

Distance Learning Needs Assessment - USCA Student Services
Distance Learning Committee
Student Services Subcommittee

Subcommittee members: Prof. Deborah Tritt, Dr. Rebecca Carr, Troy Mothkovich, Dr. Thomas Smyth, Jr.

The objective of the Student Services Subcommittee of the Distance Learning Committee was to examine how student-support units can accommodate distance students at USC Aiken. We identified the departments on campus that may interact with distance students and initiated a dialogue with their directors. Through these discussions, the Subcommittee was able to identify challenges, opportunities, and needs of the USC Aiken departments as they move forward with supporting distance students. This report reflects the major findings of our inquiry and associated subcommittee discussions on student services. Full responses from individual student service units are attached as the appendix.

In addition to establishing a dialogue on distance education with student support departments at USC Aiken, the Subcommittee designed a distance learner web portal. The web portal provides distance students a central dashboard to access student support services and other critical information resources for distance students. Draft of portal content can be viewed at http://tritt.net/distance_Learning_Aiken.html

Subcommittee recommendations:

- Central office of distance education
- Distance learning portal for students & faculty
- Investment in technologies (both hardware & software) for student services to support distance students
- Funding provisions to units to support distribution of materials to distance students
- Upper level support for individual student service units as they expand to accommodate distance students

Opportunities:

New or unique student services for distance students:

- Academic Success
 - Online tutoring**
- *Broken Ink*
 - Inclusion of distance students as *Broken Ink* contributors
- Career Services

- Career counseling appointments by phone/Skype
- Computer services
 - Help desk via phone, email, and social media
- Disability Services
 - Supply documentation & software to distance students with disabilities
- Library
 - Online reference consultations
 - Distance student library portal
 - Book lending through PASCAL Delivers & other USC campus libraries (student ID required)
 - Book delivery from Gregg-Graniteville Library*
 - Online information literacy classes**
- *Pacer Times*
 - Inclusion of distance students as *Pacer Times* contributors
 - Opportunities for ad sales & business services internships for distance students
- Veterans Success Center
 - provide online office hours support, academic advisement, and veteran to veteran support **
- University Police
 - Provide ID cards without photo to distance students

* requires funding

** requires technology

Challenges:

- Academic Success
 - Change verification process for approving changes of majors and advisors.
- Bookstore (Pacer Shoppe)
 - Pacer Shoppe requires approval from Columbia campus for e-commerce.
- Counseling Services
 - Significant legal, ethical, privacy, and confidentiality issues in providing counseling services for distance students.
- Enrollment Services
 - Immunization holds for distance students.
- International Students Office
 - Services not applicable to distance students.
- Pacer Times
 - Needs people and funding to get *Pacer Times* website in production.
- Student Health Services
 - Services not applicable to distance students.
- University police (ID Cards)
 - Physical student ID's - cost to distribute

Software/hardware needs to support distance students.

Academic Success

- Online tutor support software (TutorTrac, Accudemia, StarFish, MapWorks, etc.)

Library

- Screencasting tool - Camtasia/Adobe Captivate
- E-learning content creation tool (i.e. Adobe Connect /Adobe Presenter, Wimba, SoftChalk or Articulate Storyline)
- Video camera, microphones, webcams, scanner

Veteran Student Success Center

- Go-to-Meeting, Facetime, or other media-based technology for communication