Outline of DL Orientation for New Department Chairs

Faculty assignment to DL courses

Please review the faculty overview to DL at CCRI.
The faculty overview is here: http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/overview.html
This includes a general description of Distance Learning at CCRI and a Professional Development Day Policy and Practices Handout. These include much of the DL policy as it relates to faculty, including definitions of the different course types and an overview of best practices.

Wherever possible, please assign faculty a minimum of two weeks prior to the course start date.
Distance Learning policy is that DL faculty will send a welcome message and syllabus to students two weeks prior to the course start date. One week prior they should, according to policy, open the Learning Management System (such as Blackboard) to students so students can orient themselves to the online learning environment. Please consider these requirements when assigning faculty to DL courses.

First-time class size is 15 students; subsequent offerings are capped at approximately 20 students.
From the CCRI DL Policy:
The first time an instructor teaches a fully online course the class size is limited to 15 students.
The experience of teaching online is quite different than the traditional process and faculty need time to make the necessary adjustments for their first online course. Subsequent offerings will be capped at approximately 20 students, depending on the course.

Faculty must have LMS experience prior to teaching online. There is a checklist to help.
From the CCRI DL Policy:
A faculty member must have at least one semester’s experience with a web-based learning management system, preferably Blackboard Learning System (formerly known as WebCT), prior to offering a class online.
Department Chairs must be aware of the technological needs for offering a distance course and should verify the faculty member’s experience before assigning any distance learning classes.

The LMS experience will be most productive if it includes using all LMS components that will be used in the online course.

The Distance Learning Advisory Committee has created a Faculty Technology Checklist. A prospective DL faculty member can use this as a self-checklist, but we recommend the faculty member make an appointment with a CIT (Center for Instructional Technology) staff member and review the DL course with CIT staff. The Distance Learning Advisory Committee also provides a course shell that Distance faculty can adapt to their needs. The course shell contains many of the necessary components for a DL course.
There is a Departmental Distance Learning Record for New Faculty Members form that includes technological as well as pedagogical readiness. Please verify that the faculty member is prepared to teach DL and then submit the form to Academic Affairs.

**Faculty must have taken the online pedagogy course prior to teaching online.**

From the CCRI DL Policy:

*Faculty teaching at a distance must develop familiarity with distance pedagogy prior to teaching their first course in this modality. Faculty interested in transitioning to distance teaching must complete the short course on online pedagogy developed by the DLAC prior to teaching their first distance course.*

This is a five-week fully online course that generally runs twice a year. Please contact the DL Coordinator for details. Faculty should complete all course requirements prior to being assigned an online section. Details can be found here: [http://facultywp.ccri.edu/mburke1/distancelearning/online-pedagogy-course/](http://facultywp.ccri.edu/mburke1/distancelearning/online-pedagogy-course/)

**Faculty make a two-semester commitment to an online course.**

From the CCRI DL Policy:

*Faculty agreeing to teach a distance course will commit to doing so for a minimum of two semesters. If a faculty member decides that this environment is not comfortable for him or her, the department chair will have the extra semester to find and train a replacement while allowing the program some continuity.*

**Please give consideration in assigning a DL course to the faculty member who developed the course.**

From the CCRI DL Policy:

*It is preferable for a department to allow a faculty member who has worked on developing a fully online course to teach that course for two or three semesters in order to gain experience, refine the course and, perhaps, make it part of the College’s regular offerings.*

Although department chairs contractually can assign anyone he or she thinks is appropriate to teach a course section, consideration should be given to the time commitment necessary to develop an online course when assigning courses.

**Please inform the Distance Learning Faculty Coordinator of any new DL faculty in your department.**

Faculty will be placed on a DL mailing list and will receive reminders throughout the semester of DL tasks. They will be given access to the DL Faculty Forum, which includes templates and checklists to help them set up their courses.
**Enrollment services**

From the CCRI DL Policy:

*Department chairs must notify Enrollment Services of class size and distance status of courses (web-based, hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous) when submitting information for the master schedule. Any mandatory on-campus meetings or special requirements for courses (software, hardware, etc.) should also be included.*

When you receive the master schedule from enrollment services, you will indicate a fully online course by putting DL in the campus column and WEB under Rm1. For a hybrid course, you will fill everything in as usual including the campus code in the campus column, but put HYB under Rm1. If you know the on-campus meeting dates for the course, you can include them in the empty columns to the right of the labeled columns. You can place any additional comments in the columns to the right as well.

**Offering new DL courses**

When determining whether to offer a course in the DL format, consider demand and student readiness, instructor readiness, and how well the content and course activities will map to learning in a distance format. Please take advantage of the support of the Distance Learning Faculty Coordinator, experienced distance faculty in your department, or the expertise of members of the Distance Learning Advisory Committee when determining what to offer and developing your new course so it will be a successful one.

**Students**

Once registered for a DL-format course (hybrid, online, TV), students receive an automated email message with the information that they have enrolled in an online, hybrid, or TV course and that there may be on-campus meetings.

Students are not always prepared for distance learning. The Distance Learning for Students website contains an extensive orientation, and there is a one-credit Introduction to Learning Online course. The DLAC and Distance Education Faculty Coordinator are working on other orientation modalities and forms of support. The distance learning policy requires that faculty open their courses one week prior to the semester beginning so that students can become accustomed to the DL course.

Many students in DL courses will not hesitate to contact the department chair if they perceive a problem in a course. You can prevent many of these problems by ensuring that faculty are fully prepared to teach in the online environment, by following DL Policy (such as small initial class size so faculty can work out kinks in their courses, and assigning faculty early so they can make their courses ready one week prior to semester start), and by offering your DL faculty encouragement, support, and by encouraging frequent and substantive communication with them.

Students might also contact the department chair about on-campus meetings/testing, technological, or other requirements before a faculty member has been assigned to teach the course. If the online course is taught by more than one faculty member, you can, as a department, write up on-campus and
technology requirements that will be consistent regardless of instructor so that you can answer questions before a faculty member is assigned.

**Support**

Distance Learning Faculty Coordinator  
Maggie Burke, mburke1@ccri.edu, 401.825.2058  
Distance Learning Advisory Committee  
[http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/dlcommittee/](http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/dlcommittee/)

Faculty Technology Mentor  
Kathleen Beauchene (Lincoln), kbeauchene@ccri.edu

**Links**

Distance Learning for Faculty Website  
[http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/index.html](http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/index.html)

Distance Learning for Department Chairs page  
[http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/chairs.html](http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/chairs.html)

Distance Learning Policy  

Overview of DL at CCRI  
[http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/overview.html](http://www.ccri.edu/distancefaculty/overview.html)