



Academic Senate for College of the Canyons STATEMENT

Rationale for Online Instructor Certification Requirements Standing Policy Winter & Spring 2021

On October 1, 2020 the Academic Senate adopted a Standing Policy on Online Instructor Certification Requirements for the winter and spring 2021 semesters. That policy was adopted toward the betterment of student learning and to ensure, among other things, regulatory and professional standards are upheld. Section 55208(b) of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations holds “Instructors of distance education shall be prepared to teach in a distance education delivery method consistent with local district policies and negotiated agreements.” Accreditation Standard 3.A.11 of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) states and requires, “The institution establishes, publishes, and adheres to written personnel policies and procedures.”

On May 7, 2020 the Academic Senate adopted Provisional Online Instruction Certification Standards. The adoption of this temporary measure was in response to the state of emergency declared by the Governor of the State of California as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. In response, College of the Canyons moved its instruction to a predominantly distance education/online format. At that time, colleges throughout the state were thrown into an environment of instructional crisis management.

In preparing for the continuation of a predominantly distance education/online instructional campus extending into the 2021 calendar year, the Academic Senate collaborated with the Office of Instruction and its Office of Online Education to consider the best possible online instructor certification policy for the winter and spring 2021 semesters. This collaboration contemplated best practices for the betterment of students, faculty and the College as a whole. Members of this collaborative group were privy to specific areas in need of improvement in anticipation of the 2021 calendar year. Campus officials received numerous reports of inconsistent instructional delivery for fall 2020 sections advertised as “synchronous” classes. There were also reports of inconsistencies between what was advertised in the schedule of classes and content found in faculty orientation letters.

Asynchronous instruction (100% ONLINE) requires more detailed pedagogical training than provided in the May 7, 2020 adopted provisional certification standards. This is reflected in the Academic Senate’s adopted Introduction to Online Instruction (IOI) 36 hour pedagogical course required to be a permanent 100% online certified instructor. Because there are no scheduled LIVE class meetings in asynchronous classes, the ability to uphold and meet the requirements found in a course outline of record requires more comprehensive training to ensure replication of face-to-face instruction delivered through traditional synchronous instruction.

The nuance of educational programs, disciplines and courses is well understood by the collective members of the Academic Senate. However, there is a difference between impossible and impractical. Given the provisional training that has been already been achieved, there is now time for those faculty to adequately prepare to either teach their traditional face-to-face classes via virtual synchronous platforms, or to gain full

permanent certification. The Academic Senate and the Office of Instruction and its Office of Online Education are committed to providing relevant training and resources for either circumstance.

It is with the foregoing information in mind that the Academic Senate adopted its Standing Policy on Online Instructor Certification Requirements for the winter and spring, 2021 semesters. That policy extended the provisional certifications of faculty into the winter and spring 2021 semesters. Doing so was meant to honor the time and dedication put forth by individual faculty that achieved provisional certification status. But, restricting such faculty from asynchronous instruction was intended to guarantee instructional quality for students and to ensure the College sensibly upholds regulatory and accreditation standards as well as our own local standards of academic professionalism.