SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROPOSAL
2014
Addition of Courses That Constitute 50 Percent or More of a Program
Offered Through a Mode of Distance Education
San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College
Highway 1, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403

Substantive Change Proposal

Addition of Courses That Constitute 50 Percent or More of a Program Offered Through a Mode of Distance Education

February 5, 2014

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Submitted to:
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
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STATEMENT OF REPORT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College Substantive Change has been reviewed and validated by Academic Senate on January 24, 2014 and College Council on January 28, 2014 for accuracy. It was approved by the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Board of Trustees on February 5, 2014.

Dr. Gil Stork
Superintendent/President

Pat Mullen
President, Board of Trustees
A. OVERVIEW OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Description of Proposed Change

The purpose of this substantive change proposal is to request approval for San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College to offer general education courses via the distance education modality. A moratorium on distance education course approval has been in effect since 2012 when the institution became aware that it was possible for a student to fulfill all GE requirements via distance education. Currently, with 28 to 32 units of general education credit available via distance education, it is possible for a student to obtain 50 percent of most degrees and a number of certificates via distance education. The district is thus requesting substantive change approval for the programs listed below. A chart with all of the details is provided in the evidence. (SC.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees</th>
<th>Degrees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration of Justice, AS-T</td>
<td>Advanced Engine Performance Technician, AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology, AA-T</td>
<td>Architectural Technology, AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History, AA-T</td>
<td>Art History and Professional Practices, AA</td>
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<td>Art Studio, AA</td>
<td>Automotive Technician, AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Science, AS</td>
<td>Broadcast Communications, AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration, AS-T</td>
<td>Business Administration - Career Path, AA</td>
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<td>Chemistry, AS</td>
<td>Communication Studies, AA-T</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer and Networking Technology, AS</td>
<td>Computer Applications/Office Administration,</td>
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<td>Computer Science, AS</td>
<td>AA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama, AA</td>
<td>Criminal Justice, AA</td>
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<td>Engineering, AS</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education Teacher, AA</td>
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<tr>
<td>English, AA-T</td>
<td>English, AA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Studies/Human Services, AA</td>
<td>Exercise Science, AA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Science, AA</td>
<td>Geology, AS</td>
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<td>International Studies, AA</td>
<td>History, AA</td>
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<td>Journalism, AA-T</td>
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<td>Legal Studies: Business Option, AA</td>
<td>Kinesiology, AS</td>
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<td>Studio Arts, AA-T</td>
<td>Theatre Arts, AA-T</td>
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<td>Welding Technology, AS</td>
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San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College Substantive Change Proposal – Distance Ed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificates</th>
<th>Business Administration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Applications</td>
<td>Computer Networking Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Processing</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library/Information Technology</td>
<td>Office Professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship to the Mission Statement**

The current Mission, Vision and Values statements of San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College are in support of supporting 50 percent or more of the general education requirements to be completed through distance education. The college’s mission statement can be found on the college’s website and printed in the 2013-2014 San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College Catalog.

**Mission**

*Cuesta College is an inclusive institution that inspires a diverse student population to achieve their educational goals.*

*We effectively support students in their efforts to improve foundational skills, transfer to four-year institutions, earn certificates or associate degrees, and advance in the workforce.*

*Through dynamic and challenging learning opportunities, Cuesta College improves lives by promoting cultural, intellectual, and professional growth. We prepare students to become engaged citizens in our increasingly complex communities and world.*

**Vision**

*Cuesta College is dedicated to accessible, high-quality education for the support and enhancement of student success, professional development, and the community we serve.*

**Values**

*Access, Success, and Excellence*

Both the vision and the values statements emphasize **access**, a concept inherent in the “inclusive” nature of the college as defined in the mission statement which was revised in 2013. By providing accessible courses to students for whom attendance at onsite classes is difficult, the distance education offerings in general education and other areas make affordable higher education available to a broader range of students, thus fulfilling the mission of the college.

San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College offers courses face-to-face, online and hybrid delivery methods of instruction to meet the current and future needs of its students. An increase in distance education offerings can help address student needs and enable students to meet their educational goals while supporting the institution’s mission statement.
Rationale for Request

As part of the college’s responsibility to maintain compliance with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges the San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College is submitting this substantive change proposal to seek appropriate approval. As part of a self evaluation the college identified general education courses that allow students to obtain 50 percent of the requirements for degrees and a number of certificates via distance education.

The need to expand distance education offerings and services results from an increasing student demand for distance education classes to enhance their chances of completing degree and certificate programs in a reasonable amount of time, and from efforts to serve a rural population with the district’s commitment to accessible higher education for all future students.

As a means to increase access to education, San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College has offered distance education courses for more than 15 years, while continuing to build instructional and student support services for distance education students. San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College has attempted to meet student needs and demands by offering student support services with on-line dimensions in the following areas: enrollment services, orientation, guidance, counseling, tutoring, library and instructional programs and services.

In support of the institution’s mission and student success Cuesta College’s Strategic Plan 2012-2014 identified Institutional Goal 1: “San Luis Obispo County Community College District will enhance its programs and services to promote students’ successful completion of transfer requirements, degrees, certificates, and courses.” Institutional Objective 1.3 states, “Increase successful completions in distance education courses by 2 percent annually.” Multiple actions steps have been developed and completed to support student successful completion rates.

San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College’s submission of the Distance Education Substantive Change Proposal is based on the growth in distance education over the past decade. This has created an opportunity for students to reach their educational goals by way of flexible learning opportunities in different modalities.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO BE OFFERED

The Educational Purposes of the Change are Clear and Appropriate

The programs included in this proposal are not new programs; each of them is an existing program offered by San Luis Obispo County Community College District, and each has been approved by the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Curriculum Committee
and the Board of Trustees. The change is only the addition of distance education as a mode of delivery.

The programs proposed to be offered via distance education are already offered with traditional face-to-face delivery of instruction. Major, general education and graduation requirements are identical for both distance education and face-to-face programs. Courses, regardless of their mode of delivery, share a common curriculum, course outline of record, and Student Learning Outcomes. In addition, the district has procedures in place to ensure that 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 face-to-face mode of delivery.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District, CurricUNET system was used to determine courses that are approved to be offered in the distance education modality and total Distance Education units possible to be taken in each degree and certificate. (SC.1)

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District Curriculum Committee separately approves each course proposed for distance education delivery to ensure that the following criteria are met: (SC.2, SC.3)

- Regular and effective contact is maintained between the instructor and students. (SC.4)
- Effective pedagogical techniques appropriate to the distance education mode are used to ensure that quality and rigor of instruction is equivalent to that of the face-to-face mode of the course. (SC.5, SC.6)
- Appropriate technology is used to achieve course objectives.
- Multiple measures are used to achieve and assess student learning.

Student achievement data for all instructional programs is reported by the Office of Institutional Research, and is made available each year to instructional programs for use in the Institutional Program Planning and Review (IPPR) process.

Figure 1 represents the course success rates for online distance education and face-to-face courses at the San Luis Obispo County Community College District. While online course success rates at Cuesta College (and across the state) are lower than face-to-face course success rates, the percentage of students who successfully complete online courses at Cuesta College has increased by nearly seven percentage points between fall 2008 and fall 2012. Moreover, Cuesta College’s online course success rates consistently exceed statewide online course success rates (Figure 2).
Withdrawals ("W grades") constitute a plurality of non-successful online course grades at both Cuesta College and across the state. Consequently, online course retention rates at Cuesta College (and across the state) are lower than face-to-face retention rates. However, as was the case with successful course completion rates, Cuesta College’s online retention rate also has increased by nearly seven percentage points between fall 2008 and fall 2012 (Figure 3).
Additionally, as indicated in figure 4, Cuesta College’s online retention rates consistently exceed statewide online retention rates.
The Proposed Program Meets Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission Policies

The proposed addition of the distance education mode of delivery meets the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards of the ACCJC, and incorporates Commission policies governing distance education. The courses and programs addressed in the proposal are part of existing programs that have undergone the district’s review and approval process, including approval by the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Curriculum Committee, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Board of Trustees. All programs have been approved by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office. The district complies with state and federal regulations on distance learning.

C. PLANNING PROCESS LEADING TO REQUEST FOR CHANGE

San Luis Obispo County Community College District maintains an integrated planning process to develop, sustain, and evaluate programs and services. All planning derives from the mission, vision, and values. The San Luis Obispo County Community College District Mission describes the intended student population, the programs and educational services that the district provides to the community. Systematic data collection and analysis helps the district identify current and anticipated challenges. These challenges are foundational for the development of the Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan. Through the process of developing the Educational Master Plan, the district develops Institutional Goals that are intended to focus the district in advancing the mission and meeting the identified challenges.

In the development of the Strategic Plan, the Institutional Goals are used to develop Institutional Objectives that describe specific action steps that will be undertaken to achieve the Institutional Goals. The Strategic Plan informs two other types of short-term plans, the Institutional Program Planning and Review (IPPR) and the Operational Plans. (SC.9, SC.8) All institutional processes are defined in the 2013 Integrated Planning Manual. (SC.7) The annual IPPR process ensures that instructional and student support programs assess progress and align their activities with the Strategic Plan and operational plans. (SC.101) An instructional program might decide, for instance, that adding course sections available via distance education could help the district improve its capture rate for the 24 to 40 age cohort, an objective in the Strategic Plan.

Needs and Resource Assessment

A survey of distance education instructors in 2009 assessed the Learning Management System (LMS.) While it was decided at the time to stay with the existing LMS, the survey identified core functionality that would help the district identify candidates for a new LMS in 2011. At that time, a subcommittee of the Technology Committee and the Distance Education Committee analyzed a number of LMS options based on the criteria established by faculty in the 2009 survey. At the same time, the Strategic Plan for 2010-2012 called for establishing a budget for Distance Education, which had not had its own budget prior to that time. The budget line was
established in 2010, (SC.10) and the cost of the LMS and the principle staff support position were moved into the distance education budget. When the district decided to migrate to a new LMS in 2011-2012, the Planning and Budget Committee prioritized the one-time costs of the migration, and the transition was fully funded by the district. (SC.11) Among the needs met by the transitional funding were the expansion of the principle support staff position from 10-month to 12-month; the development of a faculty professional development support position – filled by two faculty on reassigned time since spring 2012 – to provide training and support in the migration to the new LMS; and sufficient funding to fully subsidize district faculty’s enrollment in distance education certification courses offered by @One.

**Anticipated Effect of the Proposed Change on the Institution**

The primary anticipated effect of the proposed change is an increase in student access to higher education and enhanced success in completing degree, transfer, and certificate programs. As we offer more distance education courses and expand support services for students in those courses, we can expect an increase in enrollment, especially among non-traditional students who have the greatest need for schedule flexibility.

**Benefits Resulting From the Change**

The major benefit of the proposed change is the increased access to higher education opportunities for residents of the district. As the district makes substantial portions of degree and certificate programs available via distance education or hybrid modes, and expands support services for students in those courses, more students will be able to incorporate learning opportunities into their schedules, and more will succeed at reaching their educational and training goals.

**A Description of the Preparation and Planning Process for the Change**

The change was recognized in 2011 when a review of general education courses authorized for distance education delivery made it clear that all GE requirements could be met via distance education. The district has been planning for distance education expansion and improvement since 2008, when formal responsibility for distance education was incorporated into the job description of the director of Library and Distance Education. An earlier version of the district’s strategic plan included the establishment of a budget line for distance education, which was accomplished in 2010. The primary technical support position for the LMS was expanded from 10 months to 12 months in 2011, and one-time funding for migrating to a new LMS (Moodle) was recommended by the Planning and Budget Committee and approved for the 2011-2012 academic year. In addition to paying for the simultaneous operation of two LMS platforms, the transitional funding paid for six on-site faculty training days provided by the @One Trainers Bureau, and established a reassigned-time faculty position to provide ongoing training and mentoring for distance education faculty. The 2012-2014 and 2014-2017 Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of distance education in Goal 1.3: improve the success rate of student
in distance education courses by 2 percent annually. An action step toward that goal, accomplished in 2013, was the adoption of two documents defining best practices in technological and pedagogical readiness for distance education faculty. (SC.5, SC.6) Assessment of the 2012-2013 academic year shows that the district exceeded the goal of 2 percent improvement in student distance education success rates. (SC.12)

In February 2012 the Academic Senate Council placed a moratorium on the approval of new distance education courses and adding the distance education modality to existing courses. This cessation of new course approval allowed the district time to put policies and procedures in place to ensure that existing distance education courses, and new ones when the moratorium is lifted, would have appropriate policies and support structures in place to ensure student success.

D. INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES AND PROCESS FOR CHANGE

Student Support Services

The first level of student technical support for distance education is the LMS specialist, who is available by telephone Monday through Friday and by email at support@my.cuesta.edu. This support is supplemented on weekday evenings by the instructional assistant, who answers telephone and email questions from students and faculty in distance education courses. Faculty teaching distance education or hybrid courses are encouraged to submit Course Welcome Letters which provide students with information about the technology requirements to use Moodle successfully, as well as other crucial information about the courses. (SC.13)

The distance education website provides information for students and faculty, as well as links to additional support and training. The student links include a Frequently Asked Questions section, information on the minimum technical requirements for accessing the LMS, and a link to a self-assessment test that addresses student readiness for distance education. (SC.14)

Library resources and services have become increasingly accessible to students regardless of location. The majority of the library’s periodical subscriptions are available in electronic format, and the library provides access to more than 12,000 e-books. The library web site provides online subject guides, citation guides, an information literacy tutorial (“Searchpath”), and a checklist for evaluating information resources. A version of the English 201A Workbook is available to students in distance education sections of that course. Reference librarians are available by telephone, email, and live chat whenever the library is open. (SC.15)

The Student Services for Distance Education document delineates student services and the means by which they are available for students at the three campus sites and online. (SC.16)
Sufficient and Qualified Faculty, Management, and Support Staff

The director of Library and Distance Education, who reports to the vice president for Academic Affairs, is responsible for distance education. The director supervises the LMS specialist and the instructional assistant who provide the help desk Learning Management System support for both faculty and students, and co-chairs with a faculty member of the Distance Education Committee.

The Distance Education Committee is a participatory governance body that develops and recommends standards and policies to promote the quality managed growth and sustainability of distance education at the college. These standards and policies address the following four areas: technology infrastructure and support; on-line development, delivery and evaluation; faculty support, assignment, and evaluation; and student support, access, retention, success and persistence.

Working with the Academic Senate, the Distance Education Committee has developed checklists of best practices in pedagogical and technological aspects of online teaching, and has shared them with chairs and deans as an aid in assigning distance education instructors. (SC.5, SC.6)

The committee also drafted guidelines for Regular Effective Contact and procedures for verifying the identity of students in the distance education courses which, after approval by the Academic Senate and College Council, were adopted by the Board of Trustees. (SC.4)

The Technology Committee assesses and prioritizes technology needs and makes recommendations concerning support and allocation to Planning and Budget. The committee ensures campus-wide participation in the prioritization process, and promotes sustainable technological improvements. The Educational and Facilities Master Plans, the Strategic Plan and the Technology Plan guide the committee’s decisions.

There are two technology resource coordinators (a total of 100 percent release time) to support the full-time and part-time distance education faculty with beginning and advance training, planning online course development, developing resources and maintaining the faculty distance education website.

Currently, the faculty evaluation process includes an evaluation form for distance education faculty. Revisions to the faculty evaluation process is moving through the governance approval process. The college Academic Senate approved the revisions in December 2013. (SC.17)

Professional Development

Prior to the migration to Moodle in spring 2012, the LMS specialist, instructional assistant, and technology trainer were all enrolled in Moodle administration and instructional courses provided by the district’s hosting partner Remote-Learner. The district then hosted six full-day training sessions provided by the @One Trainers Bureau to introduce instructors to the new platform.
The distance education website has been revamped to include links to additional training and resources. (SC.18) In spring 2012, the district negotiated a full-time faculty position of technology resource instructor to develop and deliver additional training and support for distance education instructors. The position has been renewed twice, and is currently shared by two faculty who conduct basic and advanced training on the LMS, best practices, and accessibility. (SC.19) Since 2011, the distance education budget has subsidized the enrollment of District faculty in @One’s Online Teacher Certification Program courses.

**Appropriate Equipment and Facilities**

The district contracts for off-site hosting of the LMS, which assures reliable access and saves the district from having to maintain additional hardware. District programming staff developed an interface between the LMS and Banner to enable simple transfers of class rosters and grades between the systems. The district provides open computer labs at both the San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles campuses; these labs provide access to the LMS as well as to other instructional software used by the district. With funding from the Cuesta Foundation, the district is working to upgrade both wired and wireless networks, assuring that students with their own computers are able to access the LMS and other networked services.

**Sustainable Fiscal Resources**

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has sufficient financial resources to cover the costs associated with licensing and continual maintenance of the college’s distance education program. Approximately half of the director’s time is devoted to distance education. The distance education budget includes the full cost of the LMS specialist position as well the annual cost for Moodle hosting and other support services provided by Remote-Learner. All of these costs are paid from general fund dollars, as is the reassigned time of the technology resource instructors. Because the existing budget includes the capacity for modest growth in use of the LMS, the proposed change will have little or no impact on the institution’s budget in the next several years.

**A Comparative Analysis of the Budget**

San Luis Obispo County Community College District provides and will continue to provide compensation for the full time and part time faculty who teach in the various programs outlined in the substantive change proposal. In order to maintain the appropriate standard for teaching in the programs the San Luis Obispo County Community College District will financially support professional development activities. Existing funds from the Distance Education budget meet the program needs and are able to support modest increases. If necessary, the vice president’s budget will be used to enhance the department budget so that program needs can be met. When the district transitioned to a new learning management system in 2012, the change resulted in a reduction by more than half of the annual LMS licensing and hosting charges. In addition, the district increased the appointment of the primary LMS support position from 10 to 12 months,
and funds a 100 percent reassigned time faculty technology resource instructor position first filled in spring 2012.

Technology resources are funded through the general fund based on technology requests submitted in the Institutional Program Planning and Reviews and the resource allocation process that consolidates and prioritizes these technology requests. Funds for technology resources are also part of the Computer Services budget. This budget for technology implementation, maintenance, staff support, and ongoing professional development totals $2,962,371 which is 6.09 percent of the district’s total unrestricted general fund. To support technology needs, the Foundation donated $152,000 for 2012-2013 along with a commitment to augment this account by $100,000 annually.

**A Plan for Monitoring Achievement of Outcomes**

All courses offered regardless of modality are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee to ensure appropriate content, length and levels of quality and rigor. Student learning outcomes and assessment are determined by faculty for programs and courses. Each course and program student learning outcome and assessment is documented.

Institutional Research collects, analyzes, and disseminates data to measure the attainment of institutional priorities. In the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, the first three Institutional Objectives define expected improvements in student transfer readiness, completion of degree and certificate programs, and successful completion of distance education courses. The draft 2014-2017 Strategic Plan retains Institutional Objective 1.3, which calls for an annual 2 percent improvement in the student success rate for distance education courses. (SC.20) The district’s integrated planning process calls for annual data analysis to assess the effectiveness of programs and plans.

The district has continued to implement practices that serve as the foundation for the continuous cycle of assessment and improvement of district instructional programs, student services, and processes.

The district systematically assesses how well it accomplishes its purposes through the implementation of a cycle of integrated planning; the timelines and processes for this cycle are documented in the *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Integrated Planning Manual 2012*. The district publishes its planning processes and how well it achieves its purposes on the Accreditation and the Office of Institutional Research web pages. (SC.21, SC.22, SC.23)

Assessment and planning occur at the unit level through a regular annual cycle of Institutional Program Planning and Review for all units in the district, including departments, instructional programs, student services, and administrative services. In this process, each unit describes its desired program outcomes and the ways that the unit contributes to the achievement of Institutional Goals and Institutional Objectives. (SC.24, SC.25, SC.26) In addition the
Institutional Program Planning and Review process includes the results of two types of assessments:

1. Analysis of institutional data most relevant to the unit. This analysis compares each unit’s performance to established standards for similar units or to historical data. For example, for instructional programs, these data include student retention, fill rates, and full-time equivalent students. (SC.24, SC.25, SC.26)

2. Analysis of student learning program outcome assessments. These assessments are contingent on the type of program (instructional, student services, or administrative). (SC.27, SC.28, SC.29)

For instructional programs, reports of the assessments of course-level and program-level student learning outcomes are documented in the Course or Program Assessment Summary. (SC.30) These Course or Program Assessment Summary documents include assessment plans and efforts to improve student learning where warranted. The program-level Course or Program Assessment Summary documents are submitted annually and are currently posted on the institutional V-Drive. The program-level Course or Program Assessment Summary documents are also submitted with Annual Program Planning and Review Worksheets and posted on the Institutional Research and Accreditation web pages. All Course or Program Assessment Summary documents, for both programs and courses, are then included in each program’s Comprehensive Program Planning and Review report, which is submitted every four or five years, depending on the program, and made public on the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Institutional Research web page. (SC.31, SC.32)

The completed Comprehensive Program Planning and Reviews are reviewed annually and analyzed by the appropriate dean and manager. (SC.33) All Institutional Comprehensive Program Planning and Reviews are published on the Institutional Research and Accreditation web pages. (SC.31, SC.32) Additionally, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee annually reviews all Comprehensive Program Planning and Reviews submitted for the academic year and develops a report with institutional trends. The report is submitted to the Superintendent/President’s Cabinet. (SC.34) The President’s Cabinet develops recommendations and submits the recommendations to the appropriate committee or department. (SC.35)

**Evaluation and Assessment of Student Success, Retention and Completion**

Institutional Objective 1.3 in the 2012-2014 and 2014-2017 Strategic Plan is to “increase successful completions in distance education courses by 2 percent annually.” To meet that goal for the 2013 year, the target rate of successful completions was 63.06 percent. The 2013 performance exceeded that goal – and the goal for 2014 – by increasing the successful completion rate to 64.73 percent. While this rate has not yet closed the gap with overall District successful completions (71.8 percent), the gap is the smallest on record. The Institutional
Objective remains in the draft 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, with the focus of actions turning from faculty support to student readiness and support. (SC.12)

E.  EVIDENCE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPROVALS

All courses, degrees, and certificates of achievement offered by San Luis Obispo County Community College District have been approved by the college’s Curriculum Committee, the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Board of Trustees, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. Courses taught in a distance education modality, either as a hybrid or fully online have been reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee using a separate review process in accordance with California administrative code and regulation.

Policies and procedures governing distance education, faculty resources, faculty training and videos, can be found at the Distance Education Resources web page: (SC.18)

Administrative

All approvals for policies, procedures, and functions for Distance Education are generally accomplished through the governance process that includes the Academic Senate and/or College Council in addition to the Distance Education Committee and Technology Committee.

Legal Requirements

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District’s director of Library and Distance Education and the distance education coordinators keeps abreast of changes in the regulations for distance education through participation in the Chancellor’s Office Distance Education Coordinators’ Meetings. All requirements and updates are disseminated to appropriate groups and committees. In addition, reports are given to College Council and Academic Senate and information is posted on the Faculty Resources for Distance Education web page: (SC.18)

Governing Board Action

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District governing board policy requires all curriculum, which includes courses and programs of study to be approved by the governing board of trustees. All programs reflected in the CCCO Inventory of Programs were approved prior to submittal for State approval.

This substantive change proposal was presented to the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Board of Trustees as an information item at its January 2014 meeting and again at the February 2014 meeting for formal action and approval.
F. EVIDENCE OF MAINTENANCE OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A summary of the eligibility requirements and the impact of this substantive change proposal (if any) on the eligibility requirement follows. Documentation is either included in this substantive change proposal or referenced for each requirement.

1. Authority

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College is one of 112 public, two-year community colleges authorized to operate by the state of California. It is governed by a locally elected, five-member board of trustees. (SC.36)

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. The addition of offering 50 percent or more courses online in degrees and certificates does not adversely impact the authority of San Luis Obispo County Community College District.

2. Mission

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District educational mission is clearly defined. (SC.37) The statement is reviewed periodically by the college and recommendations made to the superintendent/president by the College Council. The San Luis Obispo County Community College District Board of Trustees accepted the most recently proposed mission statement in May 2013. (SC.38) The mission specifically states the college’s commitment to achieving student learning. The mission statement is published in the annual college catalog, (SC.39.a) on the website (SC.40) and widely throughout the college. The San Luis Obispo County Community College District Integrated Planning Manual indicates the review cycle of the district’s mission statement. (SC.21) Distance education courses, like all courses at San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College are developed by faculty through the curriculum development and approval process. All courses must align with the college’s mission and meet the same standards as face-to-face courses.

3. Governing Board

The San Luis Obispo Community College District is governed by a board of trustees, which consists of five regular members and one student trustee. Members serve staggered terms so as nearly as practical, one-half of the members are elected in even-numbered years in order to provide continuity. (SC.36) The student trustee is elected by a district-wide Associated Students of Cuesta College (ASCC) general election. The district will move from at-large trustee area elections to by-trustee area elections commencing with the November 2014 election. (SC.41)
The board is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the district and ensures the implementation of the mission of the San Luis Obispo County Community College District as established in the Powers and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. (SC.42) The board is an independent policy-making body and adheres to its Conflict of Interest Policy. (SC.43)

The director of Institutional Research presents disaggregated data representing student achievement and success of distance education students biannually to the Board of Trustees. Distance education data is also presented to the Board of Trustees in the annual Strategic Plan progress report. Board polices and administrative procedures are reviewed and/or approved by the Board of Trustees to ensure alignment with the college mission.

4. **Chief Executive Officer**

The chief executive officer of the San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College is the superintendent/president and is appointed by the governing board, which is the Board of Trustees. (SC.44) The superintendent/president possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies and devotes full-time responsibility to the district/college. (SC.45) The superintendent/president is neither the chair nor a member of the governing board, but does report directly to the governing board. (SC.45)

Changes in the chief executive officer took place in 2010 and 2008, and the district notified the Commission immediately upon each change. (SC.46, SC.44)

5. **Administrative Capacity**

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District employs sufficient in number and well-qualified administrators to support its mission and purpose. Policy regarding administrative employment is established in Board Policy 2061, with processes outlined in Regulation 2061. (SC.47) Evaluation is conducted pursuant to Board Policy 2065 and Regulation 2065.

(Note: these Board Policies and Regulations are under review and the numbers and content may change.)

The director of Library and Distance Education reports directly to the vice president of Academic Affairs. The vice president promotes distance education through faculty driven institutionalized processes, faculty scheduling, loading of the full-time distance education coordinator position, and MIS data collection. Administrative Policy 4105 ensures that a student who enrolls in a distance education course is the same person who participates in the course:

Instructors verify student identity by doing one of the following:

- Teach their courses in the district’s Learning Management System, which requires a secure login and password to access
- or-

San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College Substantive Change Proposal – Distance Ed 20
The Distance Education website has a training module that outlines the various methods of verifying student identity. (SC.98)

And the policy states,

Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. A description of the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, should be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. All distance education courses at San Luis Obispo County Community College District will include one or more types of regular effective contact as described below. (SC.4)

6. Operational Status

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District is fully operational and has been in continuous service since 1964. It serves a diverse student body of approximately 9,500 students who pursue a variety of educational goals including transfer, degree and certificate achievement, and lifelong learning. (SC.48, SC.49)

In fall 2012 the San Luis Obispo County Community College District had approximately 1,657 students participating in distance education courses. In spring 2013, 1,703 students participated in a distance education course.

7. Degrees

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District offers 26 associate of arts degrees, 23 associate of science degrees, 33 certificates of achievement, 22 certificates of specialization, and 16 associate degrees for transfer. (SC.39.b) Most of the college’s more than 730 courses are degree applicable; others provide opportunities in basic skills education. The majority of students officially state their goal to be obtaining a degree or certificate or to transfer without a degree. (SC.50, SC.51, SC.52, SC.53)

All courses regardless of modality reviewed and approved by the curriculum committee to ensure appropriate content, length, and levels of quality and rigor. Student learning outcomes and assessment are determined by faculty for programs and courses. Each course and program student learning outcome and assessment is documented.
8. Educational Programs

San Luis Obispo County Community College District degree programs are aligned with its mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, and are of sufficient content and length. Instructors teach to the standards of their disciplines and honor the official course outline of record, both of which ensure that courses are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered. (SC.54) The names and course requirements for degrees and certificates offered at San Luis Obispo County Community College District which reflects the institution’s mission statement are found in the catalog. Course and program descriptions and student learning outcomes are also found in the catalog which can be accessed at: http://www.cuesta.edu/student/documents/catalog/catalog_2013-14/catalog_2013-14.pdf (SC.39, SC.55, SC.56)

All courses, degrees, and certificates of achievement offered by San Luis Obispo County Community College District have been approved by the college’s Curriculum Committee, the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Board of Trustees, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. Courses taught in a distance education modality, either as a hybrid or fully online have been reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee using a separate review process in accordance with California administrative code and regulation.

All distance education courses have the same student learning outcomes as the face-to-face sections of the course. Assessments of student learning outcomes can be different than in face-to-face sections when appropriate.

The 2012-2014 Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of distance education in Goal 1.3: improve the success rate of student in distance education courses by 2 percent annually. An action step toward that goal, accomplished in 2013, was the adoption of two documents defining best practices in technological and pedagogical readiness for distance education faculty. (SC.5, SC.6) Assessment of the 2012-2013 academic year shows that the district exceeded the goal of 2 percent improvement in student distance education success rates. (SC.12)

9. Academic Credit

San Luis Obispo County Community College District awards academic credit as established in California Education Code Title 5. The Cuesta College catalog clearly describes the grading system and information on grading procedures, course repetition, and grade responsibility and is also repeated in the class schedule each semester. (SC.39.c) Credit is awarded based on the conventional Carnegie unit; each unit represents three hours of the student’s time each week for one 18-week semester (54 hours total). Distance education courses require the same rigor and transferability that leads to the awarding of academic credit.
10. **Student Learning and Achievement**

San Luis Obispo County Community College District identifies and assesses Student Learning Outcomes for courses, Student Services, degrees and certificates, in all locations and for all modalities. These program level-outcomes are linked in the 2013-2014 college catalog and in program reviews published on the Institutional Research website. ([SC.31], [SC.39.f])

The district continuously engages in ongoing assessment of institutional effectiveness. Three examples of these routine assessments are program reviews that include measurements of student learning outcomes, annual Institutional Effectiveness Outcome Reports and annual progress reports. ([SC.57], [SC.58], [SC.59])

Student Achievement Outcomes were defined in 2013 and published on the Institutional Research web page in spring 2013. The student achievement of course completion, program/certificate completion, graduation, licensure, and job placement data is an assessment tool for the district to measure performance of stability and achievement of the mission and supports the district to identify trends that strengthen the district’s performance. ([SC.60])

11. **General Education**

San Luis Obispo County Community College District defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry, as described in the college catalog. ([SC.39.d]) The college requires all students who earn an A.A. or A.S. degree to successfully complete a general education (GE) course pattern of 60 degree applicable semester units that cover courses in language and rationality; natural sciences; arts and humanities; social and behavioral sciences; kinesiology, development, and performance; and intercultural studies. ([SC.39.d])

The Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, reviews courses for content, Student Learning Outcomes, assignments, methods of evaluating objectives, and the inclusion of multicultural perspectives within textbooks that have been indicated on the course outline of record. ([SC.54])

Distance education courses support students earning their general education credits by offering alternative modes of delivery which increases student access and success.

12. **Academic Freedom**

This San Luis Obispo County Community College District has a number of policies related to academic freedom. Board Policy 1565 ([SC.61]) ensures that academic freedom of faculty is maintained and that an essential function of education is a probing of opinions and an exploration of ideas. Board Policy 3095 ([SC.62]) describes a faculty statement of ethics obligating faculty not only to teach their subjects, but to instill a respect for truth and intellectual inquiry. Board Policy 3900 ([SC.63]) states that students have the right of free
expression. The Article 3 of the CCFT Collective Bargaining Agreement (SC.64) states that the district and the bargaining unit encourage the concept of academic freedom related to course content and the expression of ideas by unit members in the workplace.

These academic freedom policies are exercised and respected through the district’s distance education courses.

13. Faculty

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has consistently met or exceeded the established Faculty Obligation Number, employing 145 full-time and 322 part-time faculty in fall 2013. Board Policy 3006 and 3095 describe faculty responsibilities including curriculum review and assessment of learning. (SC.65, SC.62) The Institutional Program Planning and Review Process coupled with the faculty prioritization criteria provide a means to determine which full-time faculty positions should be hired in support of its educational programs.

Faculty who meet minimum qualifications, according to the California State Chancellor’s Office, are assigned to teach at all sites. The same is true for sections taught online, Administrative Procedure 4105 defines distance education, modality, course approval, certification, course quality determination, and defined contact as mandated by Title 5, section 55204 & 55002. (SC.4) However faculty are required to demonstrate proficiency and/or have experience teaching online prior to being assigned online sections. Such determinations are made by division chairs and deans.

14. Student Services

Cuesta College provides a full range of student support programs and services that support the diverse student population and the college mission. (SC.66) The programs and services are published in the college catalog and advertised to students through the campus website. (SC.39.e, SC.67 SC.68, SC.32)

Distance education students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning. Student Services information, such as financial aid, admissions and records, and counseling are available to students online. Students can apply to the college, register, apply for financial aid, contact a counselor, and order transcripts online. The college catalog and schedule are available online.

- Faculty teaching distance education or hybrid courses are encouraged to submit Course Welcome Letters which provide students with information about the technology requirements to use Moodle successfully, as well as other crucial information about the courses. (SC.13)
The distance education web site provides information for students and faculty, as well as links to additional support and training. The student links include a Frequently Asked Questions section, information on the minimum technical requirements for accessing the LMS, and a link to a self-assessment test that addresses student readiness for distance education. (SC.14)

Library resources and services have become increasingly accessible to students regardless of location. The majority of the library’s periodical subscriptions are available in electronic format, and the library provides access to more than 12,000 e-books. The library web site provides online subject guides, citation guides, an information literacy tutorial (“Searchpath”), and a checklist for evaluating information resources. A version of the English 201A Workbook is available to students in distance education sections of that course. Reference librarians are available by telephone, email, and live chat whenever the library is open. (SC.15)

The Student Services for Distance Education chart delineates student services and the means by which they are available for students at the three campus sites and online. (SC.16)

The Student Success Centers (SSC) offer online tutoring for all Cuesta students. Online tutoring is conducted through Google Hangouts software. Additionally, if students are in need of assistance with a writing assignment, tutors use Google Docs in conjunction with Google Hangouts to provide students with live editing and comments on their document.

15. Admissions

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has admissions policies that specify the qualifications of students eligible for its programs. Consistent with its mission and Title 5, these policies are stated in Board Policy 5010. (SC.69, SC.70) All admission policies and procedures are provided in the college catalog. The same admissions and registration policies apply to distance education students, who may apply and register online.

- Copy of enrollment application.
  - Admissions Application—(English version) (SC.71)
  - Admissions Application—(Spanish version) (SC.72)
  - Admissions Application—Paramedic (SC.73)
  - Admissions Application—Psychiatric Technician Atascadero State Hospital (ASH) (SC.74)
  - Admissions Application—Registered Nurse (SC.75)
- Statement of roles and expectations of admissions personnel.
16. Information and Learning Resources

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has appropriate and sufficient information and learning resources to support its programs and mission. Board Policy 5090 states that the library will serve as a depository of books and other instructional materials. (SC.79)

Our holdings data (2011-2012 year) are as follows:

- Volumes held: 74,325
- Electronic books (included in the above figure): 12,916
- Periodical subscriptions (print): 180
- Periodical databases: more than a dozen databases providing indexing and full text articles from more than 10,000 magazines, journals, and newspapers
- Specialized databases include CINAHL Plus Full Text (nursing and allied health); Business Source Elite; and America: History and Life (US and Canadian history)
- Subscriptions to Rand California (statistical data), CountryWatch (data and news on countries), and the Chronicle of Higher Education (SC.80, SC.81)

Access to external resources comes through two agreements: first, an interlibrary loan agreement with Online Computer Library Center, Incorporated (OCLC), which provides software used to request books, media, and copies of articles from other libraries; and second, an agreement with Cal Poly which enables current Cuesta faculty and students to check out books from Cal Poly libraries. (SC.82)

The district operates distance learning through Moodle, its current learning management system.

17. Financial Resources

San Luis Obispo County Community College District’s funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development are adequate to support the college mission, student learning programs and services, institutional effectiveness, and assures financial stability. The Board of Trustees approves the tentative and final budgets each year. (SC.83) The budget includes a reserve of 6 percent of state and local revenues. (SC.83) In addition to the reserve, the budget has included a contingency account ranging from $3.1 million to $1.1 million each year since FY2009-2010. (SC.84) This contingency account has been used to help smooth the effects of state budget cuts. In FY2012-2013, the Board of Trustees approved a five-year budget reduction plan that will provide long-term stability to the college. (SC.85) In addition to the district’s funding base, the Cuesta College Foundation supports the college in the attainment of educational, scientific and cultural goals and in fulfilling the college’s mission. (SC.86)
Cuesta College Foundation has $29 million in total assets. Unlike most community colleges, the district has a very small Post Employment Health Care Plan and Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligation. (SC.87)

San Luis Obispo County Community College District provides the resources and structure to ensure that course quality standards and student learning outcomes in distance education courses can be achieved.

- A distance education budget line was established in 2010, (SC.10) and the cost of the Learning Management System and the principle staff support position were moved into the distance education budget. When the district decided to migrate to a new LMS in 2011-2012, the Planning and Budget Committee prioritized the one-time costs of the migration, and the transition was fully funded by the district. (SC.11) The director of Library and Distance Education, who reports to the vice president for Academic Affairs, is responsible for distance education. The director supervises the LMS specialist and the instructional assistant who provide the help desk Moodle support for both faculty and students, and co-chairs the Distance Education Committee with a faculty member.

18. Financial Accountability

San Luis Obispo County Community College District is audited on an annual basis by the audit firm Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Co., LLP per Board Policy 7000. (SC.88) The draft audit is reviewed by the audit committee prior to being presented to the Board of Trustees for acceptance. The audit committee reviews any current year findings and implementation status of the prior year findings. The certified audit report is sent to the appropriate oversight agencies as required.

Documentation

- Past, current and proposed budgets.
  - Planning and Budget Website (SC.89)
  - Budget Workshop presented to Board of Trustees (BOT) at February 2013 meeting (SC.90)
- Certified independent audits, including management letters (most recent three years suggested).
  - Certified Independent Audits (SC.91)
  - Foundation Audit (SC.92)
- Financial aid program review/audits, if the institution is a participant.
  - Certified Independent Audits (SC.91)
- Student loan default rates and relevant USDOE reports, if the institution is a participant.
  - 2009-2010 Annual Fiscal Report to ACCJC (SC.93)
  - 2010-2011 Annual Fiscal Report to ACCJC (SC.94)
19. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District, has continued to implement practices that serve as the foundation for the continuous cycle of assessment and improvement of district instructional programs, student services, and processes.

The district systematically assesses how well it accomplishes its purposes through the implementation of a cycle of integrated planning; the timelines and processes for this cycle are documented in the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Integrated Planning Manual 2012. The district publishes its planning processes and how well it achieves its purposes on the Accreditation and the Office of Institutional Research web pages. (SC.21, SC.22, SC.23)

In support and recognition of the importance of student success in distance education and as a result of the integrated planning process the district identified in the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan the Goal 1.3: improve the success rate of students in distance education courses by 2 percent annually. An action step toward that goal, accomplished in 2013, was the adoption of two documents defining best practices in technological and pedagogical readiness for distance education faculty. (SC.5, SC.6) Assessment of the 2012-2013 academic year shows that the district exceeded the goal of 2 percent improvement in student distance education success rates. (SC.12)
20. **Integrity in Communication with the Public**

All of required information is available from the San Luis Obispo County Community College District’s home page on the web at [www.cuesta.edu](http://www.cuesta.edu) and the online catalog with current information regarding its mission statement, admission requirements and procedures, campus rules, academic programs and courses, services available to students, and other important information. ([SC.39](#)) The district’s catalog is published annually and additional information is made public through the class schedule, the district’s website, and other materials. Distance education information is made available in the catalog and the college has a public information officer who coordinates the dissemination of information to district constituencies. Both the schedule and the catalog are available online.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District Public Information Office maintains copies of recent print or media advertisements and press releases for the college.

21. **Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District ensures that it adheres to all eligibility requirements, accreditation standards, and policies of the commission as outlined in Board Policy 3200. ([SC.95](#)) Board Policy 1100 ensures that the district describes itself in identical terms to all of its accrediting agencies. ([SC.96](#)) The district complies with requests, directives, decisions, and policies including publishing all required reports and communications from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

The vice president Academic Affairs has been delegated as the Accreditation Liaison Officer and is responsible for ensuring all necessary reports, documentation and evidence of compliance is provided to ACCJC in a timely fashion. Through the Office of the Vice President and in collaboration with the director of Library and Distance Education reporting in compliance includes distance education components where applicable. The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has responded to all recommendations and requests for reports from ACCJC.

**Documentation**

- List of other accreditations held by institution and information regarding standing with those organizations.
  - List of degree granting organizations Cuesta College is affiliated with for the following Academic Programs ([SC.97](#))
- Copy of directory pages or website which describe the institution’s representation by those accrediting bodies.
  - Accreditation Website ([SC.22](#))

Degree- and certificate-level learning outcomes are included in the 2013-2014 college catalog. ([SC.39.f](#), [SC.55](#), [SC.56](#))
Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education

In order to meet students’ needs and demands, San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College offers distance education courses in both hybrid and completely online modalities. Cuesta College does not offer correspondence education. Cuesta College meets the requirements of the Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education by ensuring that distance education courses adhere to the same quality standards and student learning outcomes as face-to-face courses.

Distance education courses, like all courses at San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College are developed by faculty through the curriculum development and approval process. All courses must align with the college’s mission and meet the same standards as face-to-face courses. The course outline of record serves as the basis of all Cuesta College courses regardless of modality. The San Luis Obispo County Community College District Curriculum Committee separately approves each course proposed for distance education delivery to ensure that the following criteria are met:  (SC.2, SC.3)

- Regular and effective contact is maintained between the instructor and students.  (SC.4)
- Effective pedagogical techniques appropriate to the distance education mode are used to ensure that quality and rigor of instruction is equivalent to that of the face-to-face mode of the course. (SC.5, SC.6)
- Appropriate technology is used to achieve course objectives.
- Multiple measures are used to achieve and assess student learning.

- All distance education courses at Cuesta College have the same student learning outcomes as the face-to-face sections of the same course, although distance education courses might employ different assessment methods than face-to-face courses. All course and program student learning outcomes are documented in CurricUNET, the college catalog, and in the Course or Program Assessment Summary (CPAS) documents which also include assessment plans and efforts to improve student learning where warranted. CPAS documents are submitted annually and are currently posted on the Institutional Research website.

- Student achievement data for all instructional programs is reported by the Office of Institutional Research, and is made available each year to instructional programs for use in the Institutional Program Planning and Review (IPPR) process.

- In order to ensure that regular and effective contact is maintained between the instructor and students San Luis Obispo County Community College District has developed Administrative Procedure 4105 which states:
Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. A description of the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, should be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. All distance education courses at San Luis Obispo County Community College District will include one or more types of regular effective contact as described below. (SC.4)

- Procedures for verifying the identity of students in distance education courses was approved by Academic Senate and College Council in fall 2013. Administrative Procedure 4105 ensures that a student who enrolls in a distance education course is the same person who participates in the course:

  Instructors verify student identity by doing one of the following:
  - Teach their courses in the district’s Learning Management System, which requires a secure login and password to access
  - Train on authentication issues, and
  - Provide written documentation on how the course uses other accepted methods of verifying student identity.

  The distance education coordinators have developed a training module that outlines the various methods of verifying student identity. (SC.98)

San Luis Obispo County Community College District provides the resources and structure to ensure that course quality standards and student learning outcomes in distance education courses can be achieved.

- A distance education budget line was established in 2010, (SC.10) and the cost of the Learning Management System and the principle staff support position were moved into the distance education budget. When the district decided to migrate to a new LMS in 2011-2012, the Planning and Budget Committee prioritized the one-time costs of the migration, and the transition was fully funded by the district. (SC.11) The director of Library and Distance Education, who reports to the vice president for Academic Affairs, is responsible for distance education. The director supervises the LMS specialist and the instructional assistant who provide the help desk Moodle support for both faculty and students, and co-chairs the Distance Education Committee with a faculty member.

- Working with the Academic Senate, the Distance Education Committee developed checklists of best practices in pedagogical and technological aspects of online teaching,
and has shared them with chairs and deans as an aid in assigning distance education instructors. (SC.5, SC.6) The committee also drafted guidelines for Regular Effective Contact which, after approval by the Academic Senate and College Council, were adopted by the Board of Trustees. (SC.4)

- There are two faculty distance education coordinators (a total of 100 percent release time) to support the full-time and part-time distance education faculty with beginning and advance training, planning online course development, developing resources and maintaining the distance education website.

- Faculty teaching distance education or hybrid courses are encouraged to submit Course Welcome Letters which provide students with information about the technology requirements to use Moodle successfully, as well as other crucial information about the courses. (SC.13)

- The distance education web site provides information for students and faculty, as well as links to additional support and training. The student links include a Frequently Asked Questions section, information on the minimum technical requirements for accessing the LMS, and a link to a self-assessment test that addresses student readiness for distance education. (SC.14)

Support services for students in distance education courses are widely available:

- Library resources and services have become increasingly accessible to students regardless of location. The majority of the library’s periodical subscriptions are available in electronic format, and the library provides access to more than 12,000 e-books. The library web site provides online subject guides, citation guides, an information literacy tutorial (“Searchpath”), and a checklist for evaluating information resources. A version of the English 201A Workbook is available to students in distance education sections of that course. Reference librarians are available by telephone, email, and live chat whenever the library is open. (SC.15)

- The Student Services for Distance Education chart delineates student services and the means by which they are available for students at the three campus sites and online. (SC.16)

- The Student Success Centers (SSC) offer online tutoring for all Cuesta students. Online tutoring is conducted through Google Hangouts software. Additionally, if students are in need of assistance with a writing assignment, tutors use Google Docs in conjunction with Google Hangouts to provide students with live editing and comments on their document.
San Luis Obispo County Community College District is making a good faith effort to comply with the State Authorization Policy. The director of Library and Distance Education and the director of Institutional Research developed the data to determine the locations of online students. The director of Library has contacted the states where Cuesta students reside, and authorization is in process or has been completed. This will be an ongoing process.

In February 2014, San Luis Obispo County Community College District submitted a Substantive Change Report to gain approval for program and certificates whose general education requirements moved beyond the 50 percent distance education threshold.

G. EVIDENCE THAT EACH ACCREDITATION STANDARD WILL STILL BE FULFILLED RELATED TO THE CHANGE AND THAT ALL RELEVANT COMMISSION POLICIES ARE ADDRESSED

Standard I. – Institutional Effectiveness and Mission

As stated earlier in the substantive change proposal, Relationship to the Mission Statement, the current mission statement of the college is clearly consistent with the establishment of programs where 50 percent or more of course general education requirements may be completed online through distance education.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District’s mission statement defines its broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

The college’s mission statement, can be found on the college’s website and printed in the 2013-2014 catalog.

**Mission**

*Cuesta College is an inclusive institution that inspires a diverse student population to achieve their educational goals.*

*We effectively support students in their efforts to improve foundational skills, transfer to four-year institutions, earn certificates or associate degrees, and advance in the workforce.*

*Through dynamic and challenging learning opportunities, Cuesta College improves lives by promoting cultural, intellectual, and professional growth. We prepare students to become engaged citizens in our increasingly complex communities and world.*

**Vision**

*Cuesta College is dedicated to accessible, high-quality education for the support and enhancement of student success, professional development, and the community we serve.*

**Values**

*Access, Success, and Excellence*

The mission, vision and the values statement emphasize **access**, a concept inherent in the
“inclusive” nature of the college as defined in the mission statement which was revised in 2013. By providing accessible courses to students for whom attendance at onsite classes is difficult, the distance education offerings in general education and other areas make affordable higher education available to a broader range of students, thus fulfilling the mission of the college.

San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College offers courses face-to-face, online and hybrid delivery methods of instruction to meet the current and future needs its students. To enable students to meet their educational goals and to support the institution’s mission statement an increase in distance education offerings can help address the student needs.

For all students who attend the college the basis of the mission, vision and values points to the need for all efforts to be geared toward providing student success and enhancing access. The proposed substantive change will enhance the college’s ability to address this purpose. As the student population changes and grows there will be more of a demand to offer programs where 50 percent or more of the general education courses required of degree and certificate programs online through distance education will grow as well. As a result of the demand the college is seeking approval to offer courses and programs meeting the definitions of this substantive change proposal.

**Standard II. - Student Learning Programs and Services**

All courses and programs are approved by the college’s Curriculum Committee with adherence to the college’s established course outlines of record (as required by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office). Requests for distance education modality for a course (new or revision to existing distance education approved course) must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. All courses offered through the distance education modality are offered with the same high quality and are in accordance to the college’s mission.

All San Luis Obispo County Community College District’s courses offered are taught with state-of-the-art instructional technology and with the most appropriate pedagogy and methodology with respect to the official course outline of record. All sections, regardless, of modality or site, adhere to the appropriate depth and rigor of all sections taught in a discipline. Courses are scheduled with consideration to what is in the best interest of students, offering choices that will enhance their opportunity to complete a certificate or degree in a reasonable time frame.

Assessment and planning occur at the unit level through a regular annual cycle of Institutional Program Planning and Review for all units in the district, including departments, instructional programs, student services, and administrative services. In this process, each unit describes its desired program outcomes and the ways that the unit contributes to the achievement of Institutional Goals and Institutional Objectives.

For instructional programs, reports of the assessments of course-level and program-level student learning outcomes are documented in the Course or Program Assessment Summary. (SC.30)
These Course or Program Assessment Summary documents include assessment plans and efforts to improve student learning where warranted. The program-level Course or Program Assessment Summary documents are submitted annually and are currently posted on the institutional V-Drive. The program-level Course or Program Assessment Summary documents are also submitted with Annual Program Planning and Review Worksheets and posted on the Institutional Research web pages. All Course or Program Assessment Summary documents, for both programs and courses, are then included in each program’s Comprehensive Program Planning and Review report, which is submitted every four or five years, depending on the program, and made public on the San Luis Obispo County Community College District Institutional Research web page. (SC.31)

Assessment and planning occur at the unit level through a regular annual cycle of Institutional Program Planning and Review for all units in the district, including departments, instructional programs, student services, and administrative services. In this process, each unit describes its desired program outcomes and the ways that the unit contributes to the achievement of Institutional Goals and Institutional Objectives.

Student support services contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes and evaluation results are used to improve services. Student Services staff analyze college data and plans to develop program student learning outcomes, which are then referenced in the Annual Program Planning Worksheet. The student learning outcomes support Institutional Goals and Objectives outlined in district plans. (SC.99)

Descriptions of available Student Services are provided in multiple modes to inform students and encourage self-assessment of needs and self-referral to services. When students initially complete the OpenCCCApply application they can request Student Services information. Those who indicate interest are automatically sent an email about the services available through the department and given department location and service hours. The college catalog includes a Student Services section and full program details are posted on the Cuesta College website.

Students enter with different challenges, abilities, interests, and levels of preparedness and they have a variety of support services across district sites, and online, to assist with progress, learning, and success. Support services include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

- CalWORKS
- Cuesta Promise
- Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)
- Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS)/(CARE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Financial Aid
- Foster Youth
- Health Services
San Luis Obispo County Community College District, Cuesta College Substantive Change Proposal – Distance Ed

- International Students
- Nursing/Allied Health
- Re-Entry
- Student Athletes
- Student Life and Leadership/Associated Students of Cuesta College
- Veterans
- Tutoring

An online orientation to the college is offered at the Counseling website at http://www.cuesta.edu/student/getstarted/orientation/. Counseling is available to all students, including online, by appointment or drop-in basis.

The first level of student technical support for distance education is the LMS specialist, who is available by telephone Monday through Friday and by email at support@my.cuesta.edu. This support is supplemented on weekday evenings by the instructional assistant, who answers telephone and email questions from students and faculty in distance education courses. Faculty teaching distance education or hybrid courses are encouraged to submit Course Welcome Letters which provide students with information about the technology requirements to use Moodle successfully, as well as other crucial information about the courses. (SC.13)

The distance education web site provides information for students and faculty, as well as links to additional support and training. The student links include a Frequently Asked Questions section, information on the minimum technical requirements for accessing the LMS, and a link to a self-assessment test that addresses student readiness for distance education. (SC.14)

Library resources and services have become increasingly accessible to students regardless of location. The majority of the library’s periodical subscriptions are available in electronic format, and the library provides access to more than 12,000 e-books. The library web site provides online subject guides, citation guides, an information literacy tutorial (“Searchpath”), and a checklist for evaluating information resources. A version of the English 201A Workbook is available to students in distance education sections of that course. Reference librarians are available by telephone, email, and live chat whenever the library is open. (SC.15)

The Student Success Centers operate under Academic Affairs and offers critical student success services including tutoring, study groups, access to academic software, a writing center, and a math lab.

The Admissions and Records Office sends timely emails to students who are not making satisfactory academic progress. The Financial Aid Office also contacts these students for purposes of state and federal financial aid. Important communications are sent via Constant Contact to students’ campus and personal email accounts.
All Student Services faculty and staff work to ensure student services are available equally to students regardless of the location or method of instruction of the courses students take.

**Standard III. – Resources**

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has processes in place to determine personnel needs and then target the best applicants by writing job descriptions that reflect program and service needs. Applicants for faculty and academic administrator positions demonstrate that they meet the minimum qualifications established by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges (Education Code 87356), as specified in the Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators Handbook from the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges (SC.100). Job announcements include, when appropriate, willingness and ability to teach online and include a statement that teaching assignments may be at any district facility.

Full-time, regular faculty are evaluated during each of their first four contract years leading up to tenure and every year three years thereafter. Part time faculty are evaluated the first two semesters assigned and every three years thereafter. The faculty evaluation procedure is detailed in Article 7 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers (CCFT). (SC.64)

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District ensures that new construction, modifications to existing structures, and maintenance to existing buildings provide an accessible, safe, and secure learning and working environment. The district follows guidelines set by the Division of the State Architect, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Americans with Disabilities Act, and state and county health codes. The district also contracts with outside agencies to assist with inspections and monitoring of these resources.

The facilities at college sites meet the requirements for the number of sections scheduled and the number of students served at each site.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District provides its students, faculty, staff and administrators with a comprehensive array of technology to facilitate learning, teaching, district-wide communication, research and district operation. Student learning and improving the instructional experience is a primary purpose for using technology. This support includes equipping classrooms with multimedia presentation equipment, supplying and maintaining open access computers laboratories for students as well as computers for faculty use, and creating a high-quality virtual classroom experience through distance education.

The district mission is the starting point for planning and resource allocations. The district evaluates its effectiveness in meeting its mission and develops Institutional Goals to
address issues that are or might become barriers to the district’s success in meeting its mission.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District has assessed and revised its cycle of integrated institutional planning that relies on its mission and Institutional Goals as the basis for subsequent planning and resource allocations.

The Institutional Program Planning and Reviews are the primary source of direction for the allocation of resources from the general fund. This process is based on unit-level input, which reflects district-wide participation in setting funding priorities for the coming year. *(SC.101)*

**Standard IV. – Leadership and Governance**
The San Luis Obispo County Community College District promotes ethical and effective leadership through its mission development, policy making, participatory governance processes, integrated planning processes, and institutional assessment, analysis and improvement efforts. At the core of the work of the district is a continuous effort to promote innovation, academic excellence and student success. The institution’s mission and data analysis drive institutional goals and objectives that direct staff and faculty to set and achieve goals, learn and improve.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District governance processes and procedures are documented in the *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Participatory Governance: Decision-Making and Committee Handbook*. The district’s committee structure ensures compliance for participatory governance as stated in California Assembly Bill 1725, in Title 5, and in California Education Code, and offers opportunities for individuals to learn more about and participate in governance and decision-making in the district. *(SC.102)*

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District governance processes and procedures may be accessed by all faculty and staff regardless of the teaching location. Students are represented by the Associated Students of Cuesta College on all central committees. The ASCC officers are elected by students.

The Distance Education (DE) Committee is a shared governance body that develops and recommends standards and policies to promote the quality, managed growth and sustainability of distance education at Cuesta College. These standards and policies address the following four areas: technology infrastructure and support; online course development, delivery and evaluation; faculty support, assignment, and evaluation; and student support, access, retention, success, and persistence. The committee annually assesses and reports on the effectiveness of distance education support structure, standards, policies, and procedures, and their compliance with current state and federal regulations.

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District’s Board of Trustees is given powers and responsibilities under Board Policy 1201 that include determining general policies, selecting
and approving the superintendent/president, evaluating the educational program, and adopting the annual budgets. (SC.103)

The Superintendent/President’s Office maintains a compilation of Board of Trustees Policies (BP) and Administrative Procedures (AP) that is linked from the Board of Trustees web page. (SC.104) BP 2410, Board Policy and Administrative Procedure, Purposes and Objectives and AP 2410, Board Policies and Administrative Procedures Development, Review, and Update provide for the regular and systematic review of all Board policies and administrative procedures (SC.105).

**Process for Monitoring and Evaluating the Effectiveness and Learning Outcomes Expected Through the Proposed Change**

Data related to student access, progress, and success are shared and assessed in identifying institutional challenges, which then shape Institutional Goals and Institutional Objectives.

Institutional Goal 1: San Luis Obispo County Community College District will enhance its programs and services to promote students’ successful completion of transfer requirements, degrees, certificates and courses defined in the *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Strategic Plan 2012-2014* and *2014-2017*.

- Institutional Objective 1.1: Increase the percentage of transfer-directed students who are transfer prepared by 2 percent annually
- Institutional Objective 1.2: Increase the percentage of degree or certificate directed students who complete degrees or certificates by 2 percent annually
- Institutional Objective 1.3: Increase successful completions in distance education courses by 2 percent annually
- Institutional Objective 1.4: Increase English as a second language course success and improvement rates by 2 percent annually
- Institutional Objective 1.5: Increase basic skills course success and improvement rates by 2 percent annually

A progress report of the institution’s goals and objectives is submitted annually and distributed district wide and published on the Accreditation website.

Through the program review process, units identify and prioritize needs for personnel, facilities, supplies, equipment, and technology. Once the units complete the Institutional Program Planning and Review documents, requests for resources are reviewed and evaluated in the following sequence.

1. Division chairs and directors work to consolidate and prioritize the funding requests. If funding requests can be funded at the departmental level, these funding requests are
removed from the prioritized list that is then forwarded to the appropriate cluster manager (superintendent/president, vice presidents, and deans). (SC.106)

2. Cluster managers collaborate with faculty and staff within their cluster to further consolidate and prioritize requests on a cluster-wide basis. If funding requests can be funded at the cluster level, these funding requests are removed from the list that is then is forwarded to the Planning and Budget Committee. (SC.107)

3. Cluster managers forward the cluster’s prioritized requests for staffing, equipment, and supplies to the Planning and Budget Committee. Requests for technology are forwarded to the Technology Committee that then conducts a technical assessment of the requests, and consolidates requests for technology with similar requests where possible. The Technology Committee ranks the technology requests based on the level of impact, level of need, and current fiscal priorities and forwards its recommendation to the Planning and Budget Committee. (SC.108)

4. With consideration of the clusters’ prioritized lists and the Technology Committee’s recommendation, the Planning and Budget Committee prepares the final list of institutional priorities using a Resource Allocation Rubric that weighs each funding request based on the extent to which it is justified according to one or more of the following categories. (SC.109)
   - Program Review
   - Alignment with Institutional Objectives
   - Alignment with operational plans
   - Health, safety, or regulatory
   - Unit prioritization bonus for top priority
   - Cluster prioritization bonus for top priority
   - Subjective score

5. The Planning and Budget Committee finalizes the list of institutional priorities and forwards the information to the Foundation Grant Committee and president’s cabinet. (SC.110)

6. The Foundation Grant Committee is made up of Foundation board members, the executive director of Foundation/Advancement and the Foundation’s lead accountant. The Foundation board, through its budget process, allocates resources for grants. In the spring the Foundation accepts grant applications for the following fiscal year. The Foundation Grant Committee reviews all applications for program review, alignment
with Institutional Objectives and alignment with operational plans. The Foundation Grant Committee also reviews Planning and Budget Committee Resources Allocation Priority List and Technology Committee ranking of technology requests. The Foundation Grant Committee uses these lists as a starting point for consideration but doesn’t limit its decision to them because the Foundation does not fund salaries, ongoing expenditures, and grant requests over $10,000. The executive director Foundation/Advancement presents the funded grant list to cabinet so those requests can be removed from the institution’s Resource Allocation List.

7. The president’s cabinet conducts a feasibility review of the list of institutional priorities recommended by the Planning and Budget Committee. Following this feasibility review of the recommendations of institutional priorities for funding, the cabinet advises the superintendent/president about the items on the prioritized list that should be or could be funded based on the available resources, including grants and other partnerships.

8. The superintendent/president makes the final funding determinations.

9. The Planning and Budget Committee then assesses the planning and resources allocation for the previous year.

Through this process, the Institutional Program Planning and Review process links financial planning to the district mission and integrates resource allocation into the institutional planning cycle. Institutional Research supports the planning and decision making efforts throughout the district by providing data and information for analysis to encourage continuous improvement of academic programs, academic and student support services and administrative services.
H. Substantive Change Evidence List

SC.1 List of Programs for Substantive Change Approval
SC.2 Distance Education Handbook
SC.3 CurricUNET Distance Education Approval
SC.4 Administrative Procedure 4105
SC.5 Best Practices for Distance Education Technology Readiness for Faculty
SC.6 Best Practices for Distance Education Pedagogical Readiness for Faculty
SC.7 *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Integrated Planning Manual 2013*
SC.8 San Luis Obispo County Community College District Educational Master Plan 2011-2016 Addendum
SC.9 San Luis Obispo County Community College District Strategic Plan 2012-2014
SC.10 2010-2011 Institutional and Program Planning Allocation Report
SC.11 2011-2012 Planning and Budget Prioritization of Resource Allocation
SC.12 Institutional Objective 1.3 Assessment
SC.13 Course Welcome Letters
http://cuesta.edu/student/aboutacad/distance/welcome_letters.html
SC.14 Distance Education Website
http://cuesta.edu/student/aboutacad/distance/index.html
SC.15 Library Website
http://cuesta.edu/library/
SC.16 Student Services for Distance Education
SC.17 Distance Education Faculty Evaluation
SC.18 Distance Education Website Links to Additional Training and Resources
http://cuesta.edu/student/aboutacad/distance/fac_de_resources/index.html
SC.19 Moodle Training Schedule
SC.20 Draft *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Strategic Plan 2014-2017*
SC.21 *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Integrated Planning Manual 2012*
SC.22 Accreditation Web Page
http://cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/accreditation/index.html
SC.23 Institutional Research Web Page
http://cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/research/
SC.24 Annual Program Planning Worksheet for Academics
SC.25 Annual Program Planning Worksheet for Student Services
SC.26 Annual Program Planning Worksheet for Administrative Services
SC.27 Course or Program Assessment Summary Example, Academics
SC.28 Assessment Report Example, Student Services
SC.29 Course or Program Assessment Summary Example, Administrative Services
| SC.30 | Course or Program Assessment Summary Template |
| SC.31 | Institutional Research Website - Comprehensive Program Planning and Reviews/Annual Program Planning Worksheets  
http://cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/research/Student_Learning_Outcomes.html |
| SC.32 | Accreditation Website - Comprehensive Program Planning and Reviews  
http://cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/accreditation/programplanning.html |
| SC.33 | Comprehensive Program Planning and Review Dean’s Analysis |
| SC.34 | Institutional Effectiveness Committee 2013 Comprehensive Review Recommendations |
| SC.35 | Institutional Effectiveness Committee Comprehensive Program Planning and Review Recommendations |
| SC.36 | Board Policy 1030 |
| SC.37 | Mission Statement |
| SC.38 | Mission Revision, Board of Trustees Minutes, May 1, 2013 |
| SC.39 | College Catalog  
http://cuesta.edu/student/aboutacad/schedule_catalog/catalog.html |
| SC.39.a | College Catalog, Mission Statement |
| SC.39.b | College Catalog, Degrees and Certificates |
| SC.39.c | College Catalog, Course Repetition and Grading Policies |
| SC.39.d | College Catalog, General Education |
| SC.39.e | College Catalog, Student Support Services and Special Programs |
| SC.39.f | Link from College Catalog, Program Student Learning Outcomes  
http://www.curricunet.com/Cuesta/search/program/program_search_result.cfm?status=1&colleges_id=&subjects_id=&program_title=&OK=OK |
| SC.40 | Mission Statement Web Page  
http://www.cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/president/mission.html |
| SC.41 | Board Policy 1034 |
| SC.42 | Board Policy 1201 |
| SC.43 | Board Policy 2710 |
| SC.44 | Board of Trustees Minutes, November 2, 2011 |
| SC.45 | Board Policy 2430 |
| SC.46 | Chief Executive Officer’s Bio |
| SC.47 | Organizational Chart |
| SC.48 | Enrollment History 2011-2014  
http://www.cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/research/Enrollment_Management.html |
| SC.49 | Enrollment in Institutional Degree Programs by Year or Cohort  
http://www.cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/research/student_achievement_data.html |
| SC.50 | Student Achievement Data 2008-2012 |
| SC.51 | Student Achievement Data: Program Awards |
| SC.52 | Program Awards |
| SC.53 | Associate Degrees for Transfer Progress Report |
| SC.54 | CurricUNET  
| SC.55 | Class Finder  
  [https://ssb.cuesta.edu:9040/prod/syk_class_finder.p_basic_search](https://ssb.cuesta.edu:9040/prod/syk_class_finder.p_basic_search) |
| SC.56 | ACCJC College Status Report on Student Learning Outcomes Implementation, October 2012 |
| SC.57 | Comprehensive Program Planning and Review Sample |
| SC.58 | *San Luis Obispo County Community College District Institutional Effectiveness Outcomes Report 2013* |
| SC.59 | *Spring 2013 Progress Report on the San Luis Obispo County College District Strategic Plan 2012-2014* |
| SC.60 | Student Achievement Outcomes – Institutional Research Website  
  [http://cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/research/student_achievement_data.html](http://cuesta.edu/aboutcc/planning/research/student_achievement_data.html) |
| SC.61 | Board Policy 1565 – Unlawful Discrimination |
| SC.62 | Board Policy 3095 – Tenure for Academic Personnel |
| SC.63 | Board Policy 3900 – Speech: Time, Place, and Manner (being vetted, currently BP 6200.1) |
| SC.64 | Cuesta College Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Agreement (2008-2011) |
| SC.65 | Board Policy 3006 – Professional Standards for Faculty of Cuesta College |
| SC.66 | Board Policy 6000 – Objectives of Student Services Programs |
| SC.67 | Demographic Characteristics of Students – Summer 2013 |
| SC.68 | Demographic Characteristics of Students – Fall 2013 |
| SC.69 | Board Policy 5010 – Admissions and Concurrent Enrollment |
| SC.70 | Administrative Procedure 5010 – Admissions |
| SC.71 | Admissions Application – (English version) |
| SC.72 | Admissions Application – (Spanish version) |
| SC.73 | Admissions Application – Paramedic |
| SC.74 | Admissions Application – Psychiatric Technician Atascadero State Hospital |
| SC.75 | Admissions Application – Registered Nurse |
| SC.76 | Admissions and Records Assistant Job Description |
| SC.77 | Admissions and Records Director Job Description |
| SC.78 | Admissions Application – (Online version)  
  [http://www.cuesta.edu/apply/](http://www.cuesta.edu/apply/) |
| SC.79 | Board Policy 5090 |
| SC.80 | Periodical Holdings Database  
  [http://library.cuesta.edu/phl.htm](http://library.cuesta.edu/phl.htm) |
| SC.81 | Database List  
  [http://library.cuesta.edu/database.htm](http://library.cuesta.edu/database.htm) |
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