

**SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROPOSAL:
DISTANCE EDUCATION
Addition of Courses that Constitute 50% or More of a Program Offered
Through Distance Education**

Submitted by:

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Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
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Participant List

The following Norco College staff members participated in the preparation of this Substantive Change proposal:

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Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Council

- Wendi Alcazar, Instruction Support Technician
- Melissa Bader, English Department Chair
- Tim Wallstrom, Physical Education Department Co-Chair
- Debra Creswell, Executive Assistant to the President
- Mark DeAsis, Admissions and Records Supervisor
- Diane Dieckmeyer, Dean of Instruction
- Carol Farrar, Social and Behavioral Sciences Department Chair
- Alexis Gray, Anthropology Faculty Member
- Monica Green, Dean of Student Services
- Susan Lafferty, Instructional Support Technician
- Jason Rey, Math Department Co-Chair

Norco College Strategic Planning Committee (Committee of the Whole)

A. Description of Proposed Change and Justification

A1. Description

This Substantive Change Proposal is submitted to ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) for approval to offer the following Associate Degrees and Certificates through the distance education mode because 51% - 100% of the coursework can be taken online.*

*Traditional modes of delivery will continue as well.

Associate in Science Degrees

Associate in Arts Degree for General Education

Areas of Emphasis

- Administration and Information Systems
- Communication, Media, and Languages
- Fine and Applied Arts
- Humanities, Philosophy and Arts
- Physical Education, Health and Wellness
- Social and Behavioral Studies

Associate in Arts Degree for General Education

CSU General Education Requirements

Associate in Arts Degree for General Education

Intersegmental General Education, Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) for Transfer to UC and CSU

Associate in Arts/Sciences Degrees

State Approved Certificates of Achievement

Business Administration

Areas of Concentration:

- Accounting
- Banking and Finance
- General Business
- Human Resources
- Logistics Management
- Management
- Marketing
- Real Estate

Justification

Using alternative course delivery formats Norco College meets the needs of a diverse community of learners. “provides educational programs, services, and learning environments for a diverse community.” (2009-2010 Norco College Catalog, p. 2.) Distance education has become a highly desirable means of course delivery to meet current student educational needs at Norco.

The increased traffic along the I-91 and I-15 corridors adjacent to the college has created a demand for alternatives to traditional on-campus instruction, making our limited weekend offerings and online modes of delivery increasingly popular. A variety of distance education formats is offered at Norco and throughout the district through Open Campus including: online and hybrid courses. Distance education classes include a variety of media-based enhancements, pedagogical approaches, and instructional methods and techniques. These include but are not limited to online discussion boards and synchronous chat.

A2. Relationship to Institutional Mission

The mission of Norco College is to provide “educational programs, services, and learning environments for a diverse community.....As a continuing process we listen to our community and respond to its needs while engaging in self-examination, learning outcomes, assessment, ongoing dialogue, planning, and improvement.” (2009-2010 Norco College Catalog, p. 2) In fall 2000, the first online classes were delivered by the Norco campus; 50 students were enrolled in four different courses. As of fall 2009, the enrollment in fully online sections had grown to 2,658 students. DE courses are among the first to fill during each term’s registration period and the demand shows no sign of decreasing. In order to address this student need, the number of courses offered in DE format has increased each term which enables students to complete more program, transfer, and degree requirements fully online.

A3. Rationale for Change

In Riverside Community College District and Norco College specifically, the growth and demand for online learning has steadily increased. This growth reflects a nationwide trend. Allen and Seaman (2008) summarized the results of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation’s survey of 2,500 institutions of higher learning in *Staying the Course, Online Education in the United States* and reported 3.9 million students enrolled in two- and four-year colleges and universities were taking at least one online course in 2007 (p. 5). Dobbs, Waid, del Carmen (2009) and others report that online learning fills an obvious need for many due to its convenience, accessibility, and flexibility and most students surveyed were satisfied with their online experience. Most agree that the flexibility and convenience of DE courses contribute to their popularity.

Each term a significant amount of courses are offered in DE formats (both hybrid and fully online). There are three major reasons for the proposed change:

- 1) Students’ desire for Internet-based distance learning, as evidenced by the rapid and continued growth of distance education locally, statewide, and nationwide.
- 2) To serve students who find it difficult to attend traditional face-to-face classes.
- 3) The evolution of distance education from telecourses to Internet-based modalities.

Norco College acknowledges this as a major step in the diversification of the instructional offerings in that it provides the opportunity for learners to earn or to complete a variety of existing state-approved certificates of achievement, areas of emphasis, transfer, and degree-applicable requirements fully online. Being able to complete 50% or more of Certificates of Achievement and Associate Degree requirements online in a format serves the needs of Norco College’s diverse student population. It also creates the need for Norco College to file a substantive change report to the commission.

B. Description of Educational Programs to be Offered

All courses and programs proposed to be offered through the distance education mode are already offered through the traditional on-campus mode of instruction. There are no differences in the basic requirements between the distance education delivery and on-campus version of the courses and programs. In addition, the college has procedures in place to ensure that the rigor, breadth, objectives, learning outcomes, and academic quality of courses and programs offered in the distance education mode meet the same standards as those offered in the traditional on-campus mode. The Norco College Curriculum Committee separately approves each course proposed for delivery via distance education to ensure the following criteria are met:

- Regular effective contact is maintained between the instructor and students through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, study sessions, field trips, library workshops, threaded conferencing, chat rooms, telephone contact, email, or other activities.
- Effective pedagogical techniques appropriate to the distance education mode are utilized to ensure that the quality and rigor of instruction mirrors that of the on-campus version of the course.
- Appropriate technology is used to achieve the objectives of the course.
- Multiple measures are used to achieve and assess student learning, including reading, writing, critical thinking assignments, and multiple evaluations.
- All delivery methods used are accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws.

C. Planning Process Which Led to the Request for the Change

The online course offerings that comprise 50% or more of the requirements for the degrees, certificates and areas of concentration listed above were each approved by the curriculum committee and District Board of Trustees. The ACCJC Visiting Team that visited Norco in October 2009 recommended that the college submit a substantive change application in light of the fact that several of the college's degree and certificate offerings appeared to be attainable by taking 50% or more of the coursework online. The January 2010 action letter from ACCJC granting Norco College initial accreditation included a recommendation that a substantive change proposal be prepared in order to comply with the ACCJC Distance education policy. The substantive change proposal was approved by the College Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Council on April 6th, 2010 and by the Norco Strategic Planning Committee on April 27, 2010.

C1. How the Change Relates to the Institution's Planning Process and Mission

The offering of courses, programs, transfer patterns, and degrees through distance education modalities directly correlates to the institution's mission of equipping "our students with the knowledge and skills to attain their goals in higher, career/technical, and continuing education; workforce development; and personal enrichment." (2009. Norco College Catalog, p. 2) It Further, it provides learners with access to innovative and flexible learning opportunities. Planning for the scheduling and development of distance education courses is discussed at the college department level and at the discipline level district wide, when appropriate. Distance education planning has been integrated into department unit plans, budgeting, and program review.

C2. Assessment of Needs and Resources Which Have Taken Place

All departments at Norco College participate in ongoing planning through the process of creating annual unit plans through the program review process. The departments and all faculty participate in authentic assessment to determine learning and learner needs, to assess the areas for improvement, and to implement change where appropriate to advance the institution's effectiveness. Through Advisory Boards and industry partners, faculty obtain feedback on trends and curricular needs. As a result, faculty and departments have made adjustments to course offerings and scheduling to optimize student enrollment and to maximize options for learners. The college's instructional and student support services are expanding to provide equivalent support services to distance education students. A student can register for classes, receive counseling, request financial aid, and attend class via any internet-connected computer at times most convenient to the student. In addition, computers with internet access are available on campus for student use.

The resources needed to schedule an increasing number of distance education courses have come from the general fund. Additionally, the Riverside Community College District's Open Campus is responsible for all non-instructional aspects of online and distance education at the college and district levels, including:

- Online, hybrid and web-enhanced course set-up and maintenance; upgrades and training; and backup and implementation in conjunction with the host provider (WebCT/Blackboard)
- Online support training including use of web page publishing software, streaming media software, and peripherals via one-on-one training; FLEX workshops; and Online Blackboard Academy
- Maintenance of servers and software licenses for online-related instruction.

Open Campus provides online training for instructors through the Online Blackboard Academy which is offered on a monthly basis. A trainer is on-site every week and faculty mentors are available to assist faculty who are new to online teaching.

Open Campus also provides support for many other software applications, such as Excel, PowerPoint, Camtasia, and a wide variety of software applications that support the instructor in and out of the classroom. A 24/7 Help Desk, Presidium, is available to assist both faculty and students with technical support. Student and faculty resources are available through links on the Open Campus home page, www.OpenCampus.com.

Increasing the number of courses that can be taken online has not significantly increased the college's costs.

C3. Anticipated Effect of the Proposed Change on the Rest of the Institution

Offering classes online provides an alternative option for both students and faculty. On campus, it increases the capacity of the college to offer more sections “on ground” and to serve more traditional students by freeing up classroom space. Several campus departments and offices already offer support for online students. For example, all registration services are available through WebAdvisor and students have online access to the college bookstore, www.rccnorco.bncollege.com, and to library databases, <http://library.rcc.edu/norco>. Faculty web pages and college web pages provide contact information for online student inquiries. The total college enrollment has increased due to student enrollment in distance education courses. The number of students enrolled in Norco online courses during the 2008-2009 academic year was 4313. It is anticipated this number will continue to increase as more opportunities in distance education courses become available.

C4. Statement of the Intended Benefits that will Result from the Change

The intended improvement for Norco College in developing and offering distance education courses is that it provides the college with the capacity to serve the entire community. Distance education provides accessibility for those living away from the college and provides improved accessibility for those with family responsibilities, such as parents with young children at home, or those who must keep a full-time job and therefore cannot attend classes on campus consistently. This attracts more students and gives the college the ability to serve more students without requiring additional facilities. Another benefit students report is that they can revisit the lectures and presentations again and again if necessary for better understanding. Students also report more student-teacher interaction as they use email to correspond about their courses.

C5. Description of the Preparation and Planning Process for the Change

All Norco College courses and programs are developed and approved following the Academic Senate curriculum approval process:

- Instructional program review occurs every six years
- Instructional department program review updates are submitted yearly
- Course, program development and revision are completed by faculty with discipline and department approval, college administration review and Board of Trustees approval
- Curriculum Committee review process for existing individual courses and programs on a regular basis through the comprehensive program review process
- Curriculum Committee approval of new courses or changes to existing courses prior to Board approval
- A separate approval process for all courses offered through distance education which includes the requirement that faculty members provide sound rationale for delivering the class through online or hybrid instruction as well as an explanation for the effective replacement of “seat time”
- Board of Trustees approval for all courses and programs
- State Chancellor’s Office approval for all new non credit courses and state-approved programs.
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Transfer courses are submitted through the articulation process for approval for IGETC (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Credit), California State University Breadth and University of California Transfer Credit Approval (US-TCA).

Norco College’s online faculty members have been part of the district’s faculty Online Advisory Committee which is conducting an exhaustive search for a learning management system (LMS). All of the major vendors have been reviewed. Currently WebCT/Blackboard (Bb), Version 8, is being used. The faculty has expressed an interest in testing Bb 9 or 9.1 in the future, but a final decision has not been made. The selection of the LMS has been an inclusive process that has enabled faculty to review several different systems and to check their viability for use with *Datatel* the college’s administrative system, capacity and capability, technical training, and ease of use for students and faculty.

D. Evidence of Institutional Support to Demonstrate the Continuance of Quality Standards

D1. Evidence of Sufficient and Qualified Faculty, Management, and Support Staffing Faculty

Norco College faculty may teach courses through distance education provided they meet the following requirements:

1. Faculty member has previously taught a hybrid or online course
2. Completed the Online Blackboard Academy training
3. The course to be offered through distance education delivery has been approved for Distance Education by the college's Curriculum Committee
4. Scheduling of the course through distance education is approved by the vice president of educational services or designee

Management

Management support for distance education is provided by the district's Open Campus. Open Campus facilitates the offering of distance education for Norco College by providing the technical support to manage and distribute the college's hybrid and online offerings through the WebCT/Blackboard platform. Open Campus also provides the college professional training and support services. An Educational Training Specialist from Open Campus is on site at the college one day per week. She is available to work with faculty on issues related to the technical aspects of teaching distance education. Faculty mentors are also available to work with faculty on the pedagogical issues related to teaching distance education courses. The Faculty Development Coordinator also schedules on campus training for faculty on topics of interest related to distance education training. A new faculty innovation center is currently under construction with completion scheduled for August 2010; this facility will provide additional technical assistance support for faculty members who teach online.

Other Support

Information Technology (IT) Help Desk is available to assist faculty with hardware related issues and there is 24/7 support for both faculty and students through *Presidium*, a contracted service that assists with technical issues that arise in the distance education learning environment. Open Campus staff is also available to assist faculty with the use of media, disabled-student compliance issues and the upload and revision of classes each term.

Advisory Committees

Norco College faculty members participate in the District Online Advisory Committee which is co-chaired by two faculty members. This is a district body consisting of faculty who teach hybrid and online courses. They discuss relevant issues and provide valuable input to the Open Campus on faculty and student-related issues.

D2. Evidence of Appropriate Equipment and Facilities, including Adequate Control over any Office-campus Site

Riverside Community College District's Open Campus provides the support and facilitation

of all distance education offerings for Norco College. The current learning management system being used is WebCT/Blackboard. The LMS is fully supported through a contractual agreement. All technical problems relative to the LMS and delivery of courses is handled by the Open Campus staff. All course materials are password protected and compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Office of DSP&S provides assistance to faculty in making all DE offerings 508 compliant and is included in the curriculum approval process for all new DE proposals.

Student and Faculty Support

Online students wishing to do their work on campus have access to student computer labs in any one of the various learning labs on campus that have computers. Additionally, computers for student use are available in the Library. The newly planned Faculty Innovation Center, scheduled for completion in August 2010 will provide 15 dedicated work stations staffed by and Instructional Support Specialist to provide additional faculty support for online instruction preparation and delivery.

Library

The library has an extensive web presence to support distance education learning. The library website serves as a portal to information resources such as books, periodicals, and Internet resources. Online access to electronic books is available. Students and faculty have access to over one dozen online databases, including the EBSCO CA Premiere Package, America's Newspapers and Congressional Quarterly Weekly.

Financial Aid

Norco College provides extensive financial aid information online via the college website, including application and eligibility requirements, important deadline dates, and specific information on federal and state financial aid programs. Financial Aid resources are available online, including important websites, forms and publications. Financial Aid Office information, location, office hours, and an online contact form to speak to the staff are also available. Applications and forms are also available in Braille, large print, and Spanish.

Academic Advising and Counseling

Online academic advising and counseling are available for all current and prospective Norco College students through the college's Counseling Department. This service provides counseling and advising to students enrolled in both online and on campus classes. The e-Orientations and e-Appointment services (e-SARS web appointment services) can be utilized online. The e-Appointment service allows students to schedule a meeting online to see a counselor in person. The online counseling component allows current and prospective students to receive general academic advisement online. The Scheduling and Report System (SARS) contacts students through phone or email to remind them of an upcoming appointment. During a counseling appointment, the students receive educational, career, and personal counseling as it pertains to their academic success. The Counseling website is helpful to online students by providing information on counseling appointments, the matriculation process, orientations, success workshops, and prerequisite information. Individual appointments, group workshops, online counseling, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) are all available to current and prospective Norco College students through this service.

Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS)

All courses and services offered in a distance education format are Section 508 and ADA compliant. Courses that are newly proposed to be offered via distance education or that use technology as a method of instruction are reviewed by the Norco College Curriculum Committee to ensure accessibility and Section 508 /ADA compliance standards. The College's institutional websites and the Open Campus website are also 508 and ADA compliant. Norco College currently offers services to distance education students with a disability through a combination of email, U.S. Mail, video relay, and telephone. In addition, DSPS counseling is provided via live online academic advising services.

D3. Evidence of Fiscal Resources including the Initial and Long Term Amount and Sources of Funding for the Proposed Change

Norco College has a five-year financial plan that allocates significant resources in support of online instructional delivery. Specifically, the plan calls for \$ 100,000 annually to be allocated from the general fund to augment the college's instructional equipment block grant, as well as providing \$ 50,000 annually for online library databases. The College Technology Plan, adopted in 2009, includes a comprehensive inventory of all instructional technology accompanied by replacement cost timelines and estimates. Grant funding from federal Title V, the state Basic Skills Initiative and other sources provides additional fiscal support for technology in support of online instruction.

D4. A Plan for Monitoring Achievement of the Desired Outcomes of the Proposed Change

Student learning outcomes are required for every new and revised course outline requiring Curriculum Committee approval. Norco College conducts analysis of student learning outcomes for every course, both live and online, every semester. All courses are reviewed through the regular program review process by the instructional departments, disciplines and curriculum committee.

E. Evidence that the Institution Has Received All Necessary Internal and External Approvals

All courses, degrees, and certificates offered by Norco College have been approved by the Norco College Curriculum Committee, which requires that all courses being proposed for distance education, whether as a hybrid or fully online, undergo a separate review and approval by the curriculum committee. Each course proposed for distance education delivery must demonstrate that it is designed to ensure regular and effective contact in hybrid and online classes has been developed to serve this process. Following approval of the curriculum committee, the course is submitted to the Board of Trustees. This substantive change proposal was approved by the College Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Council on April 6, 2010 and the Norco Strategic Planning Committee on April 27, 2010.

F. Evidence that Each Eligibility Requirement Will Still Be Fulfilled

CERTIFICATION OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Authority

Norco College is part of the Riverside Community College District. Norco College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is approved under regulations of the California State Department of Education and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

2. Mission

On June 20, 2006, the RCCD Board of Trustees originally approved the Norco College mission statement. A revised Norco mission statement was approved on December 9, 2008 as follows: *Norco College provides educational programs, services, and learning environments for a diverse community. We equip our students with the skills to attain their goals in higher, career/technical, and continuing education; workforce development; and personal enrichment. To meet the evolving community needs, Norco College emphasizes the development of technological programs. As a continuing process, we listen to our community and respond to its needs while engaging in self-examination, learning outcomes assessment, ongoing dialogue, planning, and improvement.*

The Norco mission statement appears in published material including the RCCD Strategic Plan, the college catalog, Faculty Survival Guide, and the published Schedule of Classes. It also appears on the RCCD-Norco website and is displayed on posters around the college.

3. Governing Board

Norco College is one of three educational institutions in the Riverside Community College District. The district is governed by a publicly elected five-member Board of Trustees, joined by a non-voting student trustee. Members are elected for four-year terms, and these terms are staggered to ensure continuity. The Board members have no employment or personal financial interest in the institution. The Board holds monthly meetings open to the public with notices and agendas widely posted in advance.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The Norco College President is recommended for appointment by the District Chancellor and approved by the Board of Trustees. The President reports directly to the District Chancellor. The Chancellor is appointed by and reports to the Board of Trustees.

5. Administrative Capacity

Norco College administration is adequate in number, experience and qualifications to provide the appropriate administrative oversight necessary to support the new college's mission and purpose. In addition to the President, administrative appointments include Vice Presidents of Business and Educational Services; Deans of Instruction and Student Services; an Assistant Dean of Library and Learning Resources; Associate Deans of Student Success and Special Funded Programs; a

Supervisor of Admissions and Records; a Director of the TRIO Program; and a Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance. A Norco College organizational chart is included in this report.

6. Operational Status

Norco College has been operational since it opened its doors in April 1991. Currently, there are over 10,000 students enrolled in classes, which are held six days a week. Many students are actively pursuing vocational certificates, associate degrees, and/or transfer to four-year institutions. A smaller proportion of students have other goals, including personal and/or academic skills development and career enrichment.

7. Degrees

To meet its stated mission, Norco College offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees and a variety of certificates, primarily in business, management, early childhood education and technology fields. The institution has over twenty-seven degree and/or certificate programs. The requirements for each of these programs can be completed entirely on the Norco College.

8. Educational Programs

Norco College's degree programs are congruent with the college's mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, are of sufficient content and length, and are conducted at appropriate levels of quality and rigor. The degree programs meet California Code of Regulations and Title V curriculum requirements and, when combined with the general education component, represent two years of full-time academic work. Course outlines in both degree credit and non-degree credit courses meet predetermined student learning outcomes achieved through class content, assignments, and activities, and all course outlines are subject to periodic, rigorous program review. Norco also offers 51 career/technical certificates.

9. Academic Credit

Norco College awards academic credit based on accepted practices of California community colleges under California Code of Regulations, Title V, Section 55002.5. Detailed information about academic credit is published in the college catalog.

10. Student Learning and Achievement

Board-approved institutional General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) have been published in the college catalog beginning with the 2007-2008 edition. Additionally, program-level Student Learning Outcomes have been adopted for all Norco career/technical programs and for the seven areas of emphasis offered by the district. Course outlines of record contain appropriate course-level SLOs integrated with methods of instruction and evaluation. Course-level SLOs are achieved and assessed by a variety of methods, and on the Norco College, instructors of all courses offered are actively engaged in SLO assessment. Coordinated by department and discipline faculty and by administrators, every course, regardless of its location and delivery system, must follow the course outline of record.

11. General Education

All degree programs require a minimum of 23 units of general education to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. Students must demonstrate competency in

writing, reading, and mathematical skills to receive an associate degree. The institution's general education program is scrutinized for rigor and quality by the Academic Senates, the Matriculation Council, and appropriate constituencies; the district will adhere to the newly approved requirements for math and writing effective at the state level for students entering in 2009.

12. Academic Freedom

Norco College supports academic freedom; faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as ensured by Board Policy 4030 endorsing the AAUP Statement on Academic Freedom. The institution prides itself on offering an open, inquiring, yet respectful and transparent educational experience, evidencing our commitment to intellectual freedom and independence of thought.

13. Faculty

Norco College has 72 full-time faculty and approximately 232 adjunct faculty. All faculty must meet the minimum requirements for their disciplines based on regulations for the Minimum Qualifications for California Community College Faculty established in California Code of Regulations, Title V. Many hold terminal degrees. Clear statements of faculty roles and responsibilities exist in the faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement and the Faculty Handbook. These responsibilities are entrusted primarily to full-time faculty and include participation in curriculum, program review, the development of student learning outcomes, and assessment of student learning.

14. Student Services

Norco College prides itself on strong student services programs, providing a comprehensive array of services for all its students, as well as support services for those students requiring preparation for college-level work. Each department works to support the mission of the college and the academic success of our students.

15. Admissions

Norco College has adopted and adheres to admissions policies consistent with its mission as a public California community college and in compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title V. Student admission supports the Norco mission statement and ensures that all students are appropriately qualified for the program and course offerings. Information about admissions requirements is available in the college catalog, the Schedule of Classes, and on the college website. Students are encouraged to apply online (paper applications are also accepted).

16. Information and Learning Resources

Norco College provides long- and short-term access to sufficient print and electronic information and learning resources through its library and programs to meet the educational needs of students. The library is staffed to assist students in the use of college resources. Internet access and online computer search capabilities are available without charge to students in the library, student support programs, and in computer labs. The institution is committed to enhancing its learning resources, regardless of location or delivery method.

17. Financial Resources

Norco College, through the Riverside Community College District, has a publicly documented funding base that is reviewed and revised on an annual basis. The Norco Strategic Planning Council includes a Financial Resources Subcommittee charged with ensuring that financial resources needs are addressed in developing plans pertaining to educational programs, support services, and facilities needs.

18. Financial Accountability

The Riverside Community College District regularly undergoes and makes publicly available an annual external financial audit for the district and its educational centers by a contracted certified public accountant. The audit is conducted in accordance with the standards contained in Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The Board of Trustees reviews these audit reports on a regular basis. The Vice President of Business Services supports appropriate and effective utilization of the Norco College budget.

19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

Norco College has an established institutional strategic planning process and works with the Riverside Community College District to provide planning for the development of the college, including integrating plans for academic personnel, learning resources, student services, facilities, and financial development, as well as procedures for program review, assessment, and institutional improvement. Through the work of the Norco Academic Planning Council, Administrative Planning Council, and the Student Services Planning Council along with the Norco Strategic Planning Committee and its four subcommittees, the college is in a constant state of review and improvement. Annually generated Administrative, Student Services, and Academic Program Review documents, along with our Educational and Facilities master plans, drive institutional planning. The college and district systematically evaluate how well and in what ways Norco is accomplishing its purpose, including assessment of student learning and documentation of institutional effectiveness.

20. Public Information

The Riverside Community College District publishes a separate catalog for each of its three colleges and a schedule of classes that contains separate listings of classes offered on each college. These documents, along with multiple district and college websites and other appropriate publications, publicize accurate and current information about the institution that announces its mission and goals; admission requirements and procedures; academic calendar and program length; rules and regulations affecting students, programs and courses; degrees offered and degree/graduation requirements; costs and refund policies; available learning resources; grievance procedures; names and academic credentials of faculty and administrators, names of Board of Trustees members; and all other items relative to attending or withdrawing from the institution.

21. Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees provides assurance that Norco College adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission, describes the college in identical terms to all its accreditation agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required

by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. All disclosures by the institution will be complete, accurate and honest.

G. Evidence that Each Accreditation Standard Will Still be Fulfilled

CERTIFICATION OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

Norco College meets or exceeds all of the standards of accreditation. The college's last comprehensive evaluation and visit was in October, 2009. In January 2010, the Accrediting Commission of Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) took action to accept Norco College's self study and granted initial accreditation. The college's follow-up report and visit will take place in October, 2010; the next comprehensive evaluation and self study will be due in spring 2014. Accreditation standards will not be impacted by the proposed change.

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

The proposed substantive change strongly supports the Norco College mission statement, which calls for providing "educational programs, services, and learning environments for a diverse community" with an emphasis on "Meet(ing) evolving community needs" emphasizing "the development of technological programs". Offering degrees and certificates that can be completed primarily online is in direct congruence with Norco College's moniker as Riverside Community College District's "Technology College", which has been associated with the mission since the establishment of the Norco Campus in 1991. In this context, offering programs that can be completed largely online serves to enhance "the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished".

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated student learning outcomes. The institution provides an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

A. Instructional Programs

The proposed substantive change represents an institutional adaptation to the changing learning needs of community college students. Increasingly, community college students face competing demands, including care of children and other family members, employment or search for employment, and in some cases personal challenges that may preclude them from attending classes offered in the traditional, on-campus format. For these students, completing their studies primarily online may be the only means by which they can achieve their

educational goals. The proposed substantive change, therefore, enhances the ability of the College to meet ACCJC Standard 2A.

B. Student Support Services

Student support services at Norco College are being increasingly made available in an online format. The registration process is now almost exclusively conducted online. Beginning in fall 2010 online student advising will be available and the assessment process is also offered in an online format. The availability of online student support services complements and enhances the offering of degrees and certificates that can be largely completed online, thereby strengthening the college's adherence to ACCJC Standard 2B.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

More than a dozen online databases are available for the use of Norco College students who, like most contemporary community college students, conduct the majority of their course-related research online. Further, Norco College has begun to offer live tutorial services online and the College's faculty members who teach online are available through synchronous electronic communication during their office hours. There is, therefore, a strong congruence between the changes in instructional delivery embodied in the proposed substantive change and the manner in which library and learning support services are provided by Norco College.

Standard III: Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes, including stated student learning outcomes, and to improve institutional effectiveness.

A. Human Resources

Norco College has sufficient human resources to support the proposed substantive change. Online instructors are provided extensive training via the District operated Open Campus. Additionally, on-site support for online instructors is provided by an Instructional Support Specialist. Professional development opportunities focused on improving online instruction methods and approaches are provided to faculty members on an ongoing basis.

B. Physical Resources

Offering courses and programs online actually reduces the strain on physical resources from the standpoint of reducing the number of classrooms required to deliver instruction. The College has planned a faculty innovation center that will open in the fall 2010 semester that will provide a staffed, 15-station training facility for the college's online instructors.

C. Technology Resources

The technology required to implement the proposed substantive change is already in place. The college has a Technology Plan that was approved by the Strategic Planning Committee in fall 09. This plan includes a comprehensive inventory of the college's instructional technology, accompanied by an equipment replacement plan and the identification of funding sources to support equipment replacement.

D. Financial Resources

The college has sufficient financial resources to support implementation of the proposed substantive change. From a facilities standpoint, the operational costs of online instructional delivery are significantly lower than the costs associated with delivering instruction in the traditional live format. From the standpoint of instructional equipment, the college's inventory is sufficient to support the delivery of a wide range of online courses and programs. Although, like all California community colleges, Norco College is currently facing severe budgetary constraints, as a result of significant investment in prior years the age and condition of the college's instructional technology is sufficient to withstand a prolonged period of budgetary shortfalls.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

Implementation of the proposed substantive change is a significant step toward "continuous improvement of the institution", in that it makes many of the courses and programs offered by the college more available to students for whom coming to campus for all of their classes poses a constraint. With regard to review and approval of the proposed change through shared governance processes, this proposal was approved by the College Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Council on April 6, 2010 and by the Norco College Strategic Planning Committee on April 27, 2010.