



**Substantive Change Proposal
New Distance Education Programs
Associate Degrees and Certificates of Achievement**

**Merritt College
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To

***Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Overview of Substantive Change	4
1. Description of Proposed Programs	4
2. Relationship to the Institutional Mission	5
3. Rationale for Request	6
B. Description of Educational Programs To Be Offered	7
C. Planning Process Leading to Request for Change	9
1. Distance Education Planning and Alignment with District Objective	9
2. Anticipated Effect of the Proposed Change on the Rest of the Institution	10
3. Benefits Resulting from Change	10
D. Institutional Resources and Process for Change	11
1. Sufficient and Qualified Faculty, Management, and Support Staffing.....	11
2. Appropriate Equipment and Facilities, Including Adequate Control Over any Off-Site Campus.....	14
3. Fiscal Resources – Initial and Long Term and Sources of Funding	14
4. Plan for Monitoring Outcomes	15
E. Evidence of Internal and External Approvals.....	15
1. Administrative	16
2. External Regulatory and Legal Requirements	16
3. Peralta Community College District Governing Board Approval.....	17
F. Evidence of Maintenance of Eligibility Requirements	17
1. Authority	
2. Mission	
3. Governing Board	
4. Chief Executive Officer	
5. Administrative Capacity	
6. Operational Status	
7. Degrees	
8. Educational Programs	
9. Academic Credit	
10. Student Learning and Achievement	
11. General Education	
12. Academic Freedom	
13. Faculty	
14. Student Services	
15. Admissions	
16. Information and Learning Resources	
17. Financial Resources	
18. Financial Accountability	
19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation	
20. Public Information	
21. Relations with Accrediting Commission	

G. Evidence that Each Accreditation Standard will still be Fulfilled Related to the Change and that All Relevant Commission Policies are Addressed 26

- 1. Standard I 26
- 2. Standard II 26
- 3. Standard III 30
- 4. Standard IV 30
- 5. Process for Monitoring and Evaluating the Effectiveness and Learning Outcomes expected through the proposed change 30

H. Appendices31

APPENDIX 1: NEW MERRITT COLLEGE PROGRAMS THAT CONTAIN 50% OR MORE UNITS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION31

APPENDIX 2: DISTANCE EDUCATION FALL 2014 SURVEY SUMMARY 33

APPENDIX 3: DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT RETENTION AND ENROLLMENT DATA39

APPENDIX 4: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, MANAGEMENT.....40

APPENDIX 5: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, OFFICE OF INSTRUCTION.....41

APPENDIX 6: DISTANCE EDUCATION ADDENDUM.....42

A. ***OVERVIEW OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE***

Description of the Proposed Program

The purpose of this Substantive Change Proposal is to bring Merritt College in compliance with ACCJC substantive change requirements, and in addition, to request approval to add the following degrees and certificates to Merritt College's online learning portfolio. The College is seeking approval to offer the following twenty eight (28) associate degrees and eleven (11) certificates of achievement via the distance education mode.

Associate Degrees

Associate of Arts:

ACCOUNTING
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE SYSTEMS AND APPLICATIONS
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: CORRECTIONS
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: POLICE SCIENCE
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
BUSINESS INFORMATION PROCESSING
ECONOMICS
GENERAL BUSINESS
HUMANITIES
LIBERAL ARTS: ARTS & HUMANITIES
LIBERAL ARTS: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES
REAL ESTATE
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Associate in Arts for Transfer:

COMMUNICATION STUDIES
PSYCHOLOGY
SOCIOLOGY*

Associate of Science:

APPLICATIONS SECURITY*
HEALTH SCIENCES
INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY*
MATHEMATICS
NATURAL SCIENCES

NURSING

<i>Associate in Science for Transfer:</i>

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MATHEMATICS

Certificates of Achievement

ACCOUNTING

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: CORRECTIONS
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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: POLICE SCIENCE

APPLICATIONS SECURITY*

BUSINESS INFORMATION PROCESSING

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY*

LIBERAL ARTS: CSU GE

LIBERAL ARTS: IGETC

TEACHER

The degrees and certificates with an asterisk have not yet been approved by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. We anticipate approval in the Spring 2015 or Fall 2015 semesters and have therefore included these degrees and certificates in this proposal.

These distance education courses are promoted on the Web and in the class schedule. The expanded programs and certificates are under construction for the web page and are awaiting approval from the State Chancellor's Office.

Relationship to the Institution's Stated Mission

The mission of Merritt College is to "enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society and a global economy." To accomplish this mission, "... Our purpose is to provide opportunities for lifelong learning, contribute to the economic growth of our

communities while assisting students to attain degrees and certificates, earn credits to transfer, and develop the skills necessary to complete their educational goals.” Distance education in the form of online degrees and certificates is an integral part of accomplishing the mission of Merritt College as it provides greater access to degrees, certificates, credits and skill development for our students. In Fall of 2014, the College offered 43 courses and 51 sections in an online or hybrid online/in-class format with a headcount of 1580 students. These additions would bring the total to an estimated 55 courses and 65 sections with a projected headcount of 2180 for a 38 percent increase. Merritt College is furthering the District's DE objectives and our mission by offering 50 percent or more instruction online or in hybrid online/in-class format for all of our Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) developed thus far: Administration of Justice, Business Administration, Communication Studies, Early Childhood Education, Mathematics, Psychology, and Sociology. Our Communication Studies and Sociology ADTs allow students to possibly complete 100 percent of degree major requirements in an online or hybrid format.

In our distance education survey of Fall 2014 students, 62 percent of students remarked that they took the course to fulfill a requirement for a degree or certificate. 38 percent took the course to fulfill a requirement for four-year institution transfer (see Appendix 2).

Discussion of the Rationale for the Request

Merritt College’s students are part of the increasing trend of students nationwide who are turning to online certificate and degree programs to complete or advance their education. Merritt College sees this trend as an opportunity to provide our students with a variety of options to pursue their educational goals, while not changing the expectations that the College has established in regard to the importance of students’ meeting course and program learning outcomes. The College and the faculty have been actively responding to this student need by creating more online degrees and certificates. As this document presents, the College has identified 28 new degrees and 11 new certificates in which 50 percent or more of the requirements can be taken in an online or hybrid online/in-class format since the last time the College put forth a substantive change proposal to ACCJC.

Merritt College has been offering online courses since 2008 and has continued to increase online options for students. Between Fall of 2011 and Fall of 2014, the growth in online or hybrid online/in-class full-time equivalent students (FTES) at Merritt College was 54%.

Even with the growth of online programs and courses at Merritt College, students continue to demand more online classes. Eighty-four percent of our distance education students surveyed expressed their plan to take more distance education courses and 85 percent expressed a desire to take another online or hybrid course at Merritt College if the opportunity arose (See Appendix 2).

B. A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM TO BE OFFERED

Only five of the proposed programs Merritt is seeking approval from ACCJC for are new: Applications Security Certificate of Achievement/Associate of Science; Infrastructure Security Certificate of Achievement/Associate of Science; and Associate in Arts in Sociology for Transfer. These programs and certificates are currently awaiting California Community College Chancellor’s Office approval. Two programs are Chancellor Office approved but will not become effective until the Fall of 2015 (Associate in Arts in Psychology for Transfer and Associate in Science in Mathematics for Transfer). The remaining proposed distance education degrees and certificates in this application already exist as Chancellor Office approved degrees and certificates and have been previously taught in traditional instructional methods.

The majors, general education and graduation requirements are identical for both distance education and face-to-face programs. Courses, regardless of their method of delivery, share a common curriculum approval process and an officially approved course out of record (COR). In addition, Merritt College and the Peralta Community College District have administrative procedures in place to ensure that rigor, breadth, objectives, student 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, face-to-face delivery mode.

The Merritt College 2013-2015 Catalog and CurricUNET, Merritt’s curriculum management system archive the graduation requirements and individual major requirements for the Associate Degrees in

<i>Associate of Arts:</i>

ACCOUNTING

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE SYSTEMS AND APPLICATIONS
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: CORRECTIONS
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: POLICE SCIENCE
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
BUSINESS INFORMATION PROCESSING
ECONOMICS
GENERAL BUSINESS
HUMANITIES
LIBERAL ARTS: ARTS & HUMANITIES
LIBERAL ARTS: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES
REAL ESTATE
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

<i>Associate in Arts for Transfer:</i>
COMMUNICATION STUDIES
PSYCHOLOGY
SOCIOLOGY*

<i>Associate of Science:</i>
APPLICATIONS SECURITY*
HEALTH SCIENCES
INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY*
MATHEMATICS
NATURAL SCIENCES
NURSING

<i>Associate in Science for Transfer:</i>
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
MATHEMATICS

The Merritt College 2013-2015 Catalog and CurricUNET curriculum management system were used to determine the requirements for the following certificates of achievement:

ACCOUNTING

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: CORRECTIONS
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: POLICE SCIENCE
APPLICATIONS SECURITY*
BUSINESS INFORMATION PROCESSING
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY*
LIBERAL ARTS: CSU GE
LIBERAL ARTS: IGETC
TEACHER

The Curriculum and Instructional Council (CIC) and DE Coordinator at Merritt College separately approve each course proposed for distance education delivery to ensure that the following are met:

- Regular and effective contact is maintained between instructor and students through announcements/bulletin boards, chat rooms, discussion boards, email communication, FAQ, resource links, scheduled face-to-face meetings, telephone, or other methods of contact.
- Appropriate technologies and tools are used to achieve course objectives and student learning outcomes
- Multiple measures are used to achieve and assess student learning

Student retention, success and average GPA data are readily available through our Business Intelligence Tool, the Peralta Community College District Institutional Research website, and through data-mining done by the Peralta Community College District Office of Institutional Research. Some relevant data are presented in Appendix 3.

C. THE PLANNING PROCESS THAT LED TO THE REQUEST FOR CHANGE.

Distance Education Planning and Alignment with District Objectives

The Peralta Community College District (PCCD), of which Merritt is a part, designated objectives for distance education in its December 2013 Distance Education Report. The objectives for Academic Affairs and Instruction were summarized as follows:

The objectives under Academic Affairs and Instruction are designed to address the State of California’s concern, shared by educational administrators across the nation, about the quality and usefulness of online

educational offerings. To ensure that the courses in the PCCD promote student success, transfer, and degree completion, the state is requiring that Districts first focus on offering courses associated with the new Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) degree that has recently been introduced at California's community colleges. Other objectives, and related activities, focus on additional areas for online course expansion and services, such as expanding course offerings outside of ADT tracks, offering basic skills courses online, and offering an online Credit by Exam option. Courses in all categories must adhere to state academic standards, as well as established distance education guidelines (Peralta Community College District, 2013).

Planning for distance education at Merritt is accomplished by communication and collaboration with the Distance Education Committee, Department Chairs, Division Deans and faculty. At this time focus has been on:

- Creation of quality distance education offerings that support completion of degrees/certificates, associate degrees for transfer, and CTE programs;
- Making sure that all course offered online at Merritt meet Title 5 standards;
- Bringing all online materials into Moodle delivery format;
- Training faculty in andragogical approaches to online instruction; and
- Keeping all online materials and multimedia accessible re Section 508
- Integrating planning for online course delivery in the program review and annual program updates (APU) process.

Anticipated Effect of the Proposed Change on the Rest of the Institution

The seven new programs constitute areas where there is significant industry need or student demand for courses and programs. The ability to offer such programs in distance education format will result in benefits outlined below. Making online certificates and majors available will reduce the impact on facilities and provide our students with more options to access and complete their higher education goals.

Benefits Resulting from the Change

The projected benefits of offering more online certificates and degrees include:

- Increase student access to classes that fit into their busy lives;
 - Expansion of opportunities for more students to pursue and complete certificates and degrees;
 - Contribution to the college's goal of alleviating instructional impact on facilities;
- and

- Enhance instructional service to students with disabilities.

D. INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES AND PROCESS FOR CHANGE

Sufficient and Qualified Faculty, Management and Support Staffing:

The Office of Instruction is responsible for online learning at the College. Through delegation of authority the Department Chairs and Division Deans are responsible for all courses in their disciplines, regardless of location or delivery methodology. Department Chairs and Division Deans ensure adequacy of the instructional staff and play a major role in scheduling, evaluation, and other processes designed to address instructional quality.

The Curriculum and Instructional Council (CIC) recommends approval of all courses offered at the College, regardless of the method of instruction to the Academic Senate and the Vice President of Instruction. Recommendations for approval of online courses for inclusion in the academic curriculum follows policies and procedures outlined in the *Program and Course Approval Handbook* as mandated by the California Community College Chancellor's Office California Code of Regulations, Title 5. This procedure involves creating a Distance Education addendum outlining the type of online education (100% online, 50+% online, and/or less than 50% online), methods of instructor-student contact, and any differences in course content or assignments (see Appendix 6). The District's Institutional Research department also provides success, FTES and retention data on distance education students. Such data is available to originating faculty, administrators, and staff on the District website (<http://web.peralta.edu/indev/>) and in the Business Intelligence tool. DE addendums are reviewed, recommended for approval by the committee and DE Coordinator and sent to the Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development (CIPD) at the Peralta Community College District as an action item for Board Approval.

The Council on Instruction, Planning and Development (CIPD) is comprised of representatives from all four Peralta Community College District colleges (Berkeley City College, Laney College, College of Alameda, and Merritt College). The council reviews and recommends for approval to the Vice Chancellor, Educational Services all courses approved by the CIC at Merritt College, regardless of the method of instruction. This second recommending body serves to

ensure all courses meet the policies set forth by the Peralta District Board of Trustees and meet state requirements prior to Board of Trustees approval action.

The **Distance Education Sub-committee** is a sub-committee of the Peralta Community College District Education Committee. As such, the Distance Education Sub-committee is charged to:

- Make recommendations to the District Education Committee, in collaboration with the District Academic Senate, to design and conduct a thorough evaluation of the PCCD Online Initiative project;
- Develop and recommending metrics to assess student performance outcomes and track other related student data as relates to DE; and
- Develop and recommending milestones and plans for monitoring and regulating DE within the District.

Furthermore, the DE Subcommittee is charged to make recommendations to the DEC in the following areas:

- Policies and procedures for enhancing faculty teaching and student learning in online Education;
- District-wide communication of Distance Education policies, procedures, strategies, standards and processes;
- Faculty requirements for teaching online classes;
- Standards for online courses;
- Development of specific student success support strategies for online learning;
- Evaluation of the learning management system;
- Course evaluations;
- Ways of working collaboratively with the appropriate constituencies, such as the DAS, the DEC, and the PFT;
- Development of documentation in the area of course requirements;
- Reviewing the current district and college administrative structures to assess how these structures can be revised to best support the delivery of effective campus-based distance education; and

- Other areas of relevance to Distance Education.

The College's **Distance Education Coordinator** reports to the Vice President of Instruction, works with the Peralta Community College District's Vice Chancellor Educational Services (who oversees distance education for the District), and is a member of the District-wide DE coordinators group that meet on a monthly basis. In addition, Merritt's DE Coordinator is active in the statewide community of DE coordinators and has the responsibility for making approval recommendations to CIC for proposed distance education course offerings. The DE coordinator also provides professional development opportunities and resources in adult learning theory, student-centered learning, use of Web 2.0 and educational technology, learning objects and Courseware Management System (CMS) (Peralta uses Moodle) training on campus. Training in Section 508 and other areas for accessibility are also provided.

Our learning management tool, **Moodle**, provides an up-to-date tool for faculty. Moodle is the learning platform adopted at most California State University campuses. The ability to engage in a Moodle learning environment provides an added advantage to our students who transfer to California State Universities. Periodic faculty surveys determine the training needs of online instructors and training is also delivered during College/District Flex Day training periods at the beginning of each term.

Online Instructional Faculty: Merritt College uses the same standards and processes for the hiring and evaluation of all instructional faculty members regardless of delivery mode. The District's Human Resources Department is responsible for recruiting new instructors with job announcements generated by academic departments at the College. The hiring of both part-time and full-time online faculty follow the established procedures and evaluation of instruction for online classes follows the same contractual procedure as evaluation of on campus instruction.

To ensure that course delivery is consistent, student-centered, and integrated, a faculty member is required to receive appropriate training before he/she designs, adopts or teaches an online course. Faculty electing to teach online classes are provided training in both Moodle, and online pedagogy/andragogy. To teach a distance education course or design a new course, the faculty member must receive training/certification in online teaching, through an approved or

accredited program, and/or work in consultation with the college's DE Coordinator to develop and implement DE courses and to ensure that courses stay current with state and federal regulations. Faculty must have approval from the Division Dean to teach an online course.

To facilitate expertise in online instruction, Merritt College offers six courses in Educational Technology: Introduction to Online Teaching, Introduction to Using Online Courseware (Moodle), Introduction to Hybrid Teaching, Designing Curriculum for Online Instruction, Creating Multimedia for Online Classes, Providing Support for Online Learners. Upon completing the six courses, faculty may receive a Certificate of Proficiency in Online Teaching.

Appropriate Equipment and Facilities, including Adequate Control over any off-site Campus

The Peralta District's Moodle server is housed externally on a secure server and is funded by the Peralta Community College District.

Student Authentication

Federal financial aid eligibility regulations require that Merritt College verify that the student who registers in a distance education is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.

In order to ensure that authentication takes place as intended; faculty must utilize the Peralta Community College District's implementation of Moodle to deliver distance education courses. If faculty use a publisher's content site, faculty must require the students to access such content through a link in the campus Moodle site to ensure authentication, but the Moodle course shell must also show evidence of regular and effective contact with students.

Fiscal Resources - Initial and Long Term and Sources of Funding

Distance education support is funded by the Peralta Community College District office. The District pays for the Moodle server, which is hosted in a secure, off-campus location. The District employs specific IT personnel that are dedicated to the support of distance education only. There is also a Moodle helpdesk and support for faculty and students. Merritt College has a DE Coordinator who is responsible for providing support to faculty and assists with technical and pedagogical issues. The coordinator works during all semesters and also provides support for course migration and accessibility issues. The DE coordinator position is funded by the District. The

DE coordinator provides support to faculty on campus and also virtually via audio-video conferencing and email.

Plan for Monitoring Outcomes

All programs, including those offered via distance education mode, participate in the program and resource planning process at the college. In program review, the supervising administrator considers FTES trends, average class size, program efficiency, retention rates, full-time/part-time instructor ratios, budgets, and prior planning documents in developing a plan for distance education. The Division Dean also generates specific data on exactly how many students are enrolled in each online course. He/she will determine if sufficient online courses are being offered to meet the needs of students who embark on an online program.

The Vice President of Instruction prioritizes resource requests and new initiatives (including expansion of distance education). The President and the Vice President of Instruction make final decisions about the allocation of resources to programs.

The courses offered are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum and Instructional Council (CIC) and Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development (CIPD) to ensure appropriate content, length and levels of quality and rigor. Student learning outcomes and methods of evaluation are determined for courses and are reviewed by a Student Learning Outcome Coordinator and CIC, regardless of delivery methodology. Assessment of these identified student learning outcomes is ongoing for both online and face-to-face classes. Outcomes and assessment data are housed in our Taskstream system and are entered and monitored by faculty, Department Chairs, Division Deans, the Vice President of Instruction, the Student Learning Outcome Coordinator (faculty), and the Curriculum and Student Learning Outcome Assessment Specialist (classified staff).

The Office of Instruction also assesses student satisfaction, student readiness and student support issues for online classes. See Appendix 2 for the executive summary of our Fall 2014 distance education survey.

E: EVIDENCE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPROVALS

All courses, degrees and certificates offered by the Merritt College have been approved by the Curriculum and Instructional Council (CIC), the Council on Instruction, Planning and

Development (CIPD) for the Peralta Community College District, the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees and by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The online degrees and certificates contained in this proposal are no exception – they have received all necessary internal approvals. The above internal committees, Governing Body, and state agency have approved all courses in the proposed degrees and certificates. Externally, the programs with all of their courses have been approved by the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

Separate course approvals for distance education can be found in our curriculum management system, CurricUNET (www.curricunet.com/pccd), the CIC minutes (<http://www.merritt.edu/wp/curriculumcommittee/agendas-minutes/>), and the CIPD reports (<http://web.peralta.edu/curriculum/>).

Administrative

College approvals for distance education programs are accomplished through the collegial governance process that include the Curriculum and Instructional Council, the Academic Senate, and the Vice President of Instruction.

External Regulatory and Legal Requirements

Merritt College keeps abreast of all changes in regulations for distance education through a variety of means including CIO listserv and participation in the Chancellor's Office Distance Education Coordinators' meetings. The Merritt Distance Education Coordinator is involved in the creation of online training for DE coordinators throughout the state. Any regulatory and legal requirements and updates are communicated to the chairs at Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors meetings. The College has exercised due diligence in complying with regulatory requirements and legal mandates. A prime example of this compliance is the College's accessibility policy and procedure on distance education and web-based instructional materials. Distance education is subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, California law, and Community College Chancellor's Office Guidelines with regards to access for persons with disabilities. To ensure that students with disabilities have the same opportunity, Merritt College has established that DE courses should be designed to provide "built-in" accommodation (i.e. closed captioning, descriptive narration) and/or interface design/content layout, which is accessible to "industry standard" assistive computer technology

commonly used by students with disabilities. Faculty at the college are asked to attend workshops on DE regulations and Section 508 compliance and all online and hybrid classes are required to have a DE addendum to ensure that faculty can provide equal access for all course activities. Additionally, all four Peralta colleges provide Alternate Media and Assistive Technology support via the Disabled Students' Program office.

Governing Board Approvals

The Peralta Community College Board of Trustees approves all new curriculum, including curriculum proposed for online delivery. The Board of Trustees also approves all new majors and certificates. They also receive reports of new distance education courses sent from the Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development (CIPD) and the Vice Chancellor, Educational Services as an information item.

F. EVIDENCE THAT EACH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT WILL STILL BE FULFILLED AFTER THE CHANGE.

The Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has prescribed 21 eligibility requirements for community and junior colleges. A summary of the eligibility requirements and the impact of this substantive change proposal (if any) on the eligibility requirements are presented below.

1. Authority:

Merritt College is a state, public two-year community college, one of 112 such institutions comprising the California Community Colleges system and authorized by the State of California. Therefore, Merritt College operates as an educational institution and awards degrees under the auspices of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and is governed by a locally elected Board of Trustees.

This authority is published on page 13 of the College Catalog. Entire text from page 13 of the College Catalog is quoted here: "Merritt College is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for all course and program offerings. The California State University and

University of California systems and other universities and colleges grant credit for appropriate courses completed (see ‘Transfer to Four-Year Colleges and Universities’).”

The authority of Merritt College is not affected in any way with this proposal.

2. Mission:

Merritt College’s mission statement, as recently revised, was adopted by the Board of Trustees in June 24, 2014. This statement forms the basis for the College’s Institutional Learning Outcomes, supporting goals, and the annual institutional objectives published in the Educational Master Plan. The mission statement is included in the College Catalog, Schedule of Classes and other significant publications and is posted on the College website. The statement appropriately reflects the College as an open access institution, offering associate degree and certificate of achievement programs that prepare students for successful careers, develop college-level skills, enable transfer to universities, and foster a personal commitment to lifelong learning. Institutional commitment to student learning is central to the mission statement. The College strives for students to learn to contribute to the global community as they develop an understanding of their personal relationship to the world’s social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and natural environments.

Distance education offerings at Merritt College support the mission of the College; they provide the community access to quality education and services that support a diverse community of learners through the use of technology.

3. Governing Board:

The Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees, elected at large by Alameda County residents, consists of seven members who represent the local community and two Student Trustees (with an advisory vote), elected by the student body to represent student issues and concerns. The Board establishes policies consistent with the College’s mission and is responsible for the institution’s financial integrity and stability to ensure a sound educational program. All regular and special meetings are open to the public; all Board actions are taken in public, except where state law provides otherwise; and an opportunity for members of the public to address the

Board is provided at each meeting. All Board members are expected to adopt and adhere to the principles and standards defined by the Board of Trustees Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (Board Policy 2715).

The Board of Trustees approves all new certificates and majors, whether delivered online or by traditional methods of instruction. This proposal does not have an effect on the governing board's composition, charge, meeting policies, principles or standards.

4. Chief Executive Officer:

The Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees has the responsibility for hiring and evaluating the Chancellor of the District and the President of the College and delegates full authority to the Chancellor to administer Board policy and to oversee the general operations of the District and the President to oversee the general operations of the College. This responsibility is not changed by this proposal.

5. Administrative Capacity:

The College President is directly supported by a senior staff consisting of the Vice President of Instruction, the Vice President of Student Services and the Director of Business and Administration. Senior staff members are responsible for providing vision and leadership for all college operations. They, in turn, are supported by various deans, managers, and supervisors, who are responsible for specific departments or operations. All administrators meet or exceed the minimum qualifications for their positions in terms of educational preparation and experience.

The Vice President of Instruction supervises all programs, including those offered via distance education, and reports to the College President. In addition each Division Dean supervises the online classes in their Division, providing the same administrative support, budgets, supplies, and office staff as provided to all other programs in the division. This proposal does not have an effect on the administrative capacity or require any additional administrative capacity (see Appendix 4 and 5).

6. Operational Status:

In the fall semester of 2013, Merritt College served approximately 7,000 students. Approximately 84 percent of those students enrolled on a part-time basis in credit courses and

approximately 64 percent of them identified a goal of meeting Associate in Arts degree, career technical certificate, or transfer requirements.

The class schedule, which includes online and hybrid courses, is clearly displayed on the College's website (http://web.peralta.edu/publicinfo/files/2014/10/Spring_2015_Class_Schedule.pdf). Classes are scheduled at the College as well as online so all students have the opportunity to complete degree and/or certificate programs in a manner that meets their individual needs. This proposal enhances the operational status of the college by increasing student access to courses for degree and certificate completion.

7. Degrees:

In the fall semester of 2013, approximately 64 percent of students enrolled in credit courses identified a goal of meeting associate degree, career technical certificate, or transfer requirements. A majority of the College's credit courses are applicable to associate degrees and/or meet requirements for career technical certificates. Of those courses that are not degree applicable, most fulfill the College's mission of basic skills development.

The implementation of online degrees and certificates provides students with an alternative method to face-to-face instruction to complete their programs. This proposal enhances degrees and degree completion by increasing student access to degree-applicable courses.

8. Educational Programs:

In accordance with its mission, Merritt College offers educational programs that enable students to transfer to universities, prepare for careers, and develop college-level skills. The College currently offers courses in more than 37 fields of study, and six Associate Degrees for Transfer (with one more ADT more in the pipeline) for which the primary objective is to prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions and/or to complete the requirements for the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. Students also have the opportunity to prepare for employment or retrain to maintain state-of-the-art skill levels in more than 22 career technical education fields of study for which certificates of achievement are awarded upon successful completion of requirements in the major. Student learning outcomes have been identified and are

assessed for all courses and programs. All degree and most certificate programs are two academic years in length.

Online degrees and certificates are built upon courses approved by the Curriculum and Instructional Council, Council on Instruction, Planning and Development, and Board of Trustees, and student learning outcomes are identical to courses delivered by more traditional methods of instruction. This proposal does not alter our educational programs' curriculum or outcomes and increases student access to courses for degree and certificate completion.

9. Academic Credit:

The awarding of academic credit at Merritt College is based on Title 5, Section §55002.5 of the California Code of Regulations. All curricula are reviewed by Merritt's Curriculum and Instruction Council (CIC) every six years while CTE courses are reviewed every two years. CIC advises the Vice President of Instruction and the Academic Senate and makes recommendations to the Academic Senate concerning curriculum and instructional matters.

The College uses the Carnegie unit as a basis to define the credit hour. For example, a three-unit lecture course requires a minimum of three lecture hours per week plus six hours of homework per week for a semester-length course.

All distance education courses are subject to the same rigor, credit hour standards, and review as face-to-face courses and comply with the provisions of Title 5. This proposal does not have an effect on academic credit.

10. Student Learning and Achievement.

Merritt College has established and publishes Institutional Learning Outcomes for all students who attend the College, and these outcomes are assessed. The educational objectives for each Merritt College degree or certificate program are defined through the College's curriculum approval process and published in the College's printed and online Catalog, are available to faculty in the Taskstream assessment tool and the CurricUNET curriculum management system. Student Learning Outcomes/Program Learning Outcomes have been developed for all courses and programs, and they are regularly assessed and aligned with Institutional Learning Outcomes. Regardless of location or instructional delivery method, the expected outcomes of a given course

or program are the same. This proposal does not have an effect on student learning and achievement.

11. General Education:

General Education courses have the required breadth to promote intellectual inquiry. These courses include demonstrated competence in writing and computational skills and serve as an introduction to major areas of knowledge (Title 5 – 55806). The quality and rigor of these courses is consistent with the academic standards appropriate to higher education. The General Education component of programs is consistent with statewide standards. The general education requirements are identical for online degrees as they are for face-to-face degrees. Current policy and criteria used to evaluate courses proposed for placement in a general education category include distance education courses. The College is able to support distance education degree programs with an appropriate selection of general education requirements that apply towards an associate degree and toward the CSU or IGETC general education patterns. This proposal does not affect general education at Merritt College and increases student access to General Education courses.

12. Academic Freedom:

Merritt College’s academic freedom statement (Board Policy 4030) ensures that faculty and students can examine controversial issues in an objective manner, have access to all required information sources, and develop an understanding of conflicting viewpoints through critical thinking without fear of reprisal. It also stresses integrity and responsibility. This statement is widely distributed, as is the Academic Senate’s Statement on Professional Ethics. The College’s academic freedom policy is applicable regardless of location or method of instruction. This proposal does not have an effect on academic freedom.

13. Faculty:

In the fall semester of 2014, Merritt College employed 73 contract faculty members. Faculty hiring processes have been effective in the selection of highly qualified and appropriately experienced full-time faculty members. The duties of a faculty assignment are set forth in the faculty collective bargaining agreement and include curriculum development and assessment of student learning. The establishment of additional online certificates and degrees will not

significantly affect the present number of faculty employed at the College. Both full-time and part-time online instructors are hired through the exact same hiring procedures as face-to-face faculty, and many faculty members teach both face-to-face and online.

14. Student Services:

Merritt College prides itself on providing appropriate student services and student learning support programs to its diverse student body in order to facilitate access, retention, and success. Major areas of student services are as follows: Admissions and Records, Articulation, Assessment Center, Financial Aid and Scholarships, CalWORKs, Child Development Center, Counseling Services, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Health Services Center, Student Life, Transfer Services, and Veterans Services. The College's services and programs for students are consistent with its Mission. The College also provides opportunities for student involvement that enhances student retention, assists with definition and clarity of personal and educational goals, and stimulates goal attainment through a commitment to academic excellence. These programs and services support the College's mission by providing an integrated student pathway through their academic experience. A detailed matrix displaying online student services and resources is available on the Peralta District's distance education website (<http://web.peralta.edu/de/for-students/student-support-services/>).

15. Admissions:

As an open access community college, Merritt College has no formal admissions requirements other than requiring new students to complete the Merritt College mandatory assessment and orientation process. Merritt College adheres to admissions policies consistent with its mission as a public California community college and compliant with California Code of Regulations, Title 5. Information about admissions requirements is available in the College Catalog, Schedule of Classes, and on District and College websites. Online courses, certificates, and degrees follow the same admissions procedures as all other courses and programs.

16. Information and Learning Resources:

The recently remodeled Merritt College Library currently has 47,087 books and 79 print periodical subscriptions. The Library currently has approximately 20,000 electronic books and

subscribes to 70 electronic databases, which provides access to over 15,000 full-text periodicals. These electronic resources support the curricular needs of both traditional and online students and are available 24/7. Library information is also available to students via telephone and email. To support student learning, the Library has a small alcove area for library instruction, 3 group study rooms, over 20 computers for student use, and over 121 seats configured in a variety of ways to facilitate student success. The College's Learning Center includes an English Center, a Math Center and the Science Tutoring Center, and 12 computers for writing across the curriculum. The college also hosts two computer labs, one with 34 computers with 2 DSPS units, and one lab with 44 computers with 4 DSPS designated units.

17. Financial Resources:

The College President presents balanced budgets that support personnel and operational expenditures to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees on a yearly basis. The College President provides regular reports to the Chancellor and College community on the College's budget and its possible impact and ramifications to college operations. The annual budget of Merritt College meets the requirements of state law and the District's reserve for contingencies are consistent with recommendation by the State Chancellor's Office. The online program generates approximately 352 FTES per year. The revenue from the apportionment is sufficient to support all of the costs of the program.

18. Financial Accountability:

The Peralta Community College District and its Colleges undergo an annual financial audit, conducted in accordance with the requirements of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Audit findings support the overall preparation of the budget and financial statements of the District and the College as conforming to accepted accounting principles. Corrections are responded to in a timely manner, and an annual audit report is presented to the Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled public meeting, providing the opportunity for public comment. Audit results have steadily improved since the last comprehensive visit culminating in a perfect audit, free from findings, for the 2013-14 Fiscal Year. The addition of new online certificates and degrees will not change these procedures.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation:

In pursuit of its mission, Merritt College engages in an ongoing and systematic cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation that is integrated with student learning outcomes assessment, program review, and resource allocation. The College's planning process is also integrated with the District's strategic planning process. As part of its strategic planning process, the College develops goals that are assessed annually through the measurement of key performance objectives. Based on the assessment of those objectives and other student outcomes, adjustments to existing goals and/or the development of new goals are instituted to achieve continuous improvement. The College includes distance education data in planning and evaluation of success. The proposed change will not change the planning and evaluation procedures.

20. Public Information:

Merritt College provides an annually updated catalog (both printed and online). It includes general information about Merritt College, such as the official name, address, telephone number, and web address; the locations of satellite sites; the Institutional Learning Outcomes; the Mission, Vision, Values and Goals statements; course/program/degree offerings; the academic calendar; the academic freedom statement; available financial aid and other student support services; available learning resources; admissions information; acceptance of transfer credits; assessment information; student fee information and refund policies; and requirements for degrees and certificates. Because requirements for transfer change frequently, students are directed to access the online student-transfer information system, ASSIST, to obtain the most current information.

For the most up-to-date Associate in Arts degree and career technical certificate requirements, students are directed to the Counseling Department website. The College Catalog also identifies the Board of Trustees and the names of and degrees held by academic administrators, full-time faculty and associate faculty members. Major policies affecting students such as grievance and complaint procedures, sexual harassment, nondiscrimination, the Student Conduct Code and the Code of Academic Conduct are also published in the catalog. This information is also published in the more widely distributed Schedule of Classes and is available on the College website. Every effort is made to ensure that the College is represented with precise, accurate, and current information including providing a link to the District's website where additional information, Board Policies, and Administrative Procedures can be found.

Distance education information can be accessed through multiple sources: the Peralta District's Distance Education website (<http://web.peralta.edu/de/category/peralta/>), the ePeralta Web portal (<http://eperalta.org/spring2015/>), and the Schedule of Classes (both printed and searchable). A highly visible link to the Moodle course platform/ePeralta Web portal is on the Merritt College website.

21. Relations with Accrediting Commission:

Merritt College has consistently demonstrated honesty and integrity in its relationships with the Accrediting Commission. The College is in full compliance with the standards, policies, guidelines and public disclosure requirements of the Accrediting Commission. The Accreditation Liaison Officer prepares the annual institutional reports through which compliance with Commission standards is reaffirmed and substantive institutional changes are described. From 2009 through 2013, the College was on a variety of sanctions in its effort to seek reaffirmation of its accreditation status. Following the permanent hiring of a Chief Academic Officer and most recently the hiring of a Curriculum and Assessment Specialist, the College has as part of this self-evaluation study conducted a review of its curriculum inventory and has identified areas where substantive changes will be forthcoming to the Accrediting Commission immediately upon the completion of this self-evaluation report. As demonstrated above, the implementation of additional online degrees and certificates does not alter the College's continued commitment to meet this eligibility requirement.

G. EVIDENCE THAT EACH ACCREDITATION STANDARD WILL STILL BE FULFILLED AFTER THE CHANGE AND THAT ALL RELEVANT COMMISSION POLICIES ARE ADDRESSED.

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

As stated earlier, the current mission statement of Merritt College is clearly consistent with the establishment of programs in which fifty percent or more of the course requirements may be completed through distance education. "The mission of Merritt College is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a

democratic society and a global economy” (revised June 24, 2014). To achieve this mission, the College provides general education, transfer, career technical, and basic skills classes. Many of these are offered via distance education mode. The awarding of additional online degrees and certificates does not alter the mission or effectiveness of the College.

To accomplish our mission, Merritt College has stated it will “provide opportunities for lifelong learning, contribute to economic growth of our communities while assisting students to attain degrees and certificates, earn credits to transfer, and develop skills necessary to complete their educational goals.” Distance education actively eliminates barriers of time and space for students to access classes for degrees and certificates, transfer, and lifelong learning at Merritt College. This proposed substantive change will enhance Merritt College ability to accomplish its mission.

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard IIA

Distance education degrees and certificates conform to all aspects of Standard II, as do all certificates and degrees at Merritt College. Distance education courses conform to the approved Course Outline of Record, including stated student learning outcomes.

Curriculum and SLOs: Student learning outcomes are assessed for courses regardless of the method of delivery. Most of courses in these online certificates and majors are not new to the College, and thus they are not new enterprises nor do they represent new directions for the College beyond their mode of delivery. Although delivered entirely or in part online, the student learning outcomes and objectives are the same for online courses as they are for courses delivered by traditional methods. All courses are taught with the most appropriate pedagogy and methodology with respect to the official course outline of record (COR) and with the use of state-of-the-art instructional technology as previously noted in the “Facilities and Equipment” section of this substantive change proposal. All sections in a discipline, regardless of where or how they are offered, adhere to appropriate depth and rigor. Sections are always scheduled with consideration

for what is in the best interest of students, offering choices that will enhance students' ability to complete degrees or certificates in a reasonable time frame.

Integrity and student authentication: The institution ensures the integrity of student work and verifies credits earned, and awards degrees and certificates on the same basis as campus-based certificates and degrees. In order to ensure that authentication takes place as intended; faculty must utilize the Peralta Community College District's implementation of Moodle to deliver distance education courses. If faculty use a publisher's content site faculty must require the students to access such content through a link in the campus Moodle site to ensure authentication, but the Moodle course shell must also show evidence of regular and effective contact with students.

Online instructors' qualifications and evaluation: Faculty members teaching online courses are required to have the same qualifications as instructor's who teach campus-based courses, and the same hiring process is used. Online faculty members are evaluated using the exact same evaluations procedure used for more traditional methods of delivery.

Faculty electing to teach online classes are required to have training in both Moodle, and online pedagogy/andragogy. To teach a distance education course or design a new course, the faculty member are required receive training/certification in online teaching, through an approved or accredited program, and/or work in consultation with the college's local distance education professionals to develop and implement distance courses and to ensure that courses stay current with state and federal regulations. Faculty may then seek approval from the division Dean to teach an online course.

Faculty Training: The Distance Education Coordinator provides professional development opportunities and resources on adult learning theory, student-centered learning, use of Web 2.0 and educational technology, learning objects and Courseware Management System (CMS) (Peralta uses Moodle) training on campus. Training in Section 508 and other areas for accessibility are also provided. Periodic faculty surveys determine the training needs of online instructors and training is also delivered during College/District Flex Day training periods at the beginning of each term.

Merritt College offers six courses in Educational Technology: Introduction to Online Teaching, Introduction to Using Online Courseware (Moodle), Introduction to Hybrid Teaching, Designing Curriculum for Online Instruction, Creating Multimedia for Online Classes, Providing Support for Online Learners. Upon completing the six courses, faculty may receive a Certificate of Proficiency in Online Teaching.

Supervision and support: The Vice President of Instruction and discipline department chairs assure that the Online Learning program continuously improves through program review, self-evaluation, and assessment of student learning outcomes. The distance education coordinator assures that pedagogical issues are addressed and provides faculty training. Technical support (online@peralta.edu) is available to assist students and faculty who are having technical difficulties, login problems, or software functionality questions.

Information for Students: The Peralta District's online learning website, linked on the Merritt College homepage with a large icon on the side navigation bar, provides a multitude of information to students to enroll and participate successfully in online classes. It also includes an Online Learning Orientation and links to Passport, our online enrollment system. The class schedule has a search function that allows students to find online classes. In addition, the Peralta District has a support email (online@peralta.edu) to help with technical questions.

Student Satisfaction: In the latest student technology survey conducted by the Office of Instruction regarding Fall 2014 distance education courses, over 85 percent of the students reported they would take a distance education course at Merritt College again if given the opportunity. Students also gave an average satisfaction rating of 4.10 out of 5.00 indicating that they were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with their online course. Students also gave ratings of 4.00 or above out of 5.00 when asked about their ability to interact with faculty and fellow students and 4.00 or above ratings to the distance education website (eperalta.org) and Moodle course platform (see Appendix 2).

Standard IIB: Student Support Services

Merritt College a range of student services for online students, including the following:

- Admissions and Records provides online application, registration and transcript requests.
- Articulation and counseling answers frequently asked questions online. It also provides and eCounseling services for clearing of a prerequisite or basic educational counseling and advising.
- Bookstore offers online ordering for textbooks.
- Cal Works provides eligibility and contact information online and is reachable by phone.
- Disability Resources offers online resources and is reachable by phone.
- Financial Aid offers online application information, resources, and links, and is reachable by phone.
- Online databases available to all students
- Library Staff offers email support (merrittlib@peralta.edu), and are reachable by phone.
- Orientation is currently in the process of implementing an online orientation.
- Student Health Services provide online forms and resource links and is reachable by phone.
- The Transfer center offers many helpful online links and resources and is reachable by phone.
- Veterans Affairs offers online information and frequently asked questions and is reachable by phone.

Standard III: Resources

As explained earlier, the College has sufficient resources to support online learning, including fiscal, technology and personnel resources. This includes support from the Vice President of Instruction, a distance education coordinator, state-of-the-art Moodle learning management system, faculty and Moodle trainings, and student services.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

As noted earlier, distance education fits well within the College's established leadership and governance structures. Faculty members create curriculum. The Merritt College Curriculum and Instructional Council (CIC) approve all courses and programs. The Council on Instruction, Planning, and Development and Board of Trustees at the Peralta District then approves these actions. The CIC and Distance Education Coordinator separately approve courses for online or

hybrid delivery. The Vice President of Instruction, division deans, department chairs, and Distance Education Coordinator then supervise and support distance education instruction. A Distance Education Sub-committee of the District Education Committee at the Peralta District has also been established to discuss support, resources, and pedagogical aspects of distance education.

Process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and learning outcomes expected through the proposed change

It is the responsibility of the Vice President of Instruction, division deans and department chairs to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs conducted in distance education mode. The supervising administrator considers FTES trends, average class size, program efficiency, retention rates, full-time/part-time instructor ratios, budgets, and prior planning documents in developing a plan for distance education. Surveys are also conducted to the distance education population to evaluate effectiveness and needs for resources, student services and technology to support distance education learning (see Appendix 2).

The educational objectives for each Merritt College degree or certificate program are defined through the College's curriculum approval process, published in the College's printed and online Catalog, and are available to faculty in the Taskstream assessment tool and the CurricUNET curriculum management system. Student Learning Outcomes/Program Learning Outcomes have been developed for all courses and programs, and they are regularly assessed and mapped with Institutional Learning Outcomes. Regardless of location or instructional delivery method, the expected outcomes of a given course or program are the same. All Student Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes are regularly assessed.

Appendix 1

Merritt College
Distance Education Degrees and Certificates
Spring 2015

Associate Degrees

Associate of Arts:

ACCOUNTING

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE SYSTEMS AND APPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: POLICE SCIENCE

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS INFORMATION PROCESSING

ECONOMICS

GENERAL BUSINESS

HUMANITIES

LIBERAL ARTS: ARTS & HUMANITIES

LIBERAL ARTS: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES

REAL ESTATE

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Associate in Arts for Transfer:

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

PSYCHOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY*

Associate of Science:

APPLICATIONS SECURITY*

HEALTH SCIENCES

INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY*

MATHEMATICS

NATURAL SCIENCES

NURSING

Associate in Science for Transfer:

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MATHEMATICS

Certificates of Achievement

ACCOUNTING

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: CORRECTIONS
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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: POLICE SCIENCE

APPLICATIONS SECURITY*

BUSINESS INFORMATION PROCESSING

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY*

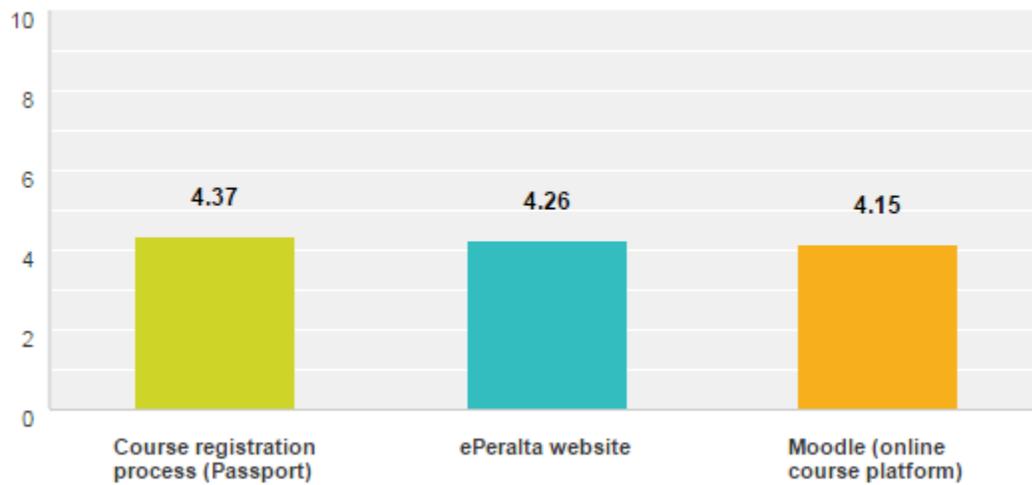
LIBERAL ARTS: CSU GE

LIBERAL ARTS: IGETC

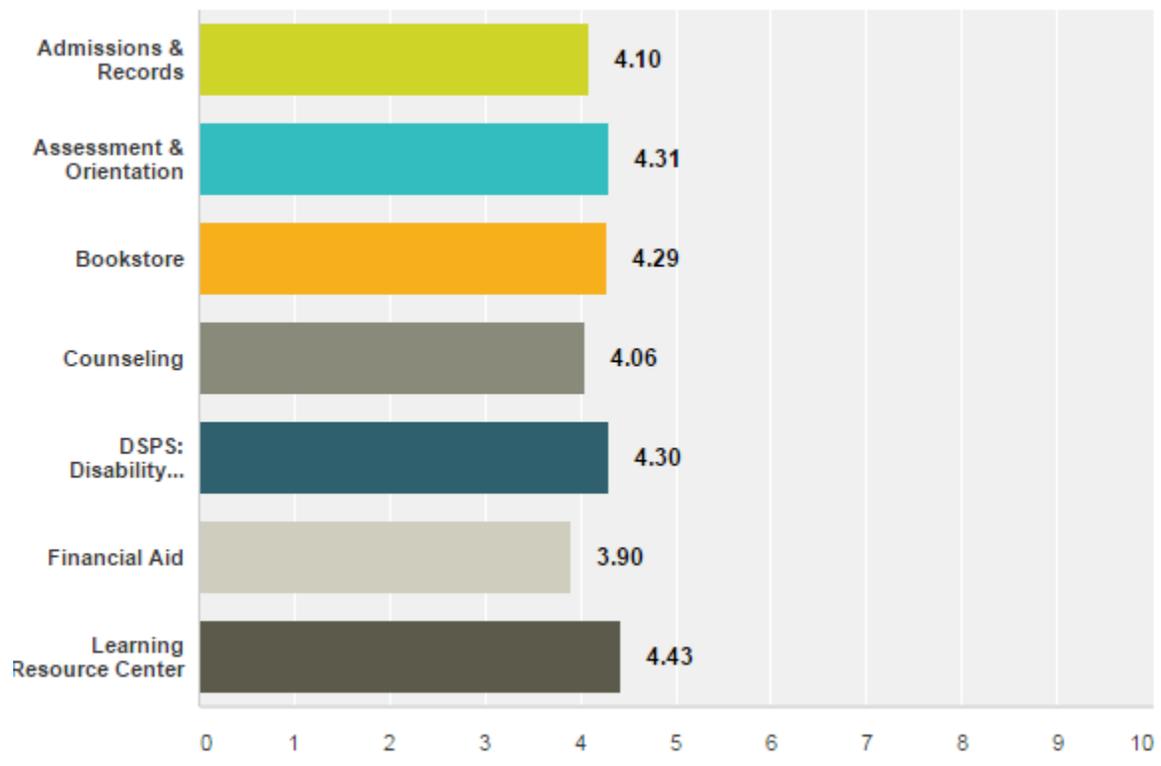
TEACHER

Appendix 2
Distance Education Survey – Fall 2014
Conducted by the Office of Instruction
(selected questions based on relevance)

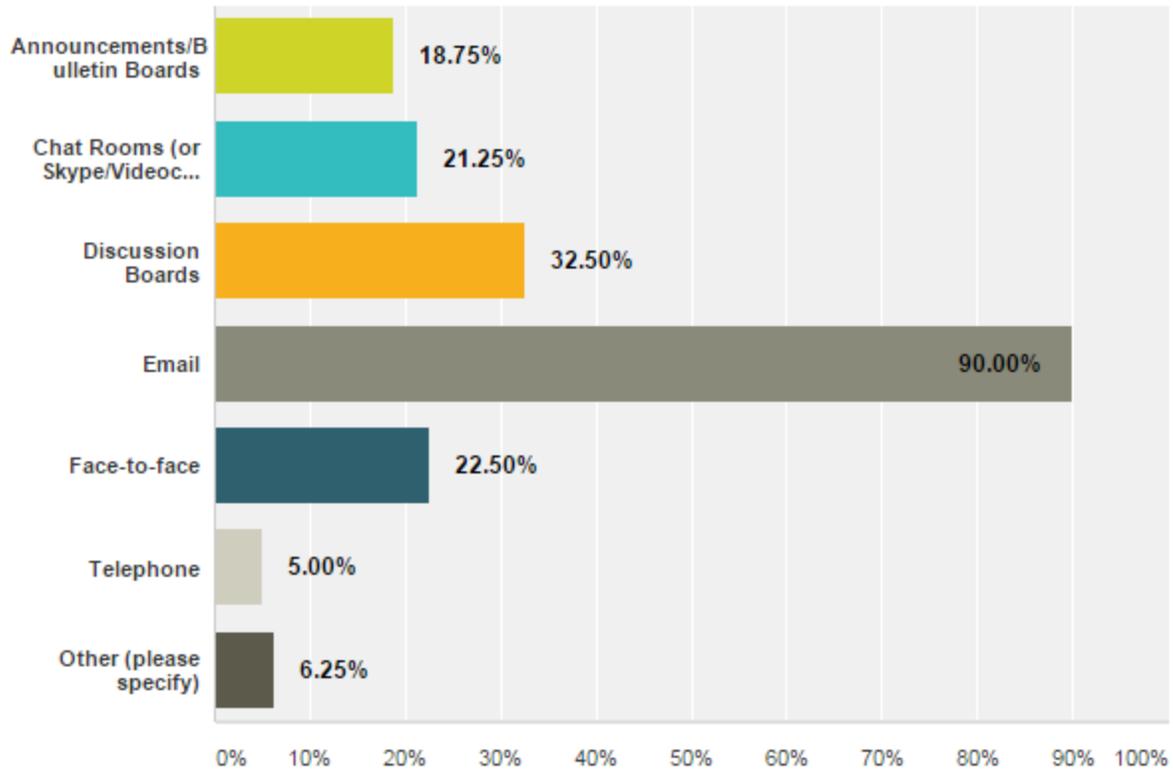
How satisfied were you with the following in regards to your online or hybrid course (out of 5)?



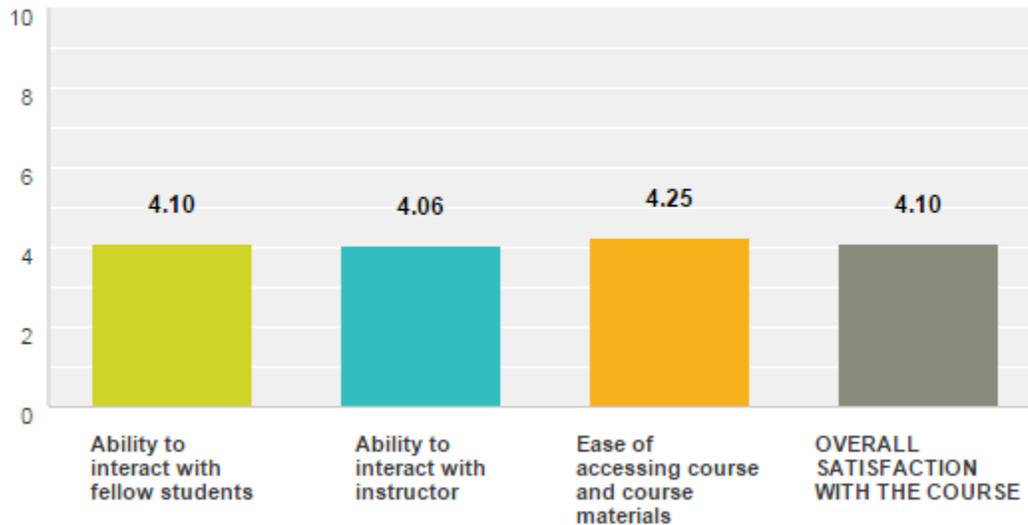
When thinking about services you accessed/contacted specifically for this online or hybrid course, how satisfied were you with the following student support services (out of 5)?



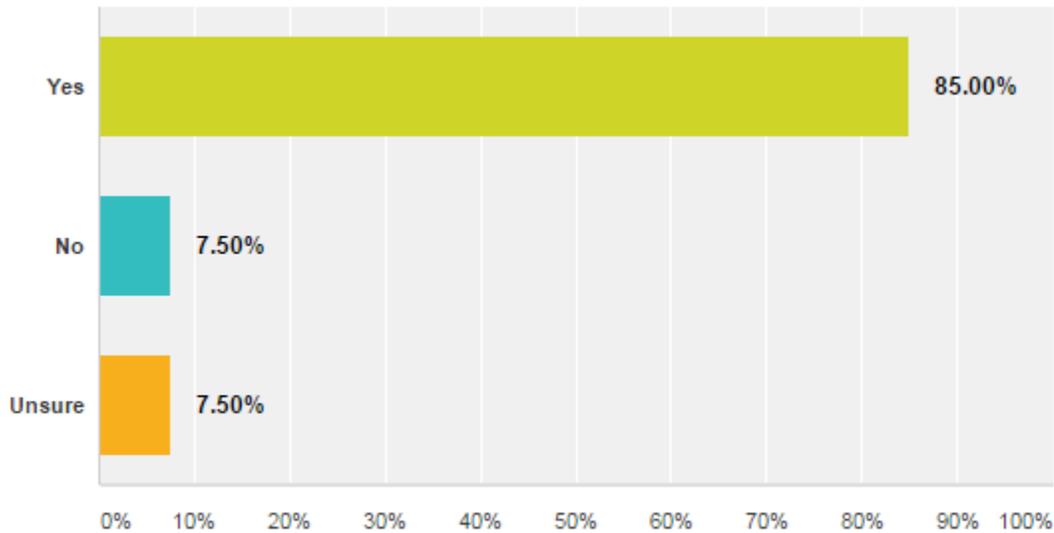
Which of the following types of office hours/instructor contact did you access during the course?



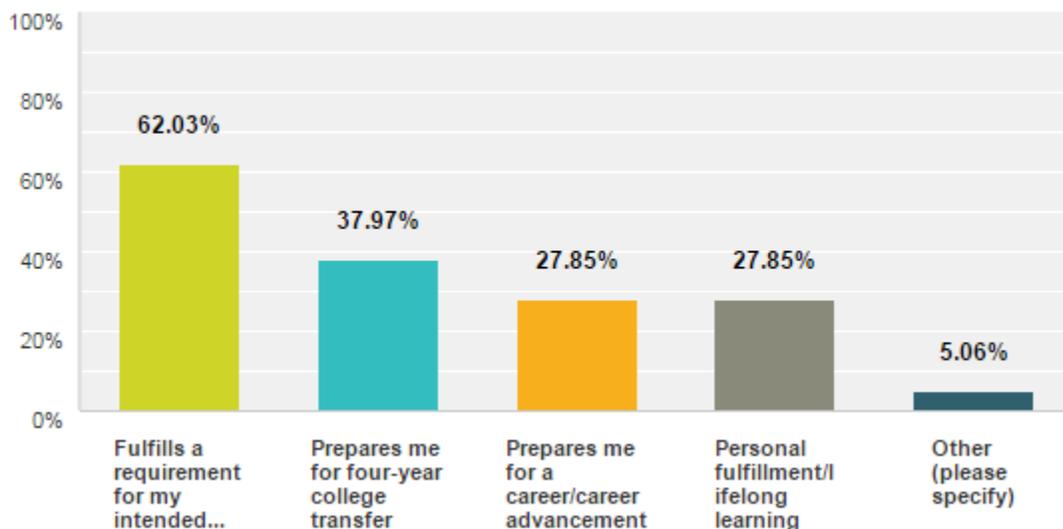
Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of your online or hybrid course (out of 5):



If the opportunity arises, would you take another online or hybrid course at Merritt College?

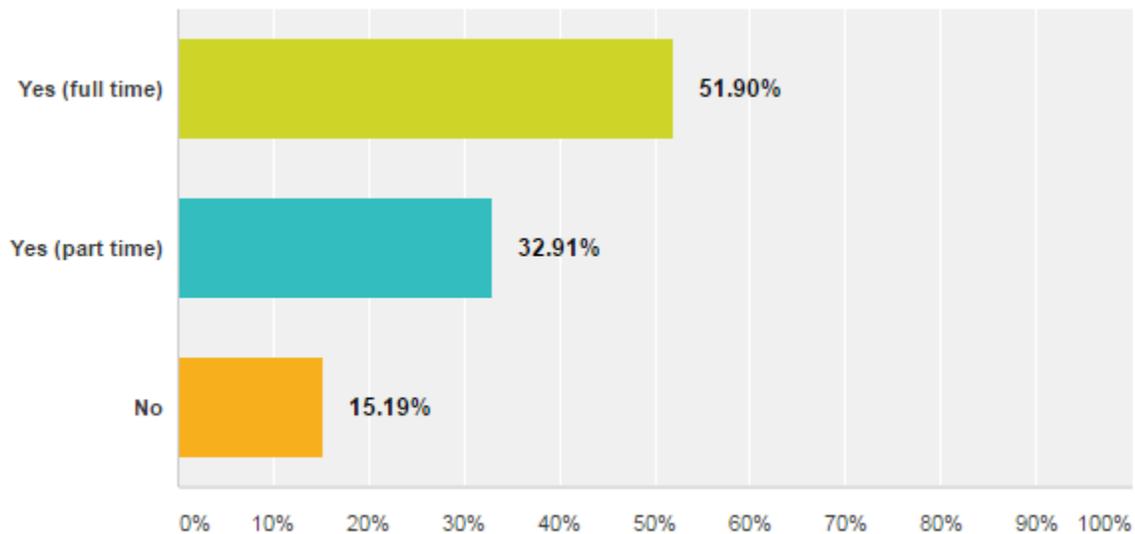


What was your purpose for taking the course? (check all that apply)



(note: the green bar indicates “Fulfills a requirement for my intended degree or certificate”)

Did you work while taking the course?



Conclusion

The overwhelming majority of Merritt College students take distance education courses while working full time and are taking the courses to fulfill a degree or certificate and/or to prepare for four-year transfer. Students overall feel “satisfied (4 of 5)” with the online course platform (Moodle) and website (ePeralta) and the ability to interact with the instructor and classmates. 85 percent indicated they would take another distance education course at Merritt. Students also feel on average “satisfied (4 of 5)” with the student services and resources available.

While students are utilizing email for regular contact with instructors, the survey indicates that students and faculty could be utilizing a wider variety of technology with regards to contact.

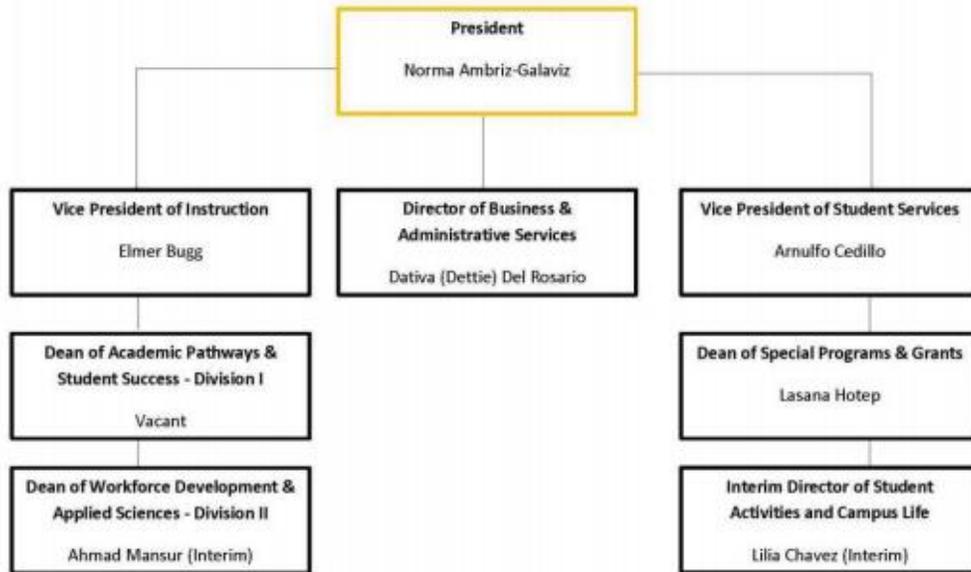
Appendix 3

Merritt College Retention and Enrollment Data for Online Courses Fall 2011 – Spring 2013

Term	Campus	Retention Rate	Census Enrollment	Retained
2011 Fall	Merritt	65.00%	865	562
2012 Spring	Merritt	65.20%	868	566
2012 Fall	Merritt	73.10%	1025	749
2013 Spring	Merritt	70.60%	1172	828

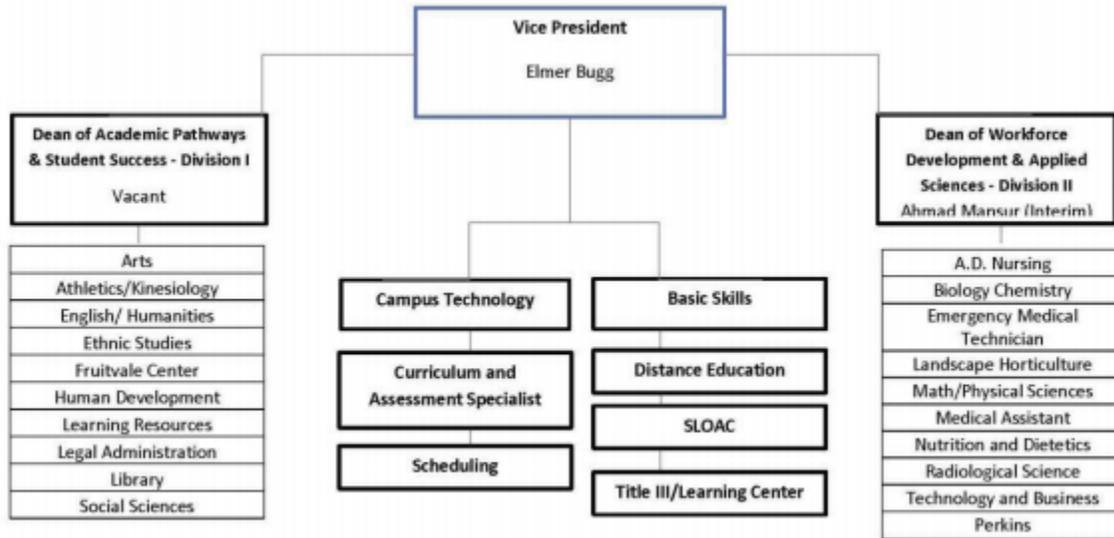
Appendix 4

Merritt College Management Organizational Chart



Appendix 5

Office of Instruction Organizational Chart



Appendix 6

COURSE DISTANCE EDUCATION ADDENDUM

Merritt College

A/ET test1

Each proposed or existing course, if delivered by distance education, shall be separately reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee prior to being offered (Education Code A§55378).

The Board of Governors (BOG) and the Peralta Community College District have defined a distance education course. A distance education course/section or session is defined as the use of technology utilized 51 percent or more of the time to deliver instruction during the course term and where the student and instructor are separated by distance. Furthermore, distance education courses may then be considered a virtual equivalent to a class-room-based course (California Community Colleges Distance Education Regulations and Guidelines).

1. **Delivery Methods**

100% Internet-based

Recommended Maximum Student Enrollment

The college curriculum committee recommends a maximum student enrollment of 40 students for this Distance Education course.

2. **Need/Justification**

this is qa test

3. **Do the following sections of the Course Outline of Record differ by offering this course via distance education?**

Student Performance Objectives	YES
Assignments	YES
Assessment	YES

Explanation for any "Yes" answers.

this is another test

4. **Technical Issues**

technical issues test

5. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Will this course, as designed, accommodate students with disabilities? NO

If NO, please explain.

woohoo entering text

6. **Additional Resources**

Are additional resources or clerical support needed or anticipated? YES

If YES, please explain.

resources text

7. **Distance Ed-Instructor-Student Contact**

Announcements/Bulletin Boards - 1 time a week

Chat Rooms - as needed

Discussion Boards - 3 times a week

Email Communication - as needed