Los Angeles Harbor College

Fall 2010 DISTANCE EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS
August 2011

Prepared by:
The Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Data in this report were from a survey given by California Community Colleges System Office to Los Angeles Harbor College’s distance education (DE) students. The survey was given to students who enrolled in and dropped a DE course in the fall 2010 term. Almost 700 students were contacted and 175 responded to the survey.

DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS

- A majority (74%) who responded were females.
- Forty percent were Hispanic.
- About 73% were from the age groups of 18-24 and 25-34 years of age.
- More than half (59%) have previously taken a DE course.
**Question 1:** How did you choose to take this distance education course?

![Bar chart showing choices for taking distance education courses. The largest bar indicates choosing the course myself, followed by guided by a counselor or advisor, and recommended by a friend or family member.]

**Question 2:** From how many courses did you withdraw in the Fall 2010 term?

![Bar chart showing courses withdrawn in the Fall 2010 term. The largest bar indicates withdrawing from all courses, followed by withdrawing from 2 DE courses, and withdrawing from 3 DE courses.]

**Question 3:** Going back to the last distance education course from which you withdrew, did you participate in any of the course activities (assignments, discussions, quizzes etc)?

Participation in last DE course withdrawn

**Question 4:** What type of distance education course did you withdraw from?
Question 5: *Please think about the reasons why you enrolled in the distance education course. Indicate how important each of the following factors were in explaining why you enrolled in the course.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important At All</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a disability and thought that it would be easier to attend classes via distance education.</td>
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<td>The course was offered only online or via some other form of distance education.</td>
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<td>An extra course online lets me graduate sooner.</td>
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<td>I thought distance education courses were self-paced and I could begin the course anytime during the term.</td>
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<td>Personal circumstances (family, health, etc.) made a distance education class more convenient.</td>
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<td>The same class on-campus was full.</td>
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<td>I had a good experience with a distance education course before.</td>
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<td>I was recommended by someone.</td>
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<td>I was curious, wanted to try something new.</td>
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<td>I thought it was easier than an on-campus courses.</td>
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<td>My work schedule is heavy and a distance education course is more convenient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I travel sometimes and could not attend an on-campus class regularly.</td>
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Question 6: From among the previous reasons which was the most important for choosing a distance education course.
Question 7: Please think about the reasons why you dropped this course. Comment on each factor below in explaining why you dropped this distance education course. Indicate if it was Very important or Somewhat important or Not important at all.

![Bar chart showing reasons for dropping distance education course]

- The course was not ADA compliant which made it difficult for me to participate.
- I discovered that I could take this course face to face.
- I was not interested in the subject matter.
- I didn’t know where to go for help.
- I do not like the distance education format.
- I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down my courses.
- I didn’t realize when I registered that it was a distance education course.
- I got behind and it was hard to catch up.
- I felt to alone, not part of a class.
- The course required to much reading and writing.
- I lacked basic computer skills.
- I experienced to many technical difficulties.
- I lacked access to a computer.
- I lacked motivation.
- I had financial problems.
- I had personal problems (family, health, job, childcare, etc.).
- I could not handle the combined study plus work responsibilities.
- The course was too difficult.
- Interaction with the instructor was lacking.
- Directions to get started in and manage this course were poor.
Question 8: Overall what do you feel was the main reason you were NOT able to successfully complete this distance education course?

The course was not ADA compliant which made it difficult for me to participate.
I discovered that I could take this course face to face.
I was not interested in the subject matter.
I didn’t know where to go for help.
I do not like the distance education format.
I signed up for too many courses and had to cut down my courses.
I didn’t realize when I registered that it was a distance education course.
I got behind and it was hard to catch up.
I felt to alone, not part of a class.
The course required too much reading and writing.
I lacked basic computer skills.
I experienced too many technical difficulties.
I lacked access to a computer.
I lacked motivation.
I had financial problems.
I had personal problems (family, health, job, childcare, etc.).
I could not handle the combined study plus work responsibilities.
The course was too difficult.
Interaction with the instructor was lacking.
Directions to get started in and manage this course were poor.
Question 9: *If your most significant reason was NOT listed in the previous question, please describe it in the space below.*

- Instructor's attitude toward my responses seemed to be petty and was looked down upon compared to other students. I felt this was because I was a former military and male, as that the other males in the class also struggled and had issues with her responses.

- It would have been better to understand the material in a classroom.

- Work schedule change.

- I have a MAC computer and the coursework was not easy to manage with my computer.

- Teacher was not clear on posting assignments and requests; too much homework even though it was a lab class.

- I didn’t need the class. It wasn’t part of my ed plan.

- Signed up for career advancement, and after signing up situation changed such that I could no longer pursue firefighting.

- Work load, business travel load and school load combined.

- My mother had a stroke which led me to withdraw from all my classes.

- Never heard from instructor, class never started.

- Did not need the unit, so I dropped.

- The course material seemed somewhat confusing and professor’s instructions not very clear.

- It was the wrong course.

- I did not have the software needed to complete class assignments.

- Again, I was added to the class halfway into the semester, and by then it was too late.

- I did not need the units originally I thought I did.

- I was unsure if I was completing assignments correctly. I felt I would do much better if I enrolled in an in-class environment.

- The course work the teacher was giving had nothing to do with my current class (The distance education course was supposed to be a lab to go with my current CIS class).
Question 9: If your most significant reason was NOT listed in the previous question, please describe it in the space below.

- I felt the course was very hard to understand and memorization of the taught material took longer to memorize.

- I had a death in the family. My instructor did not let me make up discussion question. Therefore I felt at a disadvantage, and felt I would reduce the class rather than earning less points for a situation I could not control.

- My ex-wife filed a restraining order against me leaving me without access to a computer from home, not to mention the stress and possibility of having my children unlawfully taken from me. It was terrible and I had to reprioritize and fight for my rights as a father as my wife had lost her mind and tried everything she could to destroy my will to live.

- I need the face to face class. I’m slow at reading and need extra assistance

Question 10: How likely are you to register for another online course?

Likelihood of registering for another online course

- Very likely 61%
- Somewhat likely 15%
- It’s possible 10%
- Not likely 10%
- Not a chance 4%
Question 11: What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for a distance education course?

- If you can learn more on teacher’s background prior to the class, do so.
- Get the book before class starts and email the teacher to see when the discussions are due.
- Find out beforehand if you need to meet face-to-face as well as online.
- Try to gather information about the professor and their availability to people returning back to college.
- These courses are just as much work and take more discipline.
- No interaction with other students.
- Make sure you are able to do it along with your work.
- Time management is very important.
- Excellent way to make the most out of your hectic schedule.
- If you can and is not too much for you, do it.
- Be prepared, instructors are not very helpful.
- If you do not have definite computer access "anytime, anywhere" do not take the course.
- It's just as hard maybe even harder than a regular class.
- Keep track of due dates.
- Pace yourself!
- Know where to go for help when the teacher does not respond to you and there are no directions or procedures to follow to get the necessary help.
- Make sure you have the time.
- Be sure that you have some sort of idea of the material.
- Take it if you have time.
Question 11: What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for a distance education course?

- If you know you can do it then go for it, but then think many times as you can before enrolling into a distance education especially for the people who are hands on type or want to have a real teacher that you can see every meeting period.

- Sign up early so you can get the books and other course outlines early and be ready on the first day because class goes really fast. I just so happen to get a very understanding teacher, and he was very good to work with.

- Try it!

- Make sure you can balance your work load and school.

- Be absolutely sure that you have the proper transportation.

- Go for it.

- Realize that they are a lot of work but great for those who are self motivated.

- Be cautious about lacking info.

- Find out who else you can speak to besides your instructor.

- Make sure you can handle your school work & working load at the same time.

- My advice would be that any student be self- motivated and extremely disciplined.

- Research the instructor. I’ve had great experiences in online courses I just did not think the teacher was being fair on grading. I have taken online courses in the past and am currently taking one, it just depends on how helpful the teacher is.

- Just make sure to not procrastinate and don't forget to look at the website for homework.

- Make sure you are self disciplined.

- Motivation, confidence, participation and dedication.

- Be prepared to participate in class discussions/forums as you would in an actual class at school, be ready to read and write as well, and just because it is an online class does not mean it will be easy.

- Just try it out. It may work for your schedule.

- Be very focused.
**Question 11:** *What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for a distance education course?*

- Great option.
- Assume it is the same amount of work that a regular class entails, maybe more because good instructors want to give online students as good an opportunity to learn and know the material as those who actually attend class on campus.
- Be dedicated.
- Stay on top of the assignments.
- Sign on every day.
- I took another class and I was very successful. I recommend, but first check who is the instructor.
- Just keep trying to do your best.
- They are a good choice.
- Make sure your ready for the course and don’t fall behind.
- Time management is very important, lots of reading.
- Take Accounting in a class room...online class was very difficult.
- Make sure your computer works.
- To feel very confident with the subject matter because you will be doing much of the work and teaching on your own.
- Make sure you know it's online before you sign up and get started on the work early--it adds up quick to an unmanageable pile.
- Keep up with the reading and work.
- Check out the professor ahead of time, if you can!
- Treat it just like a course where you are required to attend class. Follow the schedule given and you'll be fine!
- Make sure you have time devoted to the class.
- Very convenient.
- Make sure you set up a schedule or you can fall behind.
Question 11: What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for a distance education course?

- Just because it's an online class don't underestimate the amount of work that's required.
- Make sure you have access to a computer and wi-fi anywhere you go.
- It's just as hard as in class, but maybe a little bit more challenging.
- It’s good for certain situations.
- Plan ahead accordingly.
- To have a specific time to participate on different discussions in order to have your thoughts in order.
- Do not fall behind or underestimate the amount of time needed for these courses. They require more work than on campus classes.
- Keep up with the work.
- Very convenient for single working mothers.
- Online classes are very flexible.
- Great for students who have jobs.
- Ask previous students who took the course to see how well the course was managed.
- It is very convenient. I took another distance class and it was a great experience.
- Don't register if you're not serious of disciplined.
- Keep up with the reading and take the course very seriously.
- Just to keep up with assignments, make a routine.
- Be focused, prepared to read, and structure your schedule.
- To take course if they are self-motivated.
- Make sure your going to dedicate the time and don't slack off because it's a distance education course.
- It is no reason to slack off.
- Make sure you can follow along without a face to face teacher.
Question 11: What advice would you give to students who are considering registering for a distance education course?

- Make sure you have all software requirements before enrolling.
- Do it, it helps busy people graduate!
- To be aware of your learning abilities. ....Are you a better listener, Are you able to follow instructions and such...
- Speak with others who have taken or pass distance education courses.
- Don't overload on your education, it's best to do great in one class than poorly on all.
- Try online courses they are great for students that are parents.
- Make sure this is the course you want to take as an online course.
- Take an easy course.
- It’s more demanding than being in a classroom and you lose face to face communication which is extremely important.
- Be self-motivated.
- Ask opinion of other students that have taken the class.
- First, do a research about it, and also be very self motivated.
- At times it is very easy to lose focus in these types of classes. Use calendars, phones or anything you can to stay on top of everything.
- It’s a great option.
- You need self-motivation, a lot of it.
- Don't overload your studies especially when you can't afford it financially.
- Don't overload.
- Plan a schedule where you allow yourself to engage in study and work for the online class the sometime every week.
- Keep pace with the course assignments, talk to others who are involved with these types of courses.
- Make sure you like to work independently, I need instructor guidance.
Question 12: *What advice would you give to the college to improve distance education courses?*

- Give precise instructions on when work is due.
- Understand that professors give an unapproachable tone through online courses. Although there is a clause for the students to watch for misinterpretation, there are professors who send negative tone in emails...not nice or polite.
- Offer more distance education classes.
- Simplify the program, make tests and quizzes multiple choice, have syllabus available when choosing classes.
- Offer the same courses face to face/on campus.
- It depends on the school.
- Teachers need to be more available.
- Keep up the great work!
- Give students a place to go to or someone to talk to if they don't understand what is needed from them to take the course.
- Give us a laptop.
- Make sure to have prerequisites.
- Make it less difficult.
- Provide a quick course for first-timers.
- Make sure you have the professor's contact info.
- State where classes are being held and if students will have to transfer to different campuses.
- Don't overload us with work and quizzes each week.
- Make more online lectures and videos like Santa Monica College does.
- Please give clear instructions.
- Find out what options you have when an emergency occurs.
- Please do not continue to reduce the number of D.L. courses.
Question 12: What advice would you give to the college to improve distance education courses?

- Teachers need to be more descriptive and helpful on the course. When taking an online course it becomes more difficult to understand something as if you were in a classroom, and I think it’s the professor’s responsibility to explain to the students exactly what they expect. My experience was that the teacher was vague and when it came to grading was very harsh, and I was not the only one, many students emailed each other disagreeing with how the teacher was going about the course. I just don’t think that a teacher with actual college courses at a school will give the same attention to a distance education course but somehow expects the same results.

- To have instructors make a video of them doing the work and explain, then answer by video the student’s questions on some questions to help others who may be stuck on that question too.

- More available classes since on campus classes fill up quick.

- Instructors should give more than 2 opportunities to repeat quizzes.

- Assignment/test deadlines should have a 2 week time-frame instead of one.

- Could the professor be more responsive to questions? Plus, I didn't get my financial aid in time to get a book for one of the courses.

- Make directions clearer and as detailed as possible.

- Have a class chat conference designated with instructor for question.

- Make them always available.

- Minimize the hours needed for writing (which I love to do!), and focus on a way to get the information to the online student, while testing their understanding with a format similar to this survey.

- Less busy work.

- These courses are mostly study by your own, but if you need extra attention do not take those classes.

- Stay on task and do not procrastinate.

- Offer more courses and offer them year round.

- More classes.
**Question 12:** What advice would you give to the college to improve distance education courses?

- Probably to make sure the professors test the students on what they provide them in the notes and readings; nothing beyond that.
- Make it more obvious, easier to access course info, assignments.
- Read through the course materials - they should be legible and clear to understandable.
- Offer more classes.
- Maybe give more time to turn in work by certain deadlines?
- Allow students to come by the campus if they need help.
- Teachers should stream themselves live while teaching the lesson in class and let online students be able to replay and watch as if they were in class.
- Adopt an interactive system to help students and instructors communicate more closely.
- A strict deadline date and work conflict caused me to withdraw from a class. If there could be penalties on a grade for late assignments it would be helpful for working students. Instead, no credit is given for missed deadlines on large projects.
- Professors Hoffman and Ho are great instructors.
- Lower book prices.
- I feel that because the class was online the teacher was slacking.
- Ask teacher to let you know if class is cancelled.
- Need more distance education courses for me to get a degree.
- Be ahead of the class!
- Make the online course understandable in lay man’s terms.
- Offer more night classes.
- Have a bit more interaction with students especially if you notice some falling too behind.
- Professor’s instructions to be clearer, and to email students that class is going to start.
Question 12: What advice would you give to the college to improve distance education courses?

- Have the course directions giving more clearly. Don’t over load us.
- It’s all good.
- Explain to the students how much reading is involved and, recommend to the student to have the abilities to follow instructions and understand them.
- Make sure that everything is absolutely understandable and correspond appropriately to student communication.
- Offer more online classes.
- I think that the distance education courses are very great.
- Have better resources for the classes if students cannot find the help we need for the material taught to us.
- Require webcams where students can have a face to face conversation with the teacher.
- Offer more classes.
- More teacher interaction and instruction is needed for some courses.
- Keep up with the homework. Be ahead at all times.
- I think these classes are very clear.
- They need to open more classes for people that work.
- This class that I took was a writing class but the assignments were all multiple choice. I did not see how that format was going to help me write better in Business.
- Approve financial aid to people like me who really need it!
- Offer the every semester.
- Create an "office hour forum" for each teacher so that students can ask live questions via chat rooms etc.
- Ask for lots of help, or just take the class face to face.