

Delgado Community College
Substantive Change Committee
Distance Learning & Information Technology
Current Status

Overall History

Delgado Community College is an accredited comprehensive community college in New Orleans Louisiana. For 85 years, Delgado Community College has served the various educational needs of New Orleans and the surrounding areas. The college offers pre-baccalaureate degrees and certificates and is a noted leader in workforce development and technology training. The mission of Delgado Community College is to provide a learning-centered environment in which to prepare students from diverse backgrounds to attain their educational, career, and personal goals, to think critically, to demonstrate leadership, and to be productive citizens.

Delgado Community College consists of five (3) full service campuses and had a total of 17,000 students prior to Hurricane Katrina hitting and destroying much of the New Orleans area. DCC had over 74 programs of study with 1,236 (7.4%) of the 17,000 students taking classes on line. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the college enrolled 10,000 students in spring 2006 with 2,471 (24.7%) on-line students. This is an increase from 7.4 % in fall 2004 to a 24.7% in spring 2006.

Although there is great devastation throughout the region, Delgado Community College remains a comprehensive Community College and fully intends to remain learning-centered as it offers courses in all programs listed in the current catalog despite the loss of students, faculty, staff and facilities.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, many new realities must be faced at Delgado. At the same time many opportunities present themselves. The college is in a unique position to find a way to restore the training opportunities to their population of hurricane displaced students and the business community, but it must seek different modalities of training and instruction and do it in a way that is effective and successful. As we seek these new modalities, there must be some kind of change in the process of teaching and reaching students.

Delgado Community College is preparing to undergo a substantive change with our accrediting organization, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) because of our increased focus on distance learning. The college's mission of Learning-Centered has become even more critical for the institution. Because so many students have been displaced, Delgado is faced with the need to reach out to a new population of on-line students whose presence at Delgado Community College prior to the storm was at best marginal. To ensure success of our mission, a committee has take the time to review the historical data of

distance education at Delgado Community College and to outline it in a way that will guide future endeavors of on-line learning.

The Beginning: Telecourses

Telecourses were the first type of distance learning opportunities offered at Delgado Community College; the exact start date was some time in the mid to late 1980s. During that time, telecourses were administered through a unit entitled Community Projects. This unit of the College managed all remote learning sites and off-campus learning activities while providing continuing education and non-credit training. Telecourses were referred to as “off-site courses”. Community Projects facilitated the budget to pay the licensing fees, they were responsible to open the course sections, enroll students and hire faculty. The Student Credit Hour totals were assigned to an academic division. During the 1980s through the 1990s enrollment was high in telecourses because this was the only form of course delivery that provided off campus learning.

Over time, enrollment decreased as costs increased. Some of the costs incurred were consortium membership fees, licensing fees per course paid to PBS/Adult Learner Series, as well as an additional student fee per head enrolled from \$40.00 to \$100.00. The local public broadcasting affiliates and cable channels began placing the course programs on at inconvenient (off-peak) times, making student viewing difficult; additionally, scheduling and airing also became problematic—all too often two or three episodes had already aired prior to the semester’s start date. A few times, the local affiliate aired older versions of the programs when newer editions were available, and the content did not match the text books. The decision was made to discontinue telecourse offerings.

Instructional Television Fixed System

In 1993 the technology of offering telecourses changed to Instructional Television Fixed System (ITFS) or Microwave relayed classes. In this set-up, the students at a remote location could see and hear their instructor on a television monitor, but the instructor could not see his or her students. Feedback from the students was conducted via conference telephone. Building ten at the City Park’s Campus and building one at the West Bank’s Campus were technically equipped to offer the courses in this manner. Obviously, the lack of interaction inhibited success in this environment. Telephone connections were often lost and the microwave relay was line-of-sight, meaning an obstruction (building or large vehicle) may adversely impact the signal. Delgado Community College did not offer too many courses utilizing this technology however; the Metropolitan Hospital Council did share many medical seminars using the ITFS system.

Web Course in a Box

Delgado Community College began offering internet courses in approximately 1995 or 1996 using a system called “Web Course in A Box”—a pre-cursor to modern on-line learning. Web Course in A Box was a basic text-based interaction tool. Not much

information can be found on the success or failures of this new technology. After some grant funding from the Board of Regents, the college moved to compressed video courses.

Compressed Video

Delgado was a forerunner in the development of the State-wide Compressed Video initiative beginning in about 1996—shared with other two-year colleges, four-year public, and four-year private Universities. Delgado, along with Bossier Parish Community College offered the first joint program in the State of Louisiana created as a distance learning program with the launching of the Certificate in Pharmacy Technician in about 1997 or 1998. Most recently, Delgado Community College has focused its initiative on intra-college offerings sharing Honors sections of classes between Delgado Community College campuses. Currently all campuses (City Park West Bank, Charity School of Nursing, as well as our Northshore-Covington site) are equipped with Compressed Video Classrooms. Two classrooms in Building Seven of the City Park campus have been damaged by the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina, one containing approximately \$80,000.00 of equipment and one containing approximately \$50,000.00 of equipment.

Tegrity

In the 2004 or 2005 semesters the Tegrity web learning platform was adopted by several academic divisions. Tegrity allows faculty to “record” a small image of their teaching lecture in sync to PowerPoint. It also captures any annotations and/or student questions for streaming onto the web. Classes can be viewed “live” or “pre-recorded.”

Hybrid Courses

Hybrid course offerings are rather new to the college. Delgado offered English classes at the North Shore site that were being publicized as online courses but the course format required weekly meetings. I am not sure when they started requiring the weekly meetings. Spring 2006 is the first time that this type of courses was officially offered. They are called Hybrid course and they are in the schedule with an “H” in the section number. The letter “H” informs students that these courses are online but require some face to face class time as well.

On-line Courses

The first online course was offered through the Liberal Arts division of City Park Campus—English 102 was taught in spring 1996. At that time the instructor was simply posting assignments and teaching materials on her Delgado Community College provided web space. The class was limited to 25 students and there was only one section. The Business Division at City Park Campus was the second Division to try online classes. They began fall 1999 with a pilot project. The pilot consisted of two courses Computer Literacy (CMIN201) and Introduction to Spreadsheets (CMIN265). The CMIN department fully embraced the concept of online education and by spring 2005 they were offering at least one

online section for all CMIN courses. Today, the college uses Blackboard as its platform to deliver online courses.

Enrollment History

Over the last 5 years, enrollment in online courses steadily increased. In Fall 2001, 691 students, representing 5.1% of total enrollment was enrolled in 24 online courses. By Fall 2004, 1236 students representing 7.4% of total enrollment were enrolled in 63 online courses with an average of 20 students per class.

Impact of Hurricane Katrina

On August 28, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Greater New Orleans area. Because the City of New Orleans was flooded for weeks, regular scheduled classes were cancelled at Delgado. In an attempt to offer something to students struggling to complete course work, a special online session was quickly organized. One hundred fifty-six classes were offered and 2,555 students signed up. Many of the instructors for this special session had never taught online before. Many of the students had not taken online courses before. There were many problems associated with the special session, the most problematic being the fact that our students records system (SIS) was not operational for registration. Only 1,697 students were officially registered for that semester. With many students relocated (temporarily and permanently) out of the New Orleans area, coupled with the loss of classroom space, distance education gained a new importance. Plans were made to expand college-wide offerings of online courses.

Marketing

In the beginning, information was communicated by the Governor to all Louisiana residents informing them of a grant program developed to assist k-12 systems as well as Colleges and University Systems in gaining access to training, best practices, and professional development for faculty and staff utilizing online training.

Now distance learning courses at Delgado Community College are promoted via the web within the college's catalog and course schedules. Special codes are assigned to each online course so that students are aware of the courses being offered online.

Statistical Reporting

Delgado Community College reports statistical data to the SREB, which is accessed by the Board of Regents (BoR) who compiles and publishes various reports about the number of students served online, the percentage of classes offered by discipline, and the student satisfaction data on a regular basis. With the establishment of the LCTC System, much of the same data is now reported to the LCTCS Board.

Greatest Achievement\Challenge in Distance Learning

The greatest achievement in Distance Learning is the total number of students positively impacted through Distance Learning at Delgado Community College over the past two and a half decades; many students would not have achieved their educational and personal enrichment goals without these opportunities.

Milestones in Distance Learning

- Student can apply and register online
- Books can now be purchased online
- Special Session of 156 classes post Katrina
- 257 classes offered in Spring 2006
- Proctors can be used for tests and exams
- 8% of programs can be taken 100% online
- almost 25% of all courses offered can be taken on line

Although there are numerous successes in our e-learning/online delivery of classes, the biggest success is the sheer number of online classes that are currently being offered (257) that resulted in 2,471 students in online classes, with 879 registered in only online courses. These online offerings enabled our displaced students to continue to study at Delgado Community College. Additionally the online offerings have greatly relieved the strain of the lack of physical space. An additional success is that the online offerings provide our student with greater flexibility in their scheduling of classes. The post Katrina offerings of on-line courses to approximately 2500 students via Distance Learning was a milestone for the college.

Challenges in Distance Learning

- Dramatic increase in the number of students taking Online courses
- The distance from Delgado that some of our students have had to relocate
- Inexperienced (DL) faculty
- Many students are not prepared for Distance Learning
- Higher attrition rates in DL classes
- Lack of Online Advising
- Limited technical support
- The increased time faculty spend teaching online as opposed to traditional classes
- Lack of an department (or position) to oversee Distance Learning

What does the increased emphasis on Distance Learning mean for faculty?

- Increased course development
- Increased time (everything must be typed and uploaded to BlackBoard)
- Questions from students are answered individually
- Extra care must be taken in giving instructions.
- Student interaction which is a key to student success is difficult to achieve

According to a survey conducted in the Spring 2006 semester, the areas of the most concern to faculty include:

- Sufficient time to develop and maintain course material
- Student familiarity with computers
- Academic honesty
- Sufficient time to interact with students

Faculty Development

There are approximately 105 faculty members teaching courses at this time utilizing distance education technology. They have access to training in methodology through the professional development office and technical training provided by the Blackboard Coordinator. Faculty received training in various areas including the following:

1. Blackboard

- Bb Basics - Part 1 & 2
- Bb - Discussion Board
- Bb - Content Management
- Bb - User Management
- Bb - Creating Community
- Bb - Gradebook Management
- Bb - Assessments
- Bb - Tips & Tricks
- Bb & Merlot

2. Self-study workshops available online via the Blackboard 6.1 Faculty Users group.

3. Technology training from the CATT center includes:

- Tegrity Learning System
- PowerPoint Beginning & Intermediate
- Impatica for PowerPoint
- Digital Photography
- Word
- Excel
- Access

The following training was offered in the Fall of 2005:

Teaching On-line: What Works, What Doesn't
Use it or Lose It.
Materials, Methods, and Motivation

The Fielding Graduate Institute offered the following in Spring 2006:

Effective Online Course Development

On a survey of faculty teaching online, 79% of faculty felt they had been offered adequate training to teach on-line. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 = excellent, 1 = very poor, faculty rated the training at Delgado:

- Course development training, 3.15
- Blackboard training classes provided by Delgado, 4.18
- Tegrity training, 3.18

Faculty/Student Interaction

Faculty members provide assistance to students via phone, email, face to face meetings, discussion boards and chat. In the Online Student survey, 85% of students were satisfied with the amount of and timeliness of communication from their online instructors.

To take exams off site, the student is responsible to find proctors and the faculty member contacts and approves the proctor. The division Dean is responsible to insure quality instruction, integrity of student work, timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty. Faculty challenges are being addressed on a case by case basis by the office of Distance Learning.

Faculty/Student Satisfaction

Surveys are currently being administered to determine the attitudes of the faculty toward Distance Learning. On 2/14/06, the Office of Faculty and Staff Development held a focus group for teachers currently teaching online. About 40 people participated, including Distance Learning administrators. Based on the information given, the office of professional development is working with internal and external agents to systematically find ways to address the challenges expressed by the teachers.

During the Spring 2006 semester, a survey of online students was conducted. Of the 2471 students taking online courses, 457 responded to the survey. From that survey, the following information was gathered:

- 46.5% were taking an online course for the first time.
- 81% felt they received adequate instruction.
- 77% thought the orientation for online courses provided all or most of the information needed.
- 91% felt Delgado provided them with enough information about online courses to determine if online courses were for them.
- 53% signed up for online courses because of their work schedule. Only 17% signed up because they preferred online courses.
- 18% signed up because they resided too far to take onsite classes.
- Online Advising was our lowest rated service (3.72 out of 5).
- Blackboard was our highest rated service (4.52 out of 5).

The entire report can be found in Blackboard and in Docushare in the Institutional Research Folder.

Differences between Face to Face classes and Distance classes:

Why it takes more effort, time and resources to teach online: (Source: Faculty Staff Survey – Spring 06)

- On-line students need immediate feedback
- When students have a problem the same answer may have to be given many times. It is necessary to answer the question every time it comes up even if the question is already posted and answered on the Blackboard site.
- Working with online students takes a lot of time, patience, and a lot of tech support.
- Some online students do not have the hardware or software necessary for online classes.
- Some students in online classes should be in a traditional classroom setting.
- Must constantly check on participation, emailing students to keep them on their toes regarding assignments, and trying to keep students interested.
- Along with the everyday maintenance of the course site, teaching an online class involves a lot of preparation. Can't just give a lecture on the fly.
- Initially it takes a lot of time to set up the blackboard course. It may take several semesters to get the blackboard site set up to be effective.
- Students have a 24/7 attitude toward instructor time.
- Must learn new software
- Must type all communications. Must repeat communications.
- The discussion board is the main method of participation, and it is necessary for an instructor to read and respond to all of the students' responses.
- Must be creative with reinforcement of material or assessment of learning. Must email students personally to get them involved.
- Students interact individually more with the online instructor.

Faculty Compensation/Recruitment

Faculty members receive no special compensation for teaching courses via Distance and are recruited by the division Dean or they volunteer. If instructors are interesting in having a course added to the Distance Learning course list, they must request that the department chair add the requested course to the schedule and then inform the office of Distance Learning to create the course shell.

The attitude of faculty and staff is primarily positive. Despite the challenges presented by Distance Education, most are able to recognize the advantages this method of instruction allows our students. We can reach more students and provide flexibility to students who work

One faculty member commented, "I was pleasantly surprised to find that my students were able to learn as efficiently as in the classroom."

Distance Learning Partnerships

Delgado Community College has entered in partnerships with Merlot, and Fielding Graduate University in California. Merlot has established various "communities" that are made up of different, related academic disciplines. In these disciplines, they have reviewed, evaluated, and collected a variety of electronic resources that could be used in online courses. The Office of Faculty Development has formed a partnership with Fielding to support online instruction via Instructional Design, on-site workshops, online coaching and peer review of Delgado online classes, and long-range planning of further Professional Development opportunities for our online instructors.

Student Services

To take on-line courses, students register for the class and they assess their readiness for online learning by utilizing the on-line orientation process. Students can come to campus to registrar for classes or they can register on-line and via the telephone. They have access to everything regular students have. Transfer and readmit students can register on line 24 hours after they have been admitted to the College. Basic Education and freshman students are not eligible to register online. This would prevent a student from doing a complete program online if that student resided too far away to come to Delgado to register.

Placement tests are required for any first time, full time students taking English or Math courses or those who wish to enroll in a course that requires Math or English as a prerequisite. Students have the option to schedule their placement, ATB, ESL, CELSA, and TABE Test via DCC Web Site. The placement tests may be taken at another college which administers the Asset and Accuplacer tests. The study guide web address is listed in the catalog and the class schedule. At this time the test@dcc.edu and 1-800 number is not functioning for Distant Learning Test Registration. Students are able to complete their admissions application on-line, pay their application fee, take their placement test on-line, and view the catalog on-line, view placement test scores on-line, view progression of developmental courses.

Students are able to do the following online:

- Apply
- Register
- Schedule placement test
- drop courses
- check grades
- request transcripts
- apply for graduation
- change personal information
- obtain degree audits
- obtain enrollment verifications on-line

Based on a survey done in the Spring 2006 semester:

- 33% applied for admission online. The small percentage is partially due to the fact that online registration may not have been available when the student applied.
- 68% registered for classes online.
- 55% applied for financial aid online.

These services work very well, with the exception that the system is only available from 8a.m. to 8p.m. The Testing Office has ACT software AIM which can be access in the office which provides career and enrollment information. E- DISCOVER is also available to students via the web. E DISCOVER is a career assessment program that shares interviewing techniques, interest assessments and occupational information. Students can contact the Distance Learning office if they are having trouble accessing any of the services or if they are having problems with their password.

Electronic Testing

The Office of Testing offers Electronic Test Preparation with personal assistance offered to all students' college wide. The service is available to any student or alumni who wish to prepare for exams from GED to GRE. Also the testing center houses the ACT Center. The ACT Center offers supplemental courses from personnel services through Engineering. These courses are available to students via distance learning. Students may register for these courses at home through the ACT Web Site.

Library Resources

Currently all students are able to access library resources through the Blackboard site (Post-Katrina). This semester messages were sent to students' e-mail addresses informing them of the Blackboard access to the library's electronic resources. Instructions are provided to assist students with access as well as contact information for those experiencing difficulty.

In the near future the library's electronic resources will again be available through Delgado's web site. Students will link from the web site using the "Library Resources" link. Library locations, hours of operation, and a list of available online resources are accessed using the link. Students are then able to link to a specific resource from the list.

Students also have remote or off-campus access to all electronic databases through the use of a proxy server. The proxy server, maintained by OIT, enables authentication of students by requiring them to enter a password—their DCC e-mail user name plus the date and year of their birth (the same as required for student self service). Students are identified from DCC's active directory. Once authenticated, they are able to search all available online resources.

Budget & Finance

The two reoccurring revenue sources used for Distance Education are self generated revenues (includes tuition and fees) and state appropriation dollars. There are no additional costs incurred by students enrolled in distance education courses; their fees are the same as

other DCC students. Other revenue sources have been in the form of grants that to date were received for 2003-04 and 2004-05. They are:

- LCTCS President’s Innovation and Excellence Grant—“Online Tutoring for Senior Nursing Students”;
- the U. S. Dept. of Education Title III--\$1.75 million for 5 years (includes funding for faculty development for e-learning);
- the Board of Regents SELECT grant for Children’s Literature Collaborative Project with Xavier University (\$21,900 to develop online children’s literature course);
- the Governor’s Technology Funds for School of Nursing to collaborate with Louisiana Delta Community College (\$100,000 to offer DE to Delta CC);
- the Board of Regents 2 year Enhancement –“Distance Education in Nursing: A Partnership between Delgado and Louisiana Delta Community College (\$134,389); the Board of Regents 2 year Enhancement – “Training Instructors to Create Web-Based Content for Regular or Online Courses” (\$30,000) and the Carl Perkins Grant.

Information Technology

Technical services are available to students who are enrolled in distance education. They are able to e-mail or phone a help desk for assistance with computer issues; however, a full-time staff person is not allocated for this, nor is the service available 24 hours a day/ seven days a week. Students may have to contact different offices for different technical questions such as password reset on e-mail or help logging on to Blackboard. Technical support for faculty is similar to students and involves a hodge-podge of services through various offices and different locations. Faculty members are able to attend sessions regarding the construction, management and successful usage of the Course Management Software; training regarding technical issues, etc. The Office of Information Technology provides the automated mechanism of providing DCC e-mail and Blackboard accounts for both faculty and students.

The Office of Information Technology further supports the Distance Learning office in resolving any password/Blackboard account setup and maintenance issues; assists students with password resets; provides technical support by making sure that Blackboard, Tegrity and e-mail servers are available 24/7 to faculty and students; and works with the Distance Learning office to resolve problems, scheduled maintenance, and upgrades to the Blackboard and Tegrity servers. There are no additional costs to the Office of Information Technology for Distance Education staffing and technology.

Where do we go from here?

Currently we have 1 full-time employee (Blackboard coordinator) with a 30 hour administrative assistant manning Distance Education. Many other employees contribute including an Acting Dean, CATT Center, Faculty Development, Media Services and OIT. However, this staffing is far from adequate when you consider that we have 105 faculty teaching online and close to 2500 students taking classes on line.

Our primary software is Blackboard, Powerpoint and Tegrity.

9% of programs are online
6% have at least 75% of classes online
14% have at least 50% of classes online
23% of all courses are taught online
257 sections are currently being taught online

What does it take to teach online?

- Training
- Course development
- Time
- Most faculty spend 4 to 10 hours per week online, per online course
- Most faculty spend 1 to 7 hours online interacting with students
- 94% of faculty said it takes more time and effort to teach online, 65% said a lot more.

Delgado Community College has committed to a huge increase in the distance learning classes offered. But more classes is only part of it. There are services that must go with it. We must offer our online students services and resources to equal that of our onsite students. In order to be an effective teacher online, one must master the computer, internet, specific software and the online culture. This means that course delivery is very different and the teacher must learn new ways to impart learning.

Great strides have been accomplished with few resources, however, to truly offer a quality program, we need direction, coordination, training, talent, skills, equipment, software and support.