Include a list of all proposed certificate and degree programs planned in the initiation or expansion of distance delivery. For each degree program or certificate:

a. Indicate the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP codes). CIP codes are established by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics. More information is available at http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/.  

  - Computer and Information Systems Security. CIP Code 11.1003  

b. Provide the program name if it is different from the CIP code. Information Security  

c. Specify the program level. Associate’s degree in Applied Arts and Sciences (A.A.A.S)  

d. Specify if it is distance education or correspondence education. Distance Education  

e. Specify all modalities of delivery. Online delivery  

- Journalism, CIP Code 09.0401 – Journalism TRF, Associate’s degree in Liberal Arts (A.A.), distance education, online delivery  
- Business Administration, CIP Code 52.0201, Associate’s degree in Business (A.B.), distance education, online delivery  
- Management & Supervision, CIP Code 52.0201, Associate’s degree in Business (A.B.), distance education, online delivery  
- Marketing, CIP Code 52.1401, Associate’s degree in Business (A.B.), distance education, online delivery  
- Computer Applications Technology, CIP Code 11.1006, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery  
- Computer Information Systems Programming, CIP Code 11.0201 - CIS Computer Programming, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery  
- Applications Software, CIP Code 11.0902 – CIS-Application Software, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery  
  - Digital Graphics Communications, CIP Code 50.0499, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery  
- Web Design & Development, CIP Code 11.0801 – Web Designer Development, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery  
- Web Technical Support, CIP Code 11.1004, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery  
- Child Development, CIP Code 19.0708, Associate’s degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery
- Juvenile Services, CIP Code 43.0110, Associate's degree in Applied Arts & Science (A.A.A.S), distance education, online delivery
- Computer Applications, CIP Code 11.1006, Certificate, distance education, online delivery
- Unix System Administration, CIP Code 11.999, Certificate, distance education, online delivery
- Addiction Studies, CIP Code 51.1501, Certificate
- Chemical Technology, CIP Code 41.0301, Certificate
Substantive Change Application
Distance Delivery

Background Information on Distance Delivery

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) policies outline when institutions need to notify the Commission about distance-delivered instruction and when they need to seek approval. (See policy 3.2(a) and the information below.)

This document defines the characteristics of distance delivery, specifies when institutions must notify the Commission or seek approval for distance delivery, and provides the form for seeking approval.

Commission Definitions for Distance-Delivered Courses and Programs

The Higher Learning Commission uses the following definitions for the purpose of applying its policy on distance delivery to its accredited and candidate institutions:

• Distance-delivered courses are those in which all or the vast majority (typically 75% or more) of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication, correspondence, or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.

• Distance-delivered programs are those certificate or degree programs in which 50% or more of the required courses may be taken as distance-delivered courses.

Reporting and Seeking Approval for Distance-Delivered Offerings

The chart below identifies the Percentage Brackets for determining the scope of distance delivery by an institution. The Commission determines the appropriate Percentage Bracket for each institution. Such determination is based on information provided by the institution in its Annual Institutional Data Update to the Commission or when it seeks and receives approval of a proposed change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Bracket</th>
<th>Percentage of Distance-Delivered Offerings (calculations are based on degree programs, not certificates)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20% or more of total degree programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>At least 5%, but less than 20% of total degree programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initiation of distance-delivered offerings (as described below), but less than 5% of total degree programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher Learning Commission policy requires an institution to seek the Commission’s prior approval if the institution plans to initiate or expand its distance-delivered offerings as described below. When initiation or expansion is anticipated, an institution must submit a substantive change request using the forms contained in this document.

Initiation occurs and a review is required when the institution:

• plans to initiate its first distance education degree program, even when it has been approved to offer distance education certificates or correspondence education degree programs or certificates;
• plans to initiate its first correspondence education degree program, even when it has been approved to offer correspondence education certificates or distance education degree programs or certificates;
• has initiated four distance education certificates and plans to initiate a fifth, unless the institution has already been reviewed and approved to offer one or more distance education degree programs; or
• has initiated four correspondence education certificates and plans to initiate a fifth, unless the institution has already been reviewed and approved to offer one or more correspondence education degree programs.

Expansion occurs and a review is required when the institution:
• plans to increase its current activity in distance education degree programs or its current activity in correspondence education degree programs to a higher Percentage Bracket.

In addition, the Commission may require a substantive change evaluation if the institution:
• has never had a focused review of distance or correspondence degree or certificate programs and is offering one or more programs or five or more certificates; or
• has a significant annual increase in enrollment.

In addition to reviewing distance-delivered courses and programs through its substantive change processes, the Commission evaluates delivery whenever it comprehensively reviews an institution. In these comprehensive reviews, the Commission examines the institution’s capacity to provide education to its students and the quality of its performance in doing so, whether via distance delivery or traditional face-to-face modes. Comprehensive reviews examine curriculum, staffing, support services, access to appropriate laboratory and library resources, and all other facets of quality higher education.

Questions

For general questions on approval of distance-delivered programs, send an e-mail to changerequests@hlcommission.org or call 800-621-7440 x137. For institution-specific questions, contact the Commission staff liaison assigned to the institution by calling 800-621-7440 and asking to be transferred to the liaison.

1 Wherever distance delivery is mentioned throughout this document it means distance or correspondence delivery. The following are the Federal definitions (2009) of distance and correspondence education:

Correspondence education means:
(1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
(2) Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
(3) Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.
(4) Correspondence education is not distance education.

Distance Education means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:
(1) The internet;
(2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
(3) Audio conferencing; or
(4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3).
Substantive Change Application, Part 1: General Questions

Distance Delivery

Note: Wherever distance delivery is mentioned it means distance or correspondence delivery.

Institution: Grand Rapids Community College
City, State: Grand Rapids, MI

Name of person completing this application: Ric Underhile
Title: Associate Dean
Phone: 616-234-4659
Email: runderhile@grcc.edu

Requested Change(s). Concisely describe the change for which the institution seeks approval.

To develop and implement online programs at Grand Rapids Community College.

Classification of Change Request. Check all boxes that apply to the change.

Note: not every institutional change requires prior review and approval. Review the “Overview of Commission Policies and Procedures for Institutional Changes Requiring Commission Notification or Approval” to make certain that current HLC policy requires the institution to seek approval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in mission or student body:</th>
<th>Five or more courses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ change in mission</td>
<td>☐ at a degree level not now included in the institution’s accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ change in student body</td>
<td>☐ at an out-of-state or foreign location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New additional locations:</th>
<th>New academic program(s) requiring HLC approval:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ in home state</td>
<td>☑ certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ in other state(s) or in other country(ies)</td>
<td>☐ diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ new or additional campus(es)</td>
<td>☑ master’s/specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☑ associate’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ doctorate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consortial or contractual arrangement:</th>
<th>Additional Locations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Consortial arrangement</td>
<td>☐ Request for access to Desk Review for additional locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Contractual arrangement</td>
<td>☐ Request for access to Notification Program for locations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance Delivery:</th>
<th>Other:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ Initiation of distance education</td>
<td>☐ Substantially changing the clock or credit hours required for a program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Expansion of distance education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Initiation of correspondence education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Expansion of correspondence education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional Context for Substantive Change Review. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe the key dynamics — institutional mission and internal or external forces — that stimulated and shaped the change.
**Grand Rapids Community College mission seeks “to prepare individuals to attain their goals.” This component of our mission has contributed to the desire and need to create and expand online degree programs beyond the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC).**

**Special conditions.** Underline YES or NO attesting to whether any of the conditions identified below fit the institution. If YES, explain the situation in the box provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the institution, in its relations with other regional, specialized, or national accrediting agencies, currently under or recommended for a negative status or action (e.g., withdrawal, probation, sanction, warning, show-cause, etc.)?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the institution now undergoing or facing substantial monitoring, special review, or financial restrictions from the U.S. Dept. of Education or other federal or state government agencies?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the institution’s senior leadership or board membership experienced substantial resignations or removals in the past year?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the institution experiencing financial difficulty through such conditions as a currently declared state of exigency, a deficit of 10% or more, a default or failure to make payroll during the past year, or consecutive deficits in the two most recent years?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the institution experiencing other pressures that might affect its ability to carry out the proposal (e.g., a collective bargaining dispute or a significant lawsuit)?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approvals.** Check the approvals that are required prior to implementing the proposed change and attach documentation of the approvals to the request. Indicate the file name of the documentation.

- X Internal (faculty, board) approvals (file name): Currently new course and new program approvals are granted through a decision-making process that includes the lead faculty member of the program and/or course(s), their Associate Dean, and the Deans’ Council, which includes the Provost. Documentation of this process resides in the Office of the Provost.
- System approvals (for an institution that is part of a system) (file name: _____________)
- State approval(s) (file name: _____________)
- Foreign country(ies) approvals (for an overseas program or site) (file name: _____________)
- No approval required
Submiting a Substantive Change Request

Attach the “Substantive Change Application–General Questions” as page one of this application. That completed form and the answers to the questions below will constitute the request for approval of a substantive change. It will be provided to future HLC review processes.

The questions are designed to elicit brief, succinct, detailed information, rather than a narrative or references to extensive supporting documents. Do not attach other documents unless they are specifically requested in the questions. The total submission should be no more than 8-10 pages. Submit the completed application as a single electronic document (in Adobe PDF format) emailed to changerequests@hlcommission.org.

Name of Institution:

Part 1. Characteristics of the Change Requested

1. What percentage of the institution’s degree programs are currently offered through distance delivery (see page 1 for the Commission’s definition of distance-delivered programs)?

   *Nine percent of GRCC’s programs are offered through distance delivery.*

2. Briefly describe the planned initiation or expansion of distance delivery the institution is requesting permission to operate.

   *GRCC is planning to expand its distance learning offerings by this new program, Information Security. In accordance with our President’s directive, we will be working towards increasing our overall distance learning courses by 25% between 2010-2015. The expansion of Distance Learning also is an AQIP Action Project.*

3. Include a list of all proposed certificate and degree programs planned in the initiation or expansion of distance delivery. For each degree program or certificate:


   b. Provide the program name if it is different from the CIP code. *Information Security*

   c. Specify the program level. *Associate’s degree in Applied Arts and Sciences (A.A.A.S)*

   d. Specify if it is distance education or correspondence education. *Distance Education*

   e. Specify all modalities of delivery. *Online delivery*
4. What organizational structures are in place to ensure effective oversight, implementation, and management of the institution’s distance-delivered program?

This program would be one of the degree programs in the Computer Applications Department. As part of this department, this new degree program would be reviewed for effectiveness by the annual Academic Review Process and Perkins Core Indicators. Management supervision of staff and faculty would be provided by the Associate Dean of Faculty Evaluation, School of Workforce Development. Operational needs would be supervised by the Associate Dean of Operations, School of Workforce Development. Both Associate Deans report to the Dean, School of Workforce Development. The office of Distance Learning would work to oversee all technical aspects of this new program as supervised by the Associate Dean of Instructional Support and Interdisciplinary Studies. The Associate Dean of Operations, School of Workforce Development will complete reports on marketing, student enrollment and completion each semester.

5. Does the institution have a separately identified organizational unit for providing or marketing the distance-delivered program? ( X ) Yes (  ) No

If yes, please explain how this separate unit coordinates with other academic and administrative units across the institution to ensure the consistency and quality of offerings.

Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies (DLIT) provides and markets the College’s distance-delivered programs. This department has the responsibility to provide professional development to all faculty who use technology in their courses. Additionally, DLIT monitors for quality of online courses and programs through its range of programs and online resources (see: http://cms.grcc.edu/dlit to learn more about DLIT). DLIT is a cross-college department that reports to the Office of the Provost through the Associate Dean for Instructional Support and Interdisciplinary Studies. The Director of DLIT is a member of the College’s Deans’ Council which includes the Provost, all deans, all associate deans, and a number of other directors who hold positions that are also cross-college (e.g., the Library and Learning Commons, Marketing/Communication, Information Technology, etc).

6. If the institution is planning any involvement by external organizations (other than accredited higher education institutions) in key operations as identified below, provide the information requested for each planned involvement. (Note that such involvement by a parent company or by one of its subsidiaries external to the institution in any of these operations should be reported.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of involvement</th>
<th>Name(s) of external organization(s)</th>
<th>% of Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Support for delivery of instruction</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Recruitment and admission of students</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Course placement and advising of students</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Design and oversight of curriculum</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Direct instruction and oversight</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. If the institution is planning any involvement with other accredited higher education institutions in key operations identified above, provide the name(s) of the other institutions and the nature of the involvement. N/A

8. Operational Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Data</th>
<th>Last year (actual tallies)</th>
<th>This year (estimate)</th>
<th>Next year (projected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Total annual (academic year + summer) student credit hours generated</td>
<td>379,308</td>
<td>387,864</td>
<td>387,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Total annual student credit hours generated in distance-delivered sections</td>
<td>27,060</td>
<td>33,528</td>
<td>44,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Percentage of student credit hours in distance-delivered courses (B/C, or B divided by A, rounded up to the nearest integer)</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Total number of academic programs (i.e., counting different majors at all levels)</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Total number of programs in item D above available via distance delivery (i.e., 50% or more of courses available as distance-delivered courses)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Percentage of programs available via distance delivery (100 x E/D)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2. Institution’s History with Distance-Delivered Offerings

9. Briefly describe the institution’s experience with distance-delivered offerings.

The distance learning program can trace its root to 1979 when the Media Technologies (then Media Services) department introduced telecourses to Grand Rapids Junior College. Telecourses allowed instructors to teach a discipline with specially produced video series integrated into an adaptive curriculum. At the height of popularity, GRCC offered 28 college credit courses via television. During this 20-year span, GRCC joined with the members colleges of ETOM (Educational Teleconsortium of Michigan) to share resources and costs associated with the telecourse program. In 1995 Media Services introduced live college credit courses over cable television. In addition, many high schools were able to virtually attend classes via CODEC, Fiber and eventually video over IP (VOIP) to expand the GRCC classroom throughout West Michigan. These classes are also transmitted to the area MTEC locations. The last incarnation of telecourses were integrated into hybrid online courses which eventually spawned the development of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC). Today Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies carries on the pioneering tradition of the innovative use of technology in the classroom environment with hundreds of college credit classes available online.

10. If the Higher Learning Commission approves the institution’s initiation or expansion of distance delivery, what future growth does the institution anticipate (e.g., in the next six months, three years, 10-20 years)?
We have set a goal for 25% overall growth in distance-delivered offerings over the period, 2010-2014. This target was set by our President, Dr. Steven Ender, in 2010.

11. How does the institution plan to manage this growth?
    GRCC plans to manage this growth through Distance Learning & Instructional Technologies who works in close collaboration with all three of the College’s schools: Arts & Sciences, Student Affairs, and Workforce Development. Additionally, as a means to this end, the College has approved two new positions, 1) Instructional Designer (hired in July, 2011) and 2) Curriculum Specialist (applicants currently being interviewed). Further, a dedicated faculty learning suite that includes state of the art technology for teaching and learning has been opened and is now used weekly for teaching with technology faculty professional development events. Finally, the Director of DLIT provides weekly updates to the Associate Dean, Instructional Support & Interdisciplinary Studies.

Part 3. Institutional Planning for Distance-Delivered Offerings

12. What impact might the proposed program(s) have on challenges identified as part of or subsequent to the last comprehensive visit or reaffirmation panel and how has the institution addressed the challenge(s)?

    One of the GRCC Ends Policies reads: Access – GRCC minimizes the barriers of time, place, cost, and educational preparation levels so that all members of the community have an opportunity to participate in college programs. Enhancing our distance delivery offerings is one Action Project in our Strategic Plan to address this End. A more robust Distance Learning program will reduce geographical barriers for students who lack reliable transportation.

13. How does the institution determine the need for a distance-delivered program? If the institution offers a traditional program now, how does it decide whether to start offering this program via distance delivery?

    Each academic department assesses its academic programs to determine the need for students to have access to programs through multiple modes of delivery. Enrollment and employment projections are assessed prior to determining future direction in distance-delivered education. The modality is decided upon within the department with support from and in consultation with Distance Learning & Instructional Technologies.

14. How does the institution plan for changes and future expansion of the role distance delivery plays in the institution? Who is involved? How do new ideas and initiatives originate, and how are they examined and evaluated?

    The Academic and Student Affairs Division of Grand Rapids Community College led by the Provost determines the future direction for changes and expansion of distance learning. The administrative team of Deans and Associate Deans meet with the Distance Learning and Instructional Team to set direction and expansion. Department faculty and staff are also involved in a yearly review of their course offerings and new modalities are proposed through the New Program Approval Process.

15. How does the institution ensure that financial planning and budgeting for distance-delivered programs are realistic? What are the institution’s projected revenues and expenses?

    The budget for the development and maintenance of distance learning programs is administered by the Associate Dean, Instructional Support and Interdisciplinary Studies. Budget requests are submitted, reviewed and approved annually in March by the President’s Cabinet. Resources are allocated based on availability of funds to match institutional needs. To date, the College has successfully supported distance learning objectives as evidenced in 2011 by the hiring of a new Curriculum Specialist and a new Instructional Designer.

    Students pay an additional fee for distance learning courses that helps defray development costs and supports the lower class sizes.
16. How does the institution assure that promotion, marketing, and enrollment of its distance-delivered programs stay in balance with its actual resources and technical capabilities?

Prospective students are informed of the range of educational modalities, including distance education through the promotion, marketing and enrollment management efforts of GRCC’s Admission & Enrollment Center. Additionally, the Counseling and Career Center reinforces these messages during orientation and academic advising events. Finally, the Associate Dean of Instructional Support & Interdisciplinary Studies works with GRCC’s Director of Communications to ensure that marketing is allocated for program specific advertising that is designed to meet the needs of the community and workforce. Resources are reviewed annually and budget allocations are made. New equipment is budgeted annually as well to ensure a balance with resources.

17. What controls are in place to ensure that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications will be accurate?

The oversight of this information is coordinated through our Communications Office with centralized control on logos, data, and distribution.

Part 4. Curriculum and Instructional Design –

18. How does the institution assure good instructional design in its distance-delivered programs? How are the institution’s faculty and quality control mechanisms involved in the instructional design process?

Grand Rapids Community College requires all instructors who teach online to be certified through the Online and Hybrid Certification Course. This 5-week course provides faculty with pedagogical techniques, instructional design, and course quality including GRCC’s distance learning standards. New courses that are developed must adhere to the GRCC course development rubric which contains outcomes that include areas such as: organization and design, curriculum and instruction, technical, and a section on assessment and evaluation of the course.

When a course is approved to be developed for distance delivery, a faculty member is paid to do the development. They work with the Instructional Designer in the DLIT department to develop the course. The development is based on the college’s Distance Learning standards and a committee reviews the course using a rubric before opening it for enrollment. If changes are needed to meet the standards, those revisions must be made before the course is opened for enrollment.

19. What processes and procedures will the institution use for technology maintenance, upgrades, back up, remote services, and for communicating changes in software, hardware or technical systems to students and faculty?

Grand Rapids Community College utilizes a collaborative cross-departmental effort to ensure upgrades, maintenance, and technical changes, including troubleshooting are well coordinated and maintained. Specifically, the Department of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies (DLIT) works directly with Information Technology (IT) to evaluate, plan, monitor, and maintain instructional technology. Furthermore, there are two dedicated IT staff that reside in DLIT. This combination of leadership and technical expertise combined with the collaboration of academic and faculty focus through DLIT, the technical expertise provided by IT through the infrastructure and academic technology team, and the student support areas of the IT Support area round out a comprehensive group for ensuring reliable and quality systems.

20. How does the institution assure that it provides convenient, reliable, and timely services to students or faculty needing technical assistance, and how does it communicate information about these services?
Grand Rapids Community College provides a dedicated help desk for students and faculty needing technical assistance. These services are promoted through the college’s website, email, and enterprise course management system. Furthermore, these services are communicated through the college’s online orientation as well as course syllabi. The college offers support in the following modalities: self-help tipsheets and video tutorials, in person, phone, email, and instant messaging. Social media is also used to broadcast alerts and information. This includes Facebook, Twitter, blogs, SMS text messaging and text-to-voice services that are integrated into the college’s enterprise course management system.

21. What is the institution’s experience, if any, in collaborating with other institutions or organizations to provide distance-delivered education?

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) is a member of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC) and the Educational Technology Organization of Michigan (ETOM). The MCCVLC is a collaborative that provides students with the ability to take online courses from other member colleges and in turn, receive support services at a college that is conveniently located for the student. GRCC currently offers online courses collaboratively through the MCCVLC whereby students that attend GRCC can take distance learning courses from the other 28 community colleges in the state and the credits will easily transfer. Furthermore, students at the other community colleges in the state can access GRCC’s online courses through the same system. Through the MCCVLC the community colleges share best practices, provide student orientations, and wrap around services such as proctored testing. GRCC also participates in conferences, meetings, and facilitates the online instructor certification course administered by the MCCVLC.

GRCC works as an active member in the ETOM organization and participates in conferences, board meetings, and webinars. ETOM was established in 1980 and exists to help Michigan colleges to advance, promote, and enhance distance education. GRCC has hosted and participated in annual conferences. This fall, GRCC will host the annual Fall conference.

22. If the institution is planning partnerships or agreements with external organizations or institutions as identified in Questions 5 and 6, how will the institution ensure that students can use these services effectively?

N/A.

Part 5. Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support

23. How does the institution staff distance-delivered programs? How does this differ from the institution’s processes for staffing traditional programs?

GRCC provides faculty professional development to those faculty who seek to teach hybrid or online courses. This faculty professional development is facilitated by faculty who are themselves certified to deliver distance education and are supported with equated overload or release time. All faculty must complete this training before they are approved for teaching. This process is similar as all faculty are assessed for their abilities to teach; this is one additional step necessary to ensure quality in the online classroom. Faculty are chosen for teaching distance learning sections/courses based on their certification and content expertise. This differs from on ground courses in that no additional certification is required beyond professional areas of expertise.

24. What is the institution’s process for selecting, training, and orienting faculty for distance delivery? What special professional development, support, or released time does the institution provide for faculty who teach distance-delivered programs?

GRCC requires all faculty to have the appropriate educational credentials in their particular discipline. Distance Learning training and certification is required for all faculty to proceed with teaching a course in
this modality. The Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies (DLIT) Department implements training and the certification process for faculty. Professional development opportunities provided by DLIT are offered throughout the year.

Faculty members self-select to take the Online Hybrid Certification Course. Upon successful completion of the course, faculty members are certified, and can choose online courses from among the courses they are qualified to teach. GRCC provides many faculty professional development courses, online tip sheets, online videos, available one-on-one support for all faculty about Blackboard, GRCC’s enterprise course management system. Online courses are limited to 22 students. We also compensate faculty to develop courses for online development.

25. How does the institution assure copyright compliance and keep distance delivery faculty aware of institutional policies on using others’ intellectual property?

Copyright policies are published and distributed by the Library & Learning Commons to faculty. These are monitored by the Associate Dean, Instructional Support & Interdisciplinary Studies and in collaboration with the College’s General Counsel.

Part 6. Student Support

26. How does the institution assure that distance delivery students have access to necessary student and support services (e.g., institutional information, application for admission, registration, tutoring or academic support, advising, financial aid, tuition payment, career counseling and placement, library resources, complaint processes)? How does the institution provide them information about using these services, and how does it monitor and evaluate their use of these services?

Grand Rapids Community College provides electronic access to necessary student and support services and provides this information on college websites as well as through the online student orientation.

The following areas are accessible through online modalities: institutional information (website), admissions, registration and enrollment (Peoplesoft), tutoring and academic support (Blackboard Instant Messaging, email, phone, and website), student help desk (website, phone, and email), library (Blackboard, website, phone, and email), with all major student support services with dedicated departments which include website information, phone and email support.

Students have online access to support services and information in the following ways: the admissions applications and communication process is online with no application fee, the GRCC website represents all the services at the college with up to date information, self assessment is available for a student to determine whether online learning is a right option, orientation for distance learning students is coordinated, Google analytics is used to monitor online activity, Starfish Early Alert is used to trigger alerts for students who do not login with seven days, online tutoring, students email accounts are provided, student help desk service, responsive course management system for online courses, tuition payments can be taken online and financial aid information is available through the students student center, complaint links are accessible in multiple locations, limited online academic advising, librarian online access and multiple data bases available, subscription to the Michigan virtual library subscription, orientation information is available on the GRCC website, student life Orgsync system for student information and involvement opportunities and several social networking tools are utilized. An example of this is a Facebook page for GRCC Advising Services. Students can post questions and receive answers regarding advising questions.

27. How does the institution measure and promote interactions among distance delivery students and faculty (e.g., email, online chats, discussion groups, phone or streaming audio, "office hours," cyber
Interaction and student engagement are key to successful online learning. In this regard, GRCC provides faculty and students with a best in class course management system (Blackboard) that provides a wide array of tools that increase interaction. Faculty at GRCC have easy access to several tools in Blackboard that create interactive learning activities for students. A few of the tools that are available and integrated into Blackboard include: blogs, wikis, voice tools, assignments, assessments, and grading through interactive rubrics. Engaging and interactive content can also be added through mashups including: NBC video content, Slideshare presentations, Flickr photos, YouTube videos, and even content through GRCC’s enterprise lecture capture system called Techsmith Camtasia Relay. Furthermore, communication tools such as the built-in discussion board and Blackboard Connect provide faculty and students with the ability to use text messaging and text-to-voice phone calls to increase the ability to connect. The announcements tool in Blackboard, combined with instant messaging access through Blackboard Instant Messaging (IM) provides synchronous communication opportunities for students to meet in groups and with their instructor for online office hours. Many tutorial labs also provide online tutoring through Blackboard IM.

Finally, Starfish Early Alert is used in online courses to ensure students are frequently accessing their online course. The system automatically notifies the student and the instructor if a student hasn’t accessed their online course within seven days. Faculty may also raise a manual flag of concern for academic performance if needed. Students will receive a follow-up phone call and email to help resolve the issue.

28. How does the institution assure that the distance delivery students it enrolls and to whom it awards credit and credentials are the same ones who did the work and achieved the institution’s learning goals (student authentication)?

Grand Rapids Community College uses campus wide electronic authentication methods and identity management to provide access to Blackboard which in turn provides access to course content and assessments. All students have a unique username and password that provides access, tracking, and reporting capabilities.

29. How does the institution protect student identity and personal information?

The FERPA Right to Know and student privacy options to protect information is published in the college catalog and available online to all students. There is an emphasis on this topic in the on campus new student orientation and online version with video presentations. The individual student information is password protected including the course management system and individual student personalized student center. All staff, faculty and student employees sign a commitment of responsibility to protect student information and training is provided outlining the required steps for releasing student information.

Grand Rapids Community College provides student identity and personal information through policies such as: AUA (acceptable use agreement), HIPAA, and FERPA along with infrastructure security methods that include identity management monitoring.

Part 7. Evaluation and Assessment

30. How does the institution assess, review, and evaluate quality in distance-delivered programs?
   The GRCC faculty evaluation process. Additionally, as the College is now fully engaged in a revised Academic Program Review process, Distance Learning & Instructional Technologies will complete a full review of its processes, impact, and outcomes. Finally the College has engaged in a research study to assess characteristics of students who engage in online learning. The results of this study help inform changes to our distance education efforts.
31. How are the measures and techniques the institution uses for distance-delivered programs equivalent to those used to assess and evaluate traditional face-to-face programs? If there are differences, why are these differences appropriate?

*Programs engage in similar program review, assessment and evaluation processes regardless of modality.*

32. How does the institution assess the learning of the students it educates in its distance-delivered programs to ensure that they achieve the levels of performance that the institution expect and that its stakeholders require?

*Faculty do the same assessment of learning in an online class as they would do in an on-ground class. We use the same Course Curriculum Document to guide the course. If a program is delivered at a distance, it would be reviewed through our program review process. If applicable, we would get feedback from the program’s advisory board.*

33. How does the institution encourage and ensure continuous improvement of its distance-delivered programs?

*We offer continuing education for our faculty members teaching at a distance, we monitor success rates. We are currently studying the results of a survey of the learning readiness of our online students. This study will help us identify ways we can improve our distance delivery to help students be more successful.*