Additional supporting information on implementing MJC's Distance Education Plan 2012-2017.

Modesto Junior College approved a comprehensive distance education plan on April 16, 2012, which is now being implemented. Four distance education goals have been outlined in the plan.

**Goal #1:** Deliver online support services for students, including those enrolled in Distance Education courses, to persist and succeed in their educational goals.

**Online advising:** Counselors meet with students virtually. General counseling has implemented program to provide online students synchronous meetings with counselors without physically coming on campus, through the application 'Join Me.'

**Additional resources online.** Additional resources for distance education (and traditional students) include an Online Advising e-mail account that is staffed by counselors all year. This service has been available since 2004. Under development are two projects. First, a 'Frequently Asked Questions' online web page has been written to provide answers to common questions. This will be posted to the Counseling web page in summer 2013. Screen capture videos are also under development that will answer some of the common general counseling questions that occur when developing an Education Plan and will be uploaded in fall 2013. The addition of videos allows students to watch information on screen and to hear it being explained simultaneously.

The college has also purchased a new Google product to facilitate students to search the MJC websites for key words to help them navigate the online resources more fully. In addition, the College is actively pursuing options for putting forms online so that students can fill them out and submit them electronically.

**Goal #2:** Establish minimum standards and provide faculty training, ongoing certification and support to effectively teach online/hybrid courses.

**Faculty training.** A tiered approach to faculty online training through coursework has been developed with multiple certification options, including the following classes: 1. Introduction to Online Teaching and Learning, 2. Introduction to LMS, and 3. Advanced LMS. The district has agreed to either grant 1 unit of academic equivalent credit for column (salary) advancement, a $400 stipend per course, or FLEX credit. Thirty-five faculty have completed courses in the series. Two faculty have become Certified Online Instructors through the @One Project, which is supported by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office.

**Best practices.** The Distance Education Advisory Committee developed a four page best practices rubric that is currently being vetted through the governance bodies. A minimum standards document has been developed to both shape new courses but also to foster continuous quality improvement in current online courses.

The Instructional Design Coordinator position was transitioned from an interim one to a full-time, tenured faculty position and filled in beginning of fall 2013.

**Goal #3:** Acquire, maintain and support technologies that increase the effectiveness of distance learning.
The College stays current with rapid advances in the LMS software, Blackboard. Recent versions have dramatically improved the ability for faculty and students to interact productively and collaboratively. For example, faculty and students can now easily use video to exchange ideas. Grading tools make giving rich feedback easier. Tests can now be analyzed statistically to validate individual questions. Faculty are being trained to use these LMS advances in the online instruction courses and workshops. In addition, faculty are being trained about course accessibility, including screen-reader friendly course-design, alt-tags, color issues, and video captioning. One week (10 hours) in the Introduction to Online Teaching and Learning course is devoted to online accessibility.

**Goal #4:** Establish governance, guideline and budget standards to effectively implement and monitor the college Distance Education Program.

The college has developed methods for evaluation of online courses that address state and federal regulations, and are codified in the Best Practices documents described above. In addition, the district negotiated specific criteria with the faculty union so that every faculty that teaches an online course as part of their load must include one peer evaluation in the online classroom modality.