

## Distance Education Taskforce 2.23.26 Notes

### Attendance / Participation

- Meeting held in a hybrid format; Zoom used primarily for listening/remote participation.
- Noted that at least one member (Nguyễn Thái) could not attend in person due to a preceding meeting but joined virtually.

### Opening Items

- Meeting called to order.
- Public comment: none (no non-committee members present).

### 1) Recap: Prior Semester Work + PBC Presentation

- Committee reviewed the fall semester's work and the recent presentation to PBC (December meeting).
- Reaffirmed the committee's charge:
  - Develop data-driven, districtwide recommendations for coordinating distance education (DE) offerings.
  - Identify 2–3 fully online degree pathways (committee discussed having identified ~4 “plus a fifth”/marketing-related element).
- Reflected that prior presentations helped build trust by showing methodology, data sources, and decision-making logic (not “decisions made in a vacuum”).
- General feedback received from PBC/others:
  - Positive response to the transparency and organization of the presentation.
  - Questions tended to focus on **implementation** (how recommendations would be carried out), reinforcing the need for the committee's next phase: implementation-oriented recommendations.

### 2) Faculty/Department Chair Outreach: Process and Framing

**Key discussion:** how to engage discipline/department chairs about preliminary online pathway recommendations.

Themes / shared principles:

- Recommendations should not be perceived as a district mandate imposed on disciplines.
- Department chairs/discipline faculty should be treated as the discipline experts and essential partners in the decision.

- Strong concern about political/relational risk if recommendations “surprise” departments or appear to bypass local governance.

Options discussed for outreach mechanisms:

- **Direct outreach to chairs** (calls + follow-up emails) to review the presentation and invite feedback.
- Invite chairs to the next task force meeting (with recording available for those unable to attend).
- Framing suggestion:
  - “These are preliminary findings; we want your input before we finalize recommendations for implementation.”

Additional note:

- Recognized potential sensitivity given simultaneous college-level program reduction discussions (risk of conflating processes or increasing tension).

### **Outcome / Direction**

- Agreement to proceed with outreach and to speak openly about the recommendations as preliminary.
- Co-chairs/committee members will coordinate who contacts which chairs and will track outreach attempts and responses.

### **3) “Where We Are Now” Baseline: Current DE Coordination Snapshot**

- Reviewed a draft inventory intended to document current DE structures and practices across colleges, as a baseline for recommendations.
- Items discussed for the baseline snapshot included:
  - Whether each college has a Distance Education Committee and how often it meets (example shared: Merritt DE Committee meets twice a month).
  - Distance Education Coordinators and their assigned load/release time (concern raised about equity/consistency across colleges).
  - POCR/Peer Online Course Review capacity and staffing models:
    - Noted gaps/instability where a college may have POCR release time but no active coordinator due to resignation.
    - Discussed potential value of a districtwide POCR coordination plan (cross-college reviewers/coordinators supporting colleges without local capacity).
  - High-level review of overall DE success rates (noted as relatively close across colleges).
  - Equity gap concerns:

- Equity gaps appear wider in online education compared to in-person; flagged as a major consideration for implementation supports/funding.
- Clarified/flagged need for additional metrics (e.g., possibly adding FTES alongside FTEF).

Faculty workload/modality rights:

- Noted contract language: faculty can refuse an online assignment; faculty can be obligated to teach in person, but cannot be obligated to teach online (language unchanged in the new contract per discussion).

#### **4) Recommendations Work Phase: Converting Brainstorm to Structured Recommendations**

- Committee transitioned into the “recommendations for coordination” phase using a tracking spreadsheet created from prior brainstorming/post-its (prioritized items were coded by color).
- New structure for developing recommendations included standard fields/questions, such as:
  - What should be coordinated districtwide vs. college-level?
  - Who owns/leads the coordination?
  - What changes for students if implemented?
  - What changes for the colleges/district?
  - Financial implications / rough cost estimate.

Recommendation categories/tabs discussed:

- Instruction & Faculty Readiness
- Student Services & Onboarding
- Scheduling & Coordination
- Technology & Digital Infrastructure
- Governance & Marketing (noted these could be separated later if needed)

Activity:

- Members paired/small-grouped and were assigned initial categories to begin filling in the structured worksheet.
- Notes/forms can be completed via SharePoint or entered directly into the spreadsheet; not every field must be completed.

Student-facing support themes raised (during group work share-outs):

- Need for a clearer one-stop shop for online students (services, contacts, tutoring/library, program maps, etc.).
- Orientation concerns:
  - Online-only orientations may be insufficient; preference expressed for more intensive, guided support (potentially in-person or hybrid) to help students navigate Canvas/online learning expectations.
  - Interest in identifying strong examples from other colleges and developing cost estimates.

## 5) Next Steps / Action Items

- **Faculty outreach**
  - Co-chairs/committee members to contact department chairs for programs identified in preliminary online pathway recommendations.
  - Offer meeting options (attend next meeting, smaller discussions, Zoom/breakouts) and gather feedback for the committee.
- **Tracking**
  - Track outreach attempts/responses and incorporate feedback into recommendation framing.
- **Baseline spreadsheet**
  - Continue adding/cleaning baseline DE coordination information (committees, staffing, coordinator load, PO CR capacity, etc.).
  - Add missing columns as identified (e.g., DE coordinator load, possibly FTES context).
- **Recommendation spreadsheet**
  - Incorporate notes from today's worksheets into the tracking tabs.
  - Co-chairs to migrate remaining brainstorm items into the appropriate recommendation categories/tabs.

## Upcoming Meetings / Events Mentioned

- Next committee meeting referenced: **February 23.**
- District summit referenced: **February 27**