Standards for Online Courses at Montgomery College

The following standards for online courses were developed by the DE Task Group, which is comprised of faculty, deans and ODE staff. These are meant to be base-line standards, and individual departments/disciplines are encouraged to add to or clarify them as needed. The purpose of these standards is to identify a set of basic criteria that create a foundation for what is expected in the development of online courses at MC.

These guidelines were developed based on research of expectations at other schools, and professional organizations, like ACE, MDLA (Maryland Distance Learning Association), Quality Matters, and WebCT. MC faculty and deans from a variety of disciplines also contributed their experiences and concerns to help develop this document. In addition to being a standards document that will help faculty develop quality online learning experiences for students, it is hoped that this document will help the College to develop an effective observation tool for online courses which takes faculty and dean concerns into account.

Content

1. Content of online courses is consistent with the approved curriculum and outcomes.
2. Course materials are current and regularly updated**.**
3. The syllabus is posted with clear course outcomes, grading policy, participation policy, instructor information, such as office hours and contact/response information, and course schedule in addition to all other standard syllabus information specified in the MC syllabus template. It includes access information for course materials available through technological sources.

Activities and Assignments

1. The rigor of assignments and activities is consistent with the credit hours and level of the course.
2. Assignments and activities reflect understanding of online teaching pedagogy and the needs of online students.
3. Deadlines and course schedules are reasonable, and reflect the needs of a broad range of student needs and their schedules.
4. Assignments and activities encourage student learning and student responsibility for learning.
5. Assignments and activities encourage interaction with the course site and materials, between instructor and student, and among students, if appropriate to the course.

Site Design/Use of Tools

1. The site design reflects current standards for online pedagogy and accessibility.
2. The site layout facilitates student learning.
3. The site layout and use of media facilitates student access and use.

4. As appropriate, the course uses a variety of online instructional tools (such as quizzes, discussion board, external links, etc) which encourage/support student learning.
5. The site reflects effective use of technology.
6. The site provides instructions for using technology.

Interaction

1. The instructor's response policies are clearly stated and do not exceed 2 business days excluding weekends and holidays.
2. Communication policies are clearly stated (i.e. When to expect feedback, what kind of responses, where to find those responses).
3. The course is designed to take advantage of multiple modes of communication to give feedback.
4. The instructor has multiple methods to establish "presence" in course site.

Support

1. Instructors provide links for students to MC resources such as DSS, writing, math and science learning centers, the assessment centers and online delivery system support information (help desk and tutorials).
2. Instructors provide some orientation materials which familiarize students with course requirements and layout and online learning.
3. Instructors provide multiple means of contact beyond the online course site, like office phone number, MC email address, and/or department or division phone number, for use when the course site is unavailable or in emergency situations which preclude online access.
4. Instructor's office hours or contact hours, response policies, and means of contact reflect online students' needs and schedules.

Approved by the Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Services - November, 2007