

# Distance Education Faculty Handbook

2023 – 2024



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## I. Distance Education Mission

To provide a high-quality virtual learning environment in support of faculty and students who wish to teach and learn in a range of modalities from fully face-to-face to fully online.

## II. General Information

- [Lee College Accessibility Services](#)
- [Lee College Blackboard Learn](#)
- [Lee College Website](#)
- [Lee College Library](#)
- [Lee College Counseling & Advising Center](#)
- [Lee College Distance Education](#)
- [Lee College Title IX Information](#)

From the Lee College website, you can access the Blackboard Learn site by clicking on either the Student Logins link or the Logins link. From there, you can click on the Blackboard Learn link.

Additionally, you can directly access the [Lee College Blackboard Learn](https://elearn.lee.edu) site at this URL: <https://elearn.lee.edu>

### **Contact Information:**

Lee College Helpdesk.....	281-425-6952
Lee College Testing Center.....	281-425-6430
Lee College Counseling and Advising Center.....	281-425-6384
Cassandra Bell, Distance Education Coordinator.....	281-425-6366
Dr. Laura Lane-Worley, EEC Co-Director.....	832-556-5782
Paula Lee, Blackboard Sys Admin.....	281-425-6285
Alex Nguyen, Instructional Designer.....	832-556-4042
Nicole Tunmire, Instructional Designer.....	281 425-6370
Will Mayer, Online Education Librarian.....	832-556-4017

## III. Distance Education Committee

The Distance Education Committee provides for faculty input and oversight of online and hybrid instruction. The committee is designed to be broadly representative of the entire campus.

The membership includes the following:

- 1) Distance Education Coordinator (Chair)

- 2) One faculty representative from each academic division
- 3) One faculty representative from each technical division
- 4) Blackboard System Administrator
- 5) One Co-Director of the Empirical Educator Center
- 6) Instructional Designer(s)
- 7) Representative of Student Services
- 8) Representative Disability Services
- 9) Representative of Continuing Education
- 10) Chief Technology Officer (ex officio)
- 11) Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (ex officio)
- 12) Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (ex officio)
- 13) Student Representatives (ex officio)

Committee Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Review and recommend learning standards for online and hybrid courses
- 2) Review and evaluate technology needs of faculty and the IT Department
- 3) Review and recommend policies to improve student success
- 4) Provide pedagogical and technical training for faculty and staff
- 5) Provide tools for division chairs to evaluate OL faculty and OL courses
- 6) Assess and evaluate the quality of the distance learning program

The Distance Education Committee meets three times in the fall semester and three times in the spring semester as long as there are agenda items to review. The Distance Education Coordinator will chair the committee. A majority of voting members will constitute a quorum. Meeting minutes and all other information will be posted on the employee portal.

Policies and procedures that are simply operational and do not substantially impact instruction or the budget can be approved at the Distance Education Committee level. Policies and procedures that substantially impact instruction but do not impact the budget will require the approval of the DE Committee and the Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee. Policies and procedures that substantially impact the budget must be approved by the President's Cabinet.

#### **IV. Community of Online Learning and Teaching**

The Community of Online Learning and Teaching is made up of the faculty who have completed Quality Matters Teaching Online Certification course. Faculty who complete the Quality Matters Teaching Online

Certification course serve as resources for faculty in the process of redesigning their courses and/or faculty in the process of completing the Quality Matters Teaching Online Certification course.

## **V. Course Approval Process**

If a faculty member decides to develop a new online/hybrid/hy-flex/streaming course, he/she will follow the online/hybrid/hy-flex, streaming course approval process:

- 1.) Complete the Online-Hybrid-Hy-Flex-Streaming Course Proposal Form
- 2.) Division Approval
- 3.) Submit the Course Proposal Form to the Distance Education Coordinator for submission to the Distance Education Committee
- 4.) Present the proposal to the Distance Education Committee (virtually or in person)
- 5.) The Distance Education Coordinator will notify the faculty member, division chair, and the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs of the outcome of the proposal.
- 6.) Division Chair requests generation (if the course is new) or reset (if the course was taught as face-to-face) of the type of course symbol for the course (e.g., B, F, L, or S)

Once a course has been approved, a faculty member teaching the course using the course plan/template does not need to submit their course back through the process unless they make significant changes to the course such as changing textbooks, changing major modalities of interaction, redesigning the entire course, etc.

## **VI. Continuous Improvement Online Course Observation and Evaluation**

The continuous improvement online course observation process is faculty driven and involves the faculty member's determination of course modality to be observed as well as faculty determination of one of the seven learning principles based on the book by Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, (2010). The primary emphasis of the online course observation is course delivery with the secondary focus on course design. Faculty will complete a preliminary interview form for the observation in which they identify the learning principle and answer a set of questions related to course delivery and design.

Once the faculty member determines they wish to have an online course observed and which principle observers should look for in the course, a team of two, either two faculty members or a faculty member and an instructional designer or administrator, will observe the course. Once the observation is complete, feedback will be compiled, and a member of

the Empirical Educator Center's team will review the feedback with the faculty member and will provide the compiled feedback to the faculty member.

A faculty member can request a more thorough course design evaluation through the Empirical Educator Center. A course design evaluation will involve at least one faculty member/instructional designer trained and certified to conduct course peer reviews by Quality Matters as well as a second faculty member. If at all possible, one of the review team members will be a subject matter expert (SME) in the teaching field or in a field closely related to the teaching field. In some instances, it may not be possible to have a SME as the subject matter may only be taught by one faculty member on campus. In this case, a faculty member in a field related to the subject matter may be asked to be the second reviewer.

In addition to the option of the faculty member requesting a course design evaluation, the Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, and/or a Division Chair may recommend a course design evaluation be conducted. Additionally, gateway courses such as Math and English, courses primarily using courseware for instruction, courses with a high number of Ds, Fs, & Ws, and/or courses with negative student evaluations over a period of time, may be identified for review. Similar to the course observation process, a course design evaluation will involve compiling reviewers' comments and feedback and having a member of the Empirical Educator Center's team meet with the faculty member. The intent of a more thorough course review is to assist faculty with improving their distance education courses.

## **VII. Distance Education Mission and Goals:**

### **Mission**

Distance Education at Lee College strives to deliver innovative and quality education that provides the ideal student experience through multiple class formats including Face-To-Face, Hybrid, Hy-Flex, Online, and Streaming.

### **Goals:**

The goal of Distance Education is to create a high-quality learning environment, and to provide students the opportunity to earn college credit through technology-based methods of instruction and learning. As an instructor in online courses, your role is to provide these students with the same high-quality instruction they would receive in the physical classroom.

Although the role of distance education faculty is often perceived as passive because students do not directly interact with the instructor in a face-to-face environment, it is



actually the proactive, energetic, engaging, and empathetic instructor who is often critical to the success of the student in the course. The most important qualification an instructor brings to an online course is the knowledge of the course content and the ability to communicate this knowledge to the students in an interactive and engaging manner. However, a distance education instructor should also have a number of the following personal characteristics to enhance the teaching role:

- A positive attitude towards online courses
- An understanding of the special needs of adult learners
- A good working knowledge of the learning management system
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Good telephone communication
- A working knowledge of email
- Adaptability and versatility
- Excellent organizational skills
- An ability to use interactive technologies
- A commitment to timeliness in responding to students
- An interest in trying new forms of communication with students
- An understanding of accessibility requirements
- Organizational skills allowing for easy course navigation

Although the instructor's specific duties in teaching online and hybrid courses will be somewhat different from those in the classroom, the ultimate goal is to provide quality education to our students. Just as our students must have the self-discipline for home study, our instructors must have the flexibility in their teaching to serve these students well. This handbook is designed to help you with the goals and expectations of distance education at Lee College and to make your experience as a distance education instructor a positive one for both you and your students.

## **VIII. Distance Education Standards**

### **Faculty Responsibilities**

1. Generate Blackboard Course Shell in PeopleSoft.
2. Faculty must use the current approved syllabus template as indicated by the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. Beginning in the spring 2022, all course syllabi will be generated using the electronic syllabus.
3. All class syllabi, regardless of teaching modality, must be posted in MYLC campus and Blackboard prior to the first day of class, preferably the Friday before the semester begins. Students have access to Blackboard beginning no later than 12:00 a.m. (midnight) on the first day of class.
4. Faculty must post a syllabus/outline specifically for their online course in which the faculty member addresses online assignments, quizzes, tests, discussion boards, journals, wikis, blogs

and/or any other type of assessment requirements with due dates, information about adaptive release (if used), and any other pertinent information to help an online student navigate the course.

5. Faculty members and division chairs will ensure the curriculum offered in online courses is consistent and as rigorous as the curriculum offered in face-to-face courses.
6. Course materials posted should be common file types and meet accessibility standards. The Blackboard ALLY program housed inside each faculty members' course checks uploaded materials for accessibility and provides instructors with feedback and instructions for ensuring accessible materials. The program also provides alternative formats of materials for students.
7. Student academic support services (library, counseling, testing center, help desk, Lee College writing center, MYLC Campus, and academic honesty policy) shall be clearly identified in the Online or Hybrid course.
8. Faculty should ensure they submit their textbook requirements to their division secretaries prior to the due date each semester. Division secretaries submit the textbook requirements to the Instructional Materials Manager.
9. Course orientation is the responsibility of the faculty. Faculty will require students to participate in an orientation.
10. In order to clarify expectations to students, all faculty offering distance education courses must create succinct yet substantive summaries of meeting times or delivery methods for publication in the Lee College class schedules for each semester. Further, if a faculty requires students to come to campus for testing or other activities, the faculty member must clearly indicate this information in the notes of the class published in the Lee College class schedules each semester.
11. As a best practice recommendation, grading and feedback to students, under typical circumstances, will occur within 2 weeks of the student's submission.
12. Faculty members, under typical circumstances, will establish contact with students at the beginning of the semester and maintain regular communication throughout the term. Communication will employ any suitable means including discussion boards, private e-mail, course messages in Blackboard, individualized chat sessions (including online "office hours"), telephone, face-to-face communication, math lab, writing lab, etc.
13. Faculty members, under typical circumstances, will respond to student's voice mail, Blackboard course message, or email within 2 working days.
14. Faculty members will promote instructor-student and student-student interaction.
15. Faculty members will be available to interact with students.
16. Faculty will maintain virtual office hours consistent with college policy.
17. Deadlines and expected activities will be clearly stated at the beginning of the term.

18. Faculty members will monitor student's participation and progress and follow the online attendance policy posted in the college catalog for withdrawal as used for on-campus classes.
19. All distance education faculty members will use the college's approved Learning Management System, Blackboard Learn. Supplemental learning management systems and outside learning resources will be linked inside the faculty member's course.
20. All electronic and information resources developed, procured or changed by an institution of higher education shall comply with the accessibility standards for institutions of higher education Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments in Sections 504 and 508.
21. It is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure all copyright provisions are met and permissions have been obtained as appropriate.
22. Regardless of whether the course is online, hybrid, or face-to-face, all faculty must maintain an up-to-date gradebook for all courses.
23. Faculty will work to ensure online/hybrid courses meet the best practices as outlined in section **XIII. Best Practices** of this handbook.

#### **Administrative Responsibilities of Faculty**

1. Instructors will meet with their division chairs and the distance education coordinator prior to the development of an online or hybrid course.
2. Instructors will complete the online/hybrid course approval process before the design of the course in Blackboard.
3. All online courses will undergo student evaluation consistent with the evaluation methods utilized in face-to-face courses.
4. Distance education faculty will be assisted through training opportunities to develop online learning and assessment materials, and provided with ongoing professional development activities.
5. Adjunct faculty and full-time faculty will meet the same requirements to teach online courses as they do in face-to-face courses.
6. All faculty teaching Distance Education courses, including online, 100% online, Hy-Flex, My-Flex, hybrid and Lee Stream courses, must have documentation, on file in HR, of an online training certification for online instruction, or an equivalent accepted by the Distance Education Committee.

#### **Other Administrative Responsibilities**

1. Technical support for distance education courses and related support services will be provided through Lee College's structured services offered through the Office of Information Technology.

2. Support for Financial Aid, Library Resources, Counseling, Special Student Services, Career Services are offered through Lee College's website.
3. Students will retain the same rights to privacy in online classes as they would in a traditional classroom environment. Confidential information (including grades, private contact information, or personal information directly attributed to a student) should be transmitted only through secure interaction. Online discussion boards, open chat rooms, or group e-mails will not be used as a forum to post grades.
4. Distance Education courses offered through the Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas (DigiTex) must be approved following the college's normal approval process of faculty teaching credentials.

## **IX. Course Definitions, Hardware, and the Learning Management System**

Beginning in fall 2020, all faculty must be certified to teach online regardless of course modality. This certification must have been attained no later than January 2017 and faculty are required to obtain continued professional development related to best practices in teaching and learning in hybrid, online, or streaming courses every three years. Faculty may either complete the Lee College Teaching Online Certification course or a nationally recognized teaching online certification course. Faculty who have obtained a nationally recognized teaching online certification such as Quality Matters Teaching Online Certification or the Online Learning Consortium's Teaching Online Certification should submit this paperwork to [Distanced@lee.edu](mailto:Distanced@lee.edu) with a copy to Human Resources for your personnel file.

### **Face-to-Face (F)**

These courses are traditional synchronous, on campus, that provide face-to-face instruction in a traditional classroom on campus. However, courses may be enriched by the addition of an online component. This online component is hosted on Blackboard. Face-to-face courses must include the course syllabus and grades in Blackboard and may contain as little as 0% to as much as 100% of out-of-class activities such as homework problems, group work, assignments, or research in Blackboard. Face-to-face courses must have all scheduled instructional minutes in a physical classroom. All classes include the maintenance of a gradebook and the posting of the course syllabus in Blackboard Learn so students can access their grades/syllabus at any time during the semester.

### **Hybrid (H)**

Hybrid or blended courses are a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for a majority (more than 50%, but less than 85%) of the instructional time. The number of instructional minutes delivered face-to-face is no more than 50% of the total instructional minutes for the face-to-face course.

Typically, hybrid courses combine online and classroom components. The course syllabus will contain a section delineating the integration between face-to-face and online instruction. Additionally, it will discuss how the online environment connects and supports the classroom activities. Students must have Internet access, understand and be able to use email and the web, create and save documents in specific file formats and upload files as an attachment.

### **Hy-Flex (J)**

A Hy-Flex course is delivered in-person and via video-conferencing at the same time by the same Faculty member. Students can choose to attend via the video-conferencing tool or can come to campus and attend in person. Students can make this choice each class meeting.

### **Online (V)**

Online courses are asynchronous. Students and instructors are NOT in the same physical setting more than 85% of the instructional time. Some courses may require face-to-face sessions totaling no more than 15% of the instructional time. This could include orientations, labs, proctored tests, field trips and/or other course requirements. Orientations may occur before the course's start date. Face-to-face requirements will be listed in the course syllabus. Faculty must have Internet access, understand and be able to use email and the web, create and save documents in specific file formats, and upload files as an attachment.

### **100% Online Course (W)**

A course in which all of the tests, quizzes, and learning activities occur online. A course offered 100% online, meaning that there are no face-to-face sessions, is typically offered as asynchronous. However, faculty can choose to offer voluntary synchronous sessions and should schedule weekly office hours.

### **Lee Stream (S)**

In this course modality, the course is delivered 100% online with designated synchronous meeting times in which the students and the instructor meet for class. All course content is delivered online with synchronous course meetings. A microphone, webcam, and internet are required. As with an online course, weekly office hours should be offered in addition to the synchronous course meetings.

***As course schedule symbols can mean multiple designations, faculty should provide clear notes in the course description related to the course modality and student expectations.***

Two charts outlining each of the above course delivery modalities is found on the following pages:

***Figure 1. Understanding the Difference Between Face-to-face, Hybrid, & Hy-Flex***

Teaching Online Certification & Blackboard Training	Delivery Method for Courses	Class Schedule Symbol	0% instruction Outside of Class	50% - 84% of Instruction Outside of class	Technical/Applied courses where majority of instruction is face-to-face with some online work.
Required beginning Fall 2020	Face-to-Face	F	Course content <b>Can Be</b> in Blackboard. Face-to-face courses must have all scheduled instructional minutes in a physical classroom. Face-to-face courses must include the course syllabus and grades in Blackboard and may contain as little as 0% to as much as 100% of out-of-class activities such as homework problems, group work, assignments, or research in Blackboard.		
Required	Hybrid	H		All content <b>MUST</b> be in Blackboard. 51% - 84% instruction in Blackboard; The number of instructional minutes delivered face-to-face is no more than 50% of the total instructional minutes for the face-to-face course.	

**Figure 2: Understanding the difference between Online, 100% Online, and Lee Stream**

Teaching Online Certification & Blackboard Training	Delivery Method for Courses	Class Schedule Symbol	85% - 99% Instruction is Outside of Class	100% of Instruction is Online	Class meets Synchronously for Instruction
Required	Hy-Flex	J			All content <b>MUST</b> be in Blackboard. Students have the option of meeting face-to-face with the instructor or synchronously via a virtual conferencing platform.
Required	Online	V	All content <b>MUST</b> be in Blackboard. 85% - 99% Instruction in Blackboard; e.g. Classes will meet face-to-face no more than 15% of the time & may include orientations, labs, proctored tests, field trips, presentations, and/or other course requirements.		
Required	100% Online	W		All content, including tests, quizzes, learning materials, and learning activities are contained in the online class.	
Required	Lee Stream	S			Students and the Instructor meet synchronously on a conferencing platform at designated times. All content, including tests, quizzes, learning materials, and learning activities are contained in the online course with synchronous class meeting times.

Classes may be offered in a variety of lengths throughout the semester. During the long semester, classes may be offered in 16-week, 13-week, and 8-week sessions. During the summer, classes may be offered in 3 week, 5-week, 8-week, or 10-week sessions. Courses are offered online through Blackboard, Lee College's Learning Management System ([LMS](#)).

### **Hardware/Software requirements**

Browser:

PC Users: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer\* (Internet Explorer is no longer supported in Blackboard).

MAC Users: Safari, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome

Operating System:

PC Users: -, Windows 7, 8 or 10-

MAC Users: OSX 10.6 or higher

Pop-up blockers need to be set to allow pop-ups from the [LMS](#) site (<https://elearn.lee.edu/>).

Cookies should be set to "Allow" from elearn.lee.edu.

Additional information can be found at the Blackboard help page:

### **Blackboard Learn Help Homepage**

[Blackboard Learn Help Homepage](#)

[Blackboard Learn Help Browser Support](#)

### **Learning Management System (LMS)**

All faculty members must use the college's approved Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard Learn9.1. Any use of alternative learning management systems or publisher provided sites must be linked in Blackboard. Examples of these could be Pearson MyLab, Cengage Mind-Link, My Math Lab, McGraw-Hill Connect, etc.

## **X. Online Attendance Policies**

In a distance education context, documenting that a student has logged into an online class is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. A school must demonstrate that a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically related activity, such as by contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question... – *FSA Handbook 2017-18, Volume 5, p. 61.*



In order to comply with this federal requirement, Lee College Distance Education offers the following process for documenting attendance when students are enrolled in distance education courses:

Documentation that a student has logged into an online course is not sufficient to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. To show academic attendance, the student must complete some type of “academically related” activity in the course. Academically related activity is demonstrated by participating in an online discussion forum (with the exception of initial introduction Discussion Board posts) related to the content in the course or initiating contact with the instructor to ask a question about content in the course (see below for additional examples). This participation must occur no later than the college’s official published census date.

If the instructor determines a student has not logged in and participated in an academically related activity as described above, prior to the census date, the student has not attended the class. Therefore, the instructor should leave the student’s name unchecked on the census roster and that student will be administratively dropped by Admissions and Records (no form completion required).

Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:

- physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
- submitting an academic assignment;
- taking an exam, an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction;
- attending a study group that is assigned by the school;
- participating in an online discussion about academic matters or
- initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do **NOT** include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engages, such as:

- logging into an online class without active participation,
- participating in academic counseling or advisement, or
- Initial introduction Discussion Board posts.

## **XI. Online Test Proctoring**

Lee College currently provides faculty with two choices related to proctoring tests online. Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor, which works on all computers and laptops except Chrome Books and Honorlock, which works on all computers and laptops except iPads. These two systems can be employed simultaneously should an instructor find they have students who only have a Chrome Book or an I-Pad. For

more information about online test proctoring, contact Dr. Laura Lane-Worley, 832-556-5782, [llaneworley@lee.edu](mailto:llaneworley@lee.edu) or Paula Lee, 281-6285, [plee@lee.edu](mailto:plee@lee.edu).

## **XII. Academic Support Referral (ASR) – Early Alert**

### **What is an ASR?**

- Academic Early Alert service provided through the Advising/Counseling Center
- Link located in MyLC Campus class rosters
- Distributed to student’s advisor
- Goal is resolution/student contact within 2 business days

### **When to submit an ASR**

- Attendance Issues
- Excessive Tardies
- Failing Grades
- Financial Concerns
- Marked Change in Affect
- Mental Health Concern
- Missing Assignments
- Technology Issues

### **Steps to take prior to submitting the ASR**

- Attempt to contact student
  - Blackboard
  - Email
  - Phone
  - Text
  - In Person

### **Lessons Learned**

- Be as detailed as possible when making the ASR
- Best results when instructor talks to student first
- Early submission allows for intervention and impact
- Best for isolated incidents, not classroom-wide intervention

Spring 2015 | Thirteen Week | Lee College | Credit

▼ **SPCH 1315 - F061 (7597)** change class

Principles of Public Speaking (Lecture)

Days and Times	Room	Instructor	Dates
Tu 6:00PM-9:40PM	ATC 348	Sarah Tidwell	01/30/2015 - 05/07/2015

\*Enrollment Status Enrolled ▼

Enrollment Capacity 25      Enrolled 19

Default display option:  Link to Photos     Include photos in list

Students									
	ASR	Photo	ID	Name	Add Dt	Drop Dt	Status	Reason	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">asr</a>		██████████	██████████	01/12/2015		E	ENRL
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">asr</a>		██████████	██████████	01/28/2015		E	ENRL
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">asr</a>		██████████	██████████	01/14/2015		E	ENRL



### ASR Questions or Concerns?

Sarah Tidwell, M.A., Director of Advising and Counseling  
[stidwell@lee.edu](mailto:stidwell@lee.edu)

## XIII: Technology Support for Students

### A. Blackboard Helpline

This hotline is available to assist students with logging into Blackboard, finding their syllabus, locating their assignments, and finding resources that teach them more about how to use Blackboard.

#### Helpline Services

- Provide students with their username and default password
- Help students reset their password
- Help students log in to Blackboard
- Help students find the syllabus, course content, assignments, and grades
- Direct students to resources for learning more about Blackboard

281-425-6364

Helpline Hours

- Mon.-Thu.: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. & 6-9 p.m.

## **B. Blackboard, Office 365, and Other Tools Tutorials**

[Lee College Make Your Life Easier Monday](#) Student page provides a number of video and handout tutorials for students on Blackboard, Office 365 and other tools.

## **C. Inside Blackboard: Institutional Page**

When you log into Blackboard, the menu on the left side of the page provides you with a number of options. The first menu item is the institution page which provides you with a lot of helpful information including information on how to access and use the premium version of Grammarly.

### **Profile Page**

Listed directly beneath the Institution Page menu item is your name. This is your profile page. On this page you can set up your notification settings related to the activity stream notifications, email notifications, and push notifications.

### **Activity Stream**

Beneath the Profile menu item is an item called “Activity Stream”. The Activity Stream page provides you with notifications related to assignments due, assignments graded, and grades submitted.

### **Courses**

The courses menu item will take you to the course page where all of the courses in which you are enrolled are listed. You can choose the view for your courses as either a list or tiles with random pictures. The courses page is where you will go to access all of your courses.

### **Organizations**

This menu item is a place where, if you belong to any student clubs or organizations and they have requested a Blackboard space, the organization can be found here.

### **Calendar**

The calendar menu item takes you to a calendar page which can be viewed by the day or the month. If your instructors have posted assignments, discussions, journals, blogs, or wikis with due dates in their courses, you will see those items in the calendar. The items have a different colored line around them based on the class for which they are due.

### **Messages**

The messages menu item lets you review any course messages you receive without having to log into each specific course in which you are enrolled.

## **Grades**

The grades menu item will take you to your grades page listed by course.

## **Assist**

The assist page will allow you to upload content and have it transformed into various accessible types of content.

## **XIV. Best Practices**

### **Principle 1: Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact**

Instructors should provide clear guidelines for interaction with students in their course syllabus. Instructors should establish policies describing the types of communication that should take place over different channels.

Some examples for the “**Interaction Plan**” are:

- "Do not send technical support questions to the instructor. Contact the Lee College helpdesk at: 281-425-6952."
- "The public discussion forum is to be used for all communications except grade-related questions."
- Set clear standards for instructors' timelines for responding to messages. Examples: "I will make every effort to respond to e-mail within 24 hours of receiving it" or "I will respond to e-mails on Tuesdays and Fridays between three and five o'clock."

### **Principle 2: Good Practice Encourages Cooperation among Students**

Well-designed discussion assignments facilitate meaningful cooperation among students.

To encourage meaningful participation in asynchronous online discussions:

- Learners should be required to participate (and their grade should depend on participation).
- A clear and detailed discussion prompt should be provided.
- Discussion groups should remain small.
- Discussions should be focused on a task.
- Tasks should always result in a product.
- Learners should receive feedback on their discussions.
- Evaluation should be based on the quality of postings (and not the length or number).
- Instructors should post expectations/rubrics for discussions.

### **Principle 3: Good Practice Encourages Active Learning**

Students should present course projects.

Projects are often an integral part of face -to-face courses. Students learn valuable skills from presenting their projects and are often motivated to perform at a higher level. Students also learn a great deal from seeing and discussing their peers' work. While formal synchronous presentations may not be practical online, instructors can still provide synchronous opportunities for projects to be shared and discussed asynchronously.

**Principle 4: Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback**

Instructors need to provide feedback and describe a feedback plan in their course syllabus that states when the instructor will give feedback to the students for each type of assignment/test and what type of feedback can be expected.

There are two kinds of feedback that online instructors need to provide:

1. "Information feedback" and
2. "Acknowledgement feedback."

Information feedback provides information or evaluation, such as an answer to a question, or an assignment grade and constructive critique/comments.

Acknowledgement feedback confirms some event has occurred. For example, the instructor may send an email acknowledging he or she has received a question or assignment and will respond soon.

**Principle 5: Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task**

Online courses need deadlines.

Regularly distributed deadlines encourage students to spend time on tasks and help students with busy schedules avoid procrastination. E.g., Deadline for a discussion forum for "original post" and a deadline for "reply posts". Distributed deadlines also provide a context for regular contact with the instructor and peers.

**Principle 6: Good Practice Communicates High Expectations**

Challenging tasks, sample cases, and praise for quality work communicate high expectations.

Communicating high expectations for student performance is essential. There are various ways for instructors to communicate high expectations. Here are some examples:

- Give challenging assignments.
- Provide examples or models for students to follow, along with comments explaining why the examples are good or bad.

- Create rubrics with criteria for assignments/discussions and detailed explanations of how students can meet the expectations in each criteria.
- Do you want your students to log on daily? Do they need to submit assignments in a certain place, a certain format and a certain time? Do you have late submission policies? A course introduction either through a “start here/read first/Begin here” folder or a face-to-face or Blackboard Collaborate online course orientation would be a great way to communicate some key expectations in the course?
- Finally, publicly praising exemplary work communicates high expectations. Instructors do this by calling attention to insightful or well-presented student postings or answers.

**Principle 7: Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning**

Allowing students to choose project topics incorporates diverse views into online courses.

As instructors give students a voice in selecting their own topics for course projects, they encourage students to express their own diverse points of view. Instructors can provide guidelines to help students select topics relevant to the course while still allowing students to share their unique perspectives. While there will undoubtedly be some text-based content in an online course but there are creative ways to encourage different ways of learning. E.g., Instead of assigning a ten-page paper, have students create a video where they demonstrate what they’ve learned.

**Principle 8: Good Practice Involves Meeting the requirements of Title II & III of ADA**

Meeting accessibility standards under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act, and WCAG 2.0 A & AA standards must be considered in the development of online courses including documents, photos, video clips, links, and any other materials. For additional information refer to the Universal Design for Accessibility content folder in the Faculty Resources course or contact the Distance Education Coordinator, MS. Cassandra Bell at [distanceed@lee.edu](mailto:distanceed@lee.edu) or 281-425-6366.

\*\*Another source for reference is [Building from Content to Community: \[Re\] Thinking the Transition to Online Teaching and Learning](#) – a CTE White Paper, Britt Watwood, Jeffrey Nugent and William “Bud” Deihl. This paper presents very good information and examples/scenarios and tools faculty can use to build a course and interact with students. It is worth the read.

## **XV. What to do Before, During, and After the Course**

**Before the semester begins.....**

- The course must be fully developed in the college’s LMS and have all due dates and meeting times set before the semester begins.

- Textbook requests must be on file with the division chair and submitted to the book store, using the same procedures as on-campus courses.
- The documents and information within the course must be common file types that are ADA accessible.
- The syllabus and any first day handouts must be posted in Blackboard before the first day of class, and submitted to the division chair
- The faculty member and division chair must ensure the curriculum and course content is consistent with the curriculum in face-to-face courses.
- For faculty who use face-to-face orientation meetings, set a date, time, and reserve a classroom for the orientation with the division secretary.

**During the semester.....**

- The faculty members must have an orientation within the first week of the course for all online learners to attend. The orientation may be online or face-to-face.
- Once the official class rolls are due, any student who has not been active in the course, and has not contacted the instructor, may be dropped.
- All course-related communication must go through Lee College's LMS
- Establish contact with students at the beginning of the semester and maintain regular communication throughout the term. Communication will employ all suitable means including discussion boards, e-mail, individualized chat sessions, (including online "office hours"), telephone, face-to-face communication, etc.
- Respond to student's voice mail and e-mail messages within 2 working days, excluding weekends and Lee College-recognized holidays.
- Once the grade rosters open at the end of the semester, faculty must enter the grades before noon Friday of the final week.

**After the semester.....**

Once a semester has ended, a best practice is to create an archive (backup) of your course(s). It is also recommended you download a copy of your grade center to have as an archive. Courses are maintained on the server for 5 terms before they are archived off. These courses are only available



to faculty once the semester has ended. If a course needs to be extended due to Incompletes, then the faculty member needs to contact the LMS System Administrator for directions.

## **XVI. Teaching Online Certification for Faculty**

Beginning in fall 2020, all instructors who teach at Lee College must have proof of Teaching Online Certification obtained through Lee College or from an approved outside source. If an instructor chooses to use the in-house training, Lee College offers a certification course:

The Distance Education course is delivered through Blackboard Learn. This course allows instructors to experience the course as if they were the student while learning best practices and suggestions for online teaching. It guides the student through exercises using multiple types of media and different ways to interact with the teacher. Contact Alex Nguyen, Instructional Designer at 832-556-4042 [thnguyen@lee.edu](mailto:thnguyen@lee.edu).

If a faculty member has teaching online certification from a nationally recognized provider such as Quality Matters or the Online Learning Consortium, the faculty member should submit a copy of the certification to the Distance Education Coordinator for review, approval and forwarding to Human Resources. Other teaching online certifications may be considered on an individual basis and will be reviewed by the DE Coordinator, the COLT Coordinator, and the Instructional Designers. An instructional designer (ID) will meet with the faculty member and evaluate a past or current course in order to determine if all or some of the LTOC can be waived. The ID will review their findings with the team for a final decision.

Once faculty members have earned their certification or been approved by the committee, they are required to submit evidence of certification to Human Resources. This documentation will be recorded in People-Soft and be in the faculty member's permanent file.

Once training is completed, please be sure to print proof of completion including certificates or other documentation and provide that to Human Resources where it will be copied and placed in the faculty member's file.

Faculty are required to engage in professional development related to online learning and teaching at a minimum of once every three years following initial online certification.

## **XVII. Blackboard and Other Training**

Paula Lee, Blackboard Administrator, is the primary contact for training and supporting faculty in Blackboard. However, Alex Nguyen and Nicole Tunmire provide additional support and training. Other training opportunities are offered by various members of the Distance Education and Information Technology teams. Please contact Paula Lee, Alex Nguyen, or Nicole Tunmire for training requests. Their numbers are listed on page 1 following the Table of Contents.

For more experienced faculty, the Empirical Educator Center will offer training on more advanced Blackboard tools, such as Respondus, Honorlock, Turn-It-In, Soft-Chalk, Collaborate, WebEx, etc. The Distance Education Coordinator will work with the division chairs and IT Office to identify faculty needs.

Tutorials related to Blackboard, Office 365, Soft Chalk, Turn-It-In, Honorlock, Respondus, and other technology can be found on [the Make It Easy Monday](#) website. Additionally, a link to the faculty and student tutorials can be found on the [Empirical Educator Center webpage](#) along with this handbook.

## **XVII. Library Services**

The online library can be accessed at [Lee College library](#).

The library offers many resources to faculty and students, including e-books, Films on Demand, articles from online databases, and electronic course reserves. Librarians are available online to provide assistance to students through interactive tutorials, “Ask a Librarian” email service, and live chats. Librarians can create tutorials specific to your course upon request. Online resources can also be embedded into your Blackboard course.

For more information, contact Will Mayer at 832-556-4017 or [wmayer@lee.edu](mailto:wmayer@lee.edu)

## **XIX. Professional Development**

The Empirical Educator Center has a professional development budget for travel to professional conferences. For additional information, please contact Dr. Laura Lane-Worley, the Empirical Educator Center Co-Director at 832-556-5782 or [llaneworley@lee.edu](mailto:llaneworley@lee.edu).

## **XX. Program Assessment**

Every 5 years, the Distance Education Coordinator will conduct a program review to evaluate the overall quality of Distance Education at the college. The review will assess the program on an institutional level. Topics will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Completion Rates
- 2) Technology Needs
- 3) Faculty Training and Professional Development
- 4) Student Preparation
- 5) Institutional Support
- 6) Counseling and Advising
- 7) Governance and Policy Making
- 8) DigiTex (Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas)

## **XXI. DigiTex (Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas)**

The DigiTex is a collaborative effort among community colleges in the state of Texas. If a student is unable to register for a class at their local community college, they can register for an online class at another community college through DIGITEX. For more information, visit the [DigiTex website](#).

DIGITEX courses from another community college can be offered at Lee College. However, the course must be approved following the college's normal approval process of faculty teaching credentials.

For more information, contact Scott Bennett, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs 281-425-6558 or [sbennett@lee.edu](mailto:sbennett@lee.edu) or Cassandra Bell, Distance Education Coordinator at 281-425-6366 or [cbell@lee.edu](mailto:cbell@lee.edu).

## **XXII. Disaster Preparation**

Living on the coast presents unique challenges. When a hurricane hits, the college could experience a lengthy shut down, as it did during Hurricane Ike and during COVID-19. Since that time, the college has put generators in place to help keep mission critical systems up and running. Some of the systems that have been deemed as mission critical include PeopleSoft and Blackboard Learn.

As an instructor, whether you teach online or traditional face-to-face classes, use of Blackboard Learn is required during possible shut downs or closures as a way to continue to interact with students and keep the class work moving forward. Some of the ways you can accomplish this is to have your syllabus posted, create folders to house your lecture notes, Power Point presentations, videos, etc., you want students to work through. You can also create assignments and tests for students.

Blackboard Learn is an acceptable delivery method, regardless of whether you or your students had to evacuate, to keep the classes going during the emergency. Some possible ways to handle informing students about this possibility could be to add a statement to the syllabus that lets students know to check Blackboard. You could also include it in a course orientation.

The question is what will you do before the emergency happens? Emergencies could also include unexpected health or family issues. If you can prepare now, it will be less traumatic if/when something actually happens.

## **XXIII. FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)**

### **1. What is Blackboard Learn?**

Blackboard, Inc. is a company that develops Learning Management Systems. Blackboard Learn (Bb Learn) is a product that falls under Blackboard. It is a self-contained place to present content to students. Bb Learn can be used in a variety of manners, i.e. online or hybrid instruction, to enhance a traditional class, as a community for users such as the drafting community or the nursing community, honor societies, or Faculty Learning Communities to post information relevant to all its members. The advantage of using such a system is that it is self-contained and therefore sensitive information is not accessible to unauthorized users.

### **2. How do I get a class setup in Bb Learn?**

Faculty members are responsible for creating their Bb Learn course shells in myLC Campus. The directions for this process are located in the Help Documents folder located in Bb Learn Faculty Resource Course or you can contact Paula Lee, [plee@lee.edu](mailto:plee@lee.edu) and she will send you a copy of the word document.

### **3. Who do I contact for instructional design questions?**

Alex Nguyen serves as Lee College's Instructional Designer and can be reached at [thnguyen@lee.edu](mailto:thnguyen@lee.edu) or 832-556-4042. Additionally, Dr. Laura Lane-Worley, Co-Director of the Empirical Educator Center can assist with Instructional Design questions and can be reached at 832-556-5782 or [llaneworley@lee.edu](mailto:llaneworley@lee.edu).

### **4. Who do I call when things don't work in Bb Learn?**

You can contact Paula Lee, [plee@lee.edu](mailto:plee@lee.edu). You can contact the Help Desk at 281-425-6577. Please let your students know this as well.

### **5. How do I login to Bb Learn?**

Your username and password will be the same one you use to login to your Lee College email or onto one of the campus computers.

### **6. What exactly does Bb Learn offer?**

Bb Learn gives instructors a container for their course material. Some of the features inside Bb Learn include discussion boards, blogs, wikis and journals, ability to create assignments and assessments, web links, modules, embed videos or audio files, a home page with information, notifications, etc. for your student's use. There is a grade center and your students have a My Grades link where they can view posted grades, upcoming items, etc. Another feature inside of Bb Learn is SafeAssign, which is an anti-plagiarism program.

### **7. What other resources do instructors have access to?**

Lee College is part of the DigiTex. As a member we have access to SoftChalk, which is a lesson builder software. We also have Respondus, which is a Windows-based authoring tool that makes it easy to create and manage exams for Bb Learn. In addition, all faculty and students have access to Grammarly, Office 365, and Adobe Creative Cloud. Lee College also has access to Films on Demand. Will Mayer, Librarian, Distance Education & e-resources, is the point of contact for Films on Demand, [wmayer@lee.edu](mailto:wmayer@lee.edu).

### **8. What about training?**

Bb Learn training is ongoing throughout the year. Emails are sent out to let faculty know when trainings will occur. You can always contact Paula Lee, Alex Nguyen, or Laura Lane-Worley for additional information or help.

### **9. Is there any training or orientation for students?**

Yes. There is an Online Student Orientation Bb Learn class, to which students have access. The student should see the link for this course when they login to Bb Learn. It is set up like an actual course might be. The object is to help students become familiar with Bb Learn before they actually begin their true course.

### **10. When are Bb Learn classes available?**

The Bb Learn classes are always available for instructors. Instructors can hide the courses they do not want to see in their course list or they can request to have them removed from Bb Learn. Backups are created and maintained by the LMS System Administrator. However, instructors are encouraged to create their own backups as well, at the end of each semester. The current year

and the previous year's courses remain active on the server. Courses that are a year old will be archived and removed from the server.

Students will not be able to access their Bb Learn classes until the first day of the semester. The Bb Learn classes remain visible to the students for about a week after the semester ends. If the instructor needs a class to remain open for students who received an "I", then the instructor needs to contact Paula Lee, [plee@lee.edu](mailto:plee@lee.edu), to have the course dates extended.

### **11. What do I need to do in order to teach at Lee College?**

Beginning in the fall 2020, all faculty must be certified to teach online regardless of the modality of the course a faculty member is teaching. Full-time and adjunct faculty who want to teach at Lee College must complete the Teaching Online Certification Course or provide verification of completion of an online verification course from a nationally recognized organization such as Quality Matters or The Online Learning Consortium. Contact Dr. Laura Lane-Worley ([llaneworley@lee.edu](mailto:llaneworley@lee.edu)) for more information. Beyond the Teaching Online Certification Course, training in Blackboard Learn could prove helpful. Working with the Instructional Designer to layout the course is highly recommended.

### **12. What about accessibility?**

All materials in Blackboard Learn must be accessible. Videos must have captions and transcripts. Images, tables, diagrams, content maps, etc. providing additional meaning or learning opportunities for students must have alternative text descriptions to ensure all students have access to the same content. The Universal Design for Accessibility content folder in the Faculty Resources course in Blackboard provides multiple resources and how to videos. For additional assistance contact Cassandra Bell, Distance Education Coordinator ([distanceed@lee.edu](mailto:distanceed@lee.edu) - 281-425-6366).

In an effort to assist faculty with accessible materials, Lee College implemented Blackboard ALLY campus-wide in January 2019. While ALLY can't provide captions or transcripts, the program does check all materials for accessibility issues and provides faculty with feedback and guidance for making materials accessible.

## **XXIV. Netiquette**

The Internet provides numerous opportunities for users to connect, conduct business transactions, get an education, keep in touch with others, and other things. The Internet also has its own culture. And just like any other culture, there are "rules of etiquette" people should be aware of and follow. For the Internet, there are rules of Netiquette, or basically, the etiquette rules for cyberspace. Believe it or not, there are, actually, rules for how to behave properly online.

Virginia Shea has written a book titled *Netiquette* that discusses the core rules of netiquette. You can use this link to read more extensively about Netiquette: [The Core Rules of Netiquette](#). She lists 10 rules to help people behave properly in an online world.

One thing to always remember is this: once a person puts something online, whether it is an email, document or comments or videos, it is always online. You can delete it off your account or machine, but it is more than likely backed up on some server somewhere in the world and can be accessed again by someone.

## **XXV. Distance Education Committee Records**

On the Lee College Share Point site, records for distance education meetings as well as other documents are housed.