marin Online Content Creators: http://marin.edu/disabled/eztips.htm