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COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ONLINE INSTRUCTION EXPECTATIONS

DATE APPROVED: 10/21/2016

Distance learning provides students with the flexibility for when and how they engage in academic instruction and demonstrate mastery of course objectives. This flexibility, however, can create learning challenges. Students need effective time management skills and the ability to work independently. Online instructors, likewise, must adapt to the challenges posed by the virtual classroom in order to provide good communication and effective course management. To address this concerns, Dabney S. Lancaster provides guidelines for online learning. The goal is to establish a common set of expectations for all online students and instructors in order to ensure the academic integrity of our courses no matter what modality is used for instruction.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful interaction between students and instructors is critical for the success in the online class as well as to meet VCCS general education student learning outcomes in areas such as critical thinking, cultural and social understanding, and personal development ([§5.0.2.2](#)). Instructors should provide weekly interactive experiences in which students are permitted to interact with each other and with their instructor. Examples of such activities include (1) group discussion forums, (2) a real time discussions using chat and/or virtual conferencing software, (3) collaborative documents that can be edited by students and the instructor.

SYNCHRONOUS ACTIVITIES

Instructors who adopt real time or synchronous activities should require an alternative assignment for students who are unable to attend the activity.

COURSE AVAILABILITY

The Blackboard course shell will be opened no later than 8:30 AM of the first day of class. Instructors are encouraged to open the class shell early in order to provide students with information about the syllabus, textbook, and required course materials.

COURSE TEMPLATE

Instructors will use a Course Template that is approved by Faculty Committee. The template will include common language and designated folders for course assignments, materials, tests, and quizzes as well as directions for creating a course welcome or orientation.

EMAIL and RESPONSE TIMES

Instructors are expected to check their email on a daily basis (Monday-Friday). Instructors should plan to respond to student email within a 24-hour window. Any exceptions for weekends, holidays, conferences, etc. should be communicated with students. Instructors should plan to check email on the days leading up to a scheduled assignment. For example, if an assignment is due on a Sunday evening, instructors should plan to check email over the weekend.

WEEKLY UPDATES

Instructors are expected to provide regular updates (at least once a week) to students. Typically, updates provide information about graded assignments, pending due dates and other course information. Updates will be provided via course announcements and email.

EXAM PROCTORING

If exam proctoring is required, instructors will provide the Testing Center with exam information and will make themselves available to assist with exam proctoring. Also, the course syllabus will provide students with any exam proctoring requirements and include directions for scheduling an exam.

FEEDBACK / GRADING WINDOW

Instructors will provide students with a schedule that identifies the timeframe for instructor feedback and grades. A 2-3 day window is standard for short assignments; 1-2 weeks for longer assignments and course projects.

ONLNE GRADEBOOK

Instructors will post grades in the Learning Management System used in their course (Blackboard, MyMathLab, Cengage, etc.).

REAL TIME CONFERENCES/MEETINGS

Instructors will provide opportunities for students to schedule real time meetings using telephone or online conferencing software.

VERIFICATION OF COURSE ATTENDANCE and LAST DATE OF ATTENDANCE

All DSLCC instructors are required to verify student attendance. To do so, online instructors will require some kind of activity during the first week of class. Completion of the activity indicates attendance. For example, instructors might ask students to (1) introduce themselves in an online discussion forum, (2) complete a quiz over the course syllabus, (3) complete a diagnostic test, or (4) submit a writing sample.

At the conclusion of the semester, instructors will provide a last date of attendance for all students who earned a failing grade. This date will be based on the last submitted activity. Instructors are expected to have at least one submitted activity per week.

ONLINE SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS

In addition to syllabus information required for on-ground classes, the online syllabus will contain the following items:

- Instructor timelines for responding to graded assignments.
- Directions for scheduling real time meetings.
- Required software and/or hardware.
- Participation and attendance policies. *Recommended Language:* Students who do not complete assigned activities during the first week of the semester may be dropped for non-attendance.
- Weather or Emergency Closing Information. *Recommended Language*: Because this is an online class, assignments are due regardless of weather or other institutional closings. If you are not able to submit an assignment on time, contact the instructor by phone or email.