

**San Joaquin Delta College**  
**Academic Senate Resolution: Regular and Effective**  
**Contact for Online Courses**

**Proposed by the Distance Education Committee**

Whereas, the CCCCCO DE Guidelines (2008) stipulate that “districts and/or colleges will need to define ‘effective contact’ including how often, and in what manner instructor-student interaction is achieved (in online classes). It is important to document regular effective contact and how it is achieved. Since regular effective contact was declared an academic and professional matter, this documentation must include demonstration of collegial consultation with the Academic Senate; and

Whereas, the Academic Senate approved the use of the OEI Rubric in spring of 2018 which includes recommendations about regular effective contact; and

Whereas, accreditation teams have been looking for evidence of regular effective contact during site visits at neighboring colleges and SJDC’s accreditation visit is scheduled for 2020; and

Whereas, new Title V regulations went into effect in March of 2019 that require evidence of student-to-student interaction as part of regular effective contact requirements in online courses; and

Whereas, the DE Committee voted, at its April 4, 2019 meeting, to propose the attached Regular Effective Contact for Online Courses Guidelines to the Senate for adoption;

Therefore, be it resolved that the SJDC Academic Senate supports adopting the attached Regular Effective Contact for Online Courses Guidelines for online courses; and

Therefore, be it further resolved that the SJDC DE Committee include these guidelines in the DE Faculty Handbook.

# Regular Effective Contact for Online Courses

## Background and Requirements

### Federal Regulation

The Federal Government defines Distance Education as using one or more [technologies, including the Internet] to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, 602.3](#)

### Title IV / Financial Aid

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education requires that all online courses for which students may use Title IV funds (federal financial aid) “ensure that there is regular substantive interaction between students and instructors.” The Department of Education has the authority to review distance learning offerings at institutions that receive federal funds.

### Accreditation Requirements

For the purpose of accreditation review, the ACCJC uses the same definition of Distance Education as in CFR, Title 34, §602.3, above.

[ACCJC Guide to Evaluating Distance and Correspondence Education, 2013, p. 2](#)

### State Regulation (Title 5)

As of March 17, 2019, Title 5 requires both Regular Effective *Instructor to Student* **and** *Student-to-Student* Contact for both online and hybrid courses.

The language provides that *any* portion of instruction provided through Distance Education is required to have documentation of Regular Effective Contact between instructors and students and among students.

In addition, any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

[California Code of Regulations, Title 5: Education 55204 &55206](#)

## **Chancellor's Office Guidelines**

The CCCC Distance Education Guidelines 2008, p. 7 stipulate that “districts and/or colleges will need to define ‘effective contact’ including how often, and in what manner instructor-student interaction is achieved [in online classes].” These guidelines are currently being updated to reflect the new student-student requirement in Title 5. It is important to document Regular Effective Contact and how it is achieved, and to include demonstration of collegial consultation with the Academic Senate. This process is further supported by Title 5 55204(a) and Title 5 53200(11).

## **District Policy and Procedure, Plan and Handbook**

In February 2015, San Joaquin Delta College's Board of Trustees approved [Board Policy 4110](#) and [Administrative Procedure 4110](#) on Distance Education. AP 4110 2(b) states:

*As distinct from correspondence courses, all distance education courses are required to maintain regular effective substantive contact between the professor and students, in accordance with Title [5]. Regular effective contact is defined as professor-initiated interaction and responsive interaction by the professor to students.*

Also in February 2015, the **Academic Senate approved the college's first *Distance Education Plan***, which defines professor-initiated interaction as occurring at least weekly and responsive interaction occurring within 48 hours of student-initiated contact (weekends and holidays excluded).

Currently, the Distance Education Committee is drafting a *Distance Education Faculty Handbook*, which will include further definition and examples of Regular Effective Contact. The handbook is expected to be completed by fall of 2019 and will be taken to the Academic Senate for review and approval.

## **Online Education Initiative (OEI) – Course Design Rubric**

On February 21, 2018, the **SJDC Academic Senate voted unanimously to**

**adopt the OEI Course Design Rubric.** The OEI Rubric was developed by Distance Learning professionals across the CCC system to promote student success and meet existing regulatory and accreditation requirements. At this meeting, our DE Committee Chair and Senate discussed the Professional Development Center offering training on the rubric, including section B: Interaction (Regular Effective Contact).

The six (6) standards for Regular Effective Contact from the OEI Rubric include:

1. Regular Effective Contact (Instructor-to Student)
2. Pre-Course Contact
3. Student-Initiated Contact with Instructor
4. Regular Effective Contact (Student-to-Student)
5. Participation Levels
6. Student-Initiated Contact with Other Students

# Guidelines for Ensuring Regular Effective Contact in Online and Hybrid Courses

## Regular Effective Contact – *Instructor-to-Student*

| EXEMPLARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ALIGNED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | INCOMPLETE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <b>1: Regular Effective Contact (Instructor-to-Student)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The course design includes ample opportunities for Regular Effective Contact using a wide variety of communication tools (see examples, below).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> The course design includes regular instructor-initiated contact with students using Canvas communication tools (see examples, below).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> The course design appears to be lacking opportunities for regular effective student contact initiated by the instructor.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|  <b>Examples of Instructor-to-Student Contact by Tool:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Syllabus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Announcements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Discussions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Feedback / Grades                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Other                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Include a section for instructor’s Expected Response Times</b> to student inquiries, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canvas private messages</li> <li>• Questions in Discussion forums and Chat tool</li> <li>• Assignment feedback</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clearly describe and quantify Regular Effective Contact outside the course shell:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-campus office hours</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Notify students of expected delays in response times</b> , when possible. <i>“There may be a delay in my responsiveness from June 18-20, as I will be attending the Online Teaching Conference.”</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Front and center.</b> Show 3 most recent announcements on the class Home page. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Keep it fresh</b> with <i>contextual</i> announcements at least weekly (2-3 times per week is better!) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I’ve just graded this week’s assignment and here’s what I saw happening...”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I’ve just updated...”</i></li> <li>• Weekly tasks; wrapping up the week; coming up next...</li> <li>• Next online office hour</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Re-teach.</b> Draw out main ideas and remind students of overarching themes. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Offer kudos and encouragement.</b> <i>“Great job on last week’s discussion. This week, let’s dig deeper by...”</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Video announcements.</b> 1-3 minutes, introducing the next unit or just checking in. | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Craft thoughtful questions</b> encouraging students to apply course material to their own lives and experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Set an example.</b> <i>“For example, I would respond to this question by saying...”</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Encourage discussion early in the week</b> (3 points for posting by Tues, 2 points for posting by Wed, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Engage regularly</b> by posting reactions, comments, and questions. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Summarize</b> the main ideas and standout points for each discussion in a “capstone” post. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Seek input.</b> Periodically ask, <i>“what’s working for you? What isn’t? What surprised you about this week’s lesson?”</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Give students a clear and visible place to ask questions</b> like a Q&A forum pinned to the top of Discussions. | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Share meaningful comments</b> using SpeedGrader and DocViewer. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allow back &amp; forth exchange</b> with students using “chat” comments in SpeedGrader. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use rubrics</b> to offer detailed feedback on both assignments and discussions. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Audio feedback</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Video feedback</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Humanize your course with Video</b> (using Canvas media tools or ConferZoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome video on the Home page</li> <li>• 1-2 min Announcements introducing each unit</li> <li>• Personalized feedback in SpeedGrader</li> <li>• Online office hours</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  <p><i>ConferZoom offers cloud storage and captioning! Training @ PDC</i></p> </div> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Online office hours or study groups</b> using video or Chat; post a link to recording/archive in Announcements. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Anonymous surveys</b> offered throughout the semester. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrated PowerPoint lectures.</b> |

## Guidelines for Ensuring Regular Effective Contact in Online and Hybrid Courses

### Regular Effective Contact – *Instructor-to-Student (cont.)*

| EXEMPLARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | ALIGNED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | INCOMPLETE                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2: Pre-Course Contact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor provides multiple resources to help students successfully start the course.<br><br><b>Examples:</b> Welcome letter including course start date, Canvas login instructions, help desk info, instructor contact info, welcome video, and/or links to student services.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor initiates contact prior to or at the beginning of course.<br><br><b>Examples:</b> A welcome letter, announcement, or “Getting Started” module guiding students on how to begin in the course. May include due date for first assignment, and where to go for technology support.                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor does not initiate contact prior to or at the beginning of the course.                   |
| <b>3: Student-Initiated Contact with Instructor</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students are provided with multiple means of contacting the instructor and are encouraged to do so throughout the course.<br><br><b>Examples:</b> Syllabus or “Getting Started” module encourages multiple methods of contact, including Canvas mail, class Q&A forum, office hours, video conferencing opportunities, etc. Instructor notifies students, when possible, if there will be an expected delay in response time. Methods of contact should take place primarily within Canvas. | <input type="checkbox"/> Students are encouraged to initiate contact with the instructor through easily accessed contact information that includes expected response times.<br><br><b>Examples:</b> Instructor’s preferred method of contact is easily found. Syllabus or “Getting Started” module clearly state expected response times for: inquiries in both discussions and Canvas mail, as well as for grades and feedback on student work. | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor contact information, including expected response times, is missing or not easy to find. |



**SJDC Administrative Procedure 4110, 2(b):**

All distance education courses are required to maintain regular effective substantive contact between the professor and students, in accordance with Title V. Regular effective substantive contact is defined as **professor-initiated** interaction and **responsive** interaction by the professor.



**SJDC DE Committee Recommendations:**

“Professor-initiated” interaction shall occur **at least weekly**. Best practice is **2-3 times/week**.

“Responsive” interaction [to student inquiries] shall occur **within 48 hours**, excluding weekends and holidays.



**The above guidelines include “Hybrid” instruction.** Per Title 5, any portion of instruction provided through Distance Education in lieu of face-to-face is required to have Curriculum Committee approval and documentation of Regular Effective Contact. (5 CCR § 55206, 55204)

– See page 3 for *Student-to-Student contact (Required)* –

## Guidelines for Ensuring Regular Effective Contact in Online and Hybrid Courses

### Regular Effective Contact – *Student-to-Student*

| EXEMPLARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ALIGNED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | INCOMPLETE                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <b>4: Regular Effective Contact (Student-to-Student)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> The design and facilitation of communication activities are responsive to the variety of cultures and communication styles in the learning community.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Well-crafted discussion prompts and small groups to encourage meaningful exchange. Host a voluntary “virtual study group” with ConferZoom in which students with webcams and microphones can participate (record and post in a class Discussion for students who couldn’t attend to view and comment on later).</p>                            | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Regular Effective Contact among students is designed and facilitated to build a sense of community among learners.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Group work, peer reviews, “get to know each other” activities throughout the semester instead of at the beginning only.</p>                                                                          | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Students have no or limited opportunities to engage in Regular Effective Contact with other students (e.g. limited to a single Q&amp;A discussion forum only).</p> |
| <b>5: Participation Levels</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> A rubric or equivalent grading document is included within assignments/activities to explain how participation will be evaluated.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Use Rubrics tool in Canvas to create and attach your expectations to assignments and discussions. Use rubrics for grading in SpeedGrader so students can see where they earned points. Share an “exemplary assignment” to show students a sample of quality work. Open a Q&amp;A discussion for guidance on a specific assignment (“Midterm Project Q&amp;A”).</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines explaining required levels of student participation (i.e. quantity and quality of interactions) are consistently provided.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Use Syllabus or “Getting Started” module to clearly state class participation expectations. Consistent reminders of required number of posts in class Discussion assignments.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines explaining required levels of participation are not provided.</p>                                                                                       |
| <b>6: Student-Initiated Contact with Other Students</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> The course makes a variety of tools and methods available for student-initiated interaction to accommodate a variety of communication styles.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Encourage voluntary study groups, a class hashtag for Twitter posts, or a discussion forum where experienced online students share their tips for success in online learning.</p>                                                                                                                                                                      | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for student-initiated interaction with other students are available and encouraged.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Discussion forums for Class Introductions and ongoing student-to-student Q&amp;A (“Student Lounge”). Open the Chat tool for real-time student exchange.</p>                                                           | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Students are not given opportunities to initiate interaction with other students in the course.</p>                                                                |