

DATA ELEMENTS

A QUARTERLY REPORT ON INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Calhoun's Distance Learning Program

Calhoun's Distance Learning Program, coordinated by Dr. Carmen Blalock, has grown and evolved according to student needs since it was formally established in 1992. Dr. Blalock's first memory of a course provided at a distance involved accommodations made for a severely disabled student, Mr. Darrell Smith, who wanted to take a Mental Health Technology course in 1972. Mr. Smith's disability prevented him from commuting to the College, so Calhoun provided the course to him by two-way phone communication. Mr. Smith was able to hear what occurred in the class, and the class could hear him. Though the course was not designed as a distance education course, the student's needs allowed the course to be delivered in a format that accommodated his require-

ments. The Distance Learning program today still adheres to that philosophy.

In the summer of 1992, the College formalized distance education by developing what was then called a College-by-Cassette (or Tele-course) program. In 1997, the program was renamed the Distance Learning program to accommodate the College's first web-based course taught by Lynn Hogan. The following year, Jimmy Duke pioneered the College's efforts in CD-based courses. Calhoun currently has a catalog of 100 courses available in three formats—telecourse, CD, and web-based. 56 courses are available by web, 39 by telecourse, and 5 by CD. The complete list of courses is depicted in the following table:

FROM THE EDITOR

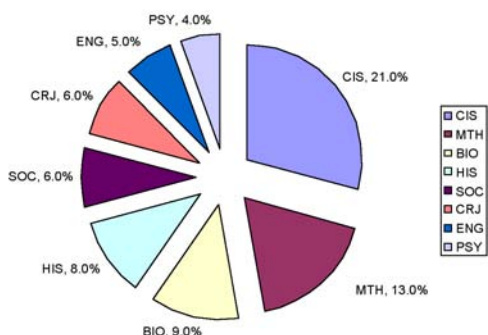


Dena Stephenson

IN THIS EDITION OF *DATA ELEMENTS*, YOU'LL LEARN INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT CALHOUN'S DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM. YOU'LL DISCOVER FACTS ABOUT THE NUMBER OF CALHOUN COURSES AVAILABLE IN DISTANCE FORMAT, THE PREFERENCE OF EXPERT STUDENTS ABOUT THE DELIVERY METHOD FOR ONLINE COURSES, AND THE PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAMS THAT ARE AVAILABLE AT A DISTANCE. YOU'LL FIND SOME FACTS ABOUT DISTANCE EDUCATION IN GENERAL, AS WELL AS FACTS SPECIFIC TO CALHOUN'S PROGRAM. ENJOY THIS EDITION OF *DATA ELEMENTS* AS WE EXPLORE DISTANCE LEARNING AT CALHOUN.

The distance learning inventory includes courses in 26 different course prefixes. Of these 26, eight prefixes comprise 72 percent of all courses offered in the distance learning inventory of courses. These course prefixes are shown in the table below:

TOP 8 COURSE PREFIXES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION
Includes All Distance Education Types (Telecourse, CD, and Web-Based)



Web-based classes

- ART 100
- ART 173
- AST 220
- BIO 101
- BIO 104
- BIO 201
- BIO 202
- BIO 288
- BIO 289
- BUS 263
- BUS 275
- CHM 111
- CHM 112
- CIS 113
- CIS 117
- CIS 130
- CIS 146
- CIS 147
- CIS 197T
- CIS 197U
- CIS 197V
- CIS 197W
- CIS 197 X
- CIS 197Y

- CIS 197Z
- CIS 197 AA
- CIS 197 CC
- CIS 197 DD
- CIS 198
- CIS 208
- CIS 212
- CIS 213
- CIS 251
- CIS 252
- CRJ 100
- OAD 101
- EMS 106
- ENG 101
- ENG 102
- ENG 130
- ENG 251
- GEO 102
- HIS 102
- HIS 122
- HIS 256
- MTH 112
- MTH 116
- MUS 101
- PED 200
- PHL 206
- PHS 120
- POL 220

- PSY 106
- SOC 200
- SOC 210
- SOC 247

CD Classes

- BIO 101
- BIO 102
- BIO 103
- ECO 231
- ECO 232

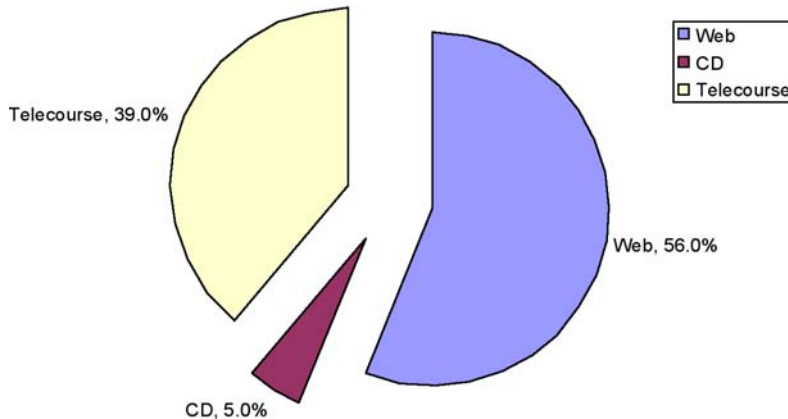
Tele-courses

- CHM 104
- CRJ 100
- CRJ 110
- CRJ 150
- CRJ 208
- CRJ 209
- ENG 101
- FRN 101
- FRN 102
- HED 221
- HED 222

- HIS 101
- HIS 102
- HIS 201
- HIS 202
- HIS 260
- MTH 090
- MTH 098
- MTH 100
- MTH 103
- MTH 104
- MTH 110
- MTH 112
- MTH 116
- MTH 125
- MTH 126
- MTH 231
- MUS 101
- POL 211
- PSY 200
- PSY 210
- PSY 211
- SOC 200
- SOC 208
- SOC 209
- SPA 101
- SPA 102
- SPH 107
- THR 120

Whereas the root of the distance learning program was established solely in telecourses, the program has enjoyed its most recent growth in two other formats—CD and web. The following table depicts the percentages of courses in each of the three delivery methods available today.

PERCENTAGE OF DISTANCE COURSES BY DELIVERY METHOD



Over the last twelve years, the Distance Learning program has experienced steady growth. The following table illustrates the growth in three delivery methods:

NUMBER OF SECTIONS BY FORMAT FOR FALL SEMESTER

1992 Through 2004

YEAR	Telecourse	Web	CD	Total
1992	7	0	0	7
1996	39	0	0	39
1997	44	1	0	45
1998	47	6	1	54
1999	41	13	1	55
2000	37	18	1	56
2001	39	24	1	64
2002	40	25	2	67
2003	39	28	5	72
2004	36	35	7	78

Growth in distance learning has required the College to closely monitor the percentage of programs of study available through distance education. The College must report major changes to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which requests regular updates. During the fall 2004 semester, the College notified SACS that the development of ENG 252 in a distance format would affect the percentage of AS programs available at a distance. The most current data indicates the development of ENG 252 in distance format allows the AS degree in five programs of study to be attained 100 % through distance learning.



ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING . . .

- ONLINE STUDENTS RECEIVED TWICE AS MANY A'S AS TRADITIONAL STUDENTS AND HALF AS MANY D'S AND F'S. [THE TECHNOLOGY SOURCE]
- THE ANNUAL MARKET FOR DISTANCE LEARNING IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO \$11 BILLION BY 2005. [LIFELONG LEARNING TRENDS]
- ROUGHLY 90% OF PUBLIC TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OFFER DISTANCE EDUCATION CLASSES. [AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION]
- ONLINE LEARNING IS BECOMING MORE COMMON AND INCREASES 40% ANNUALLY. [GALLAGHER]
- THE INTERNET IS THE MOST COMMON MODE OF DELIVERY FOR PROVIDING DISTANCE EDUCATION. [STATEMENT OF CORNELIA ASHBY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND INCOME SECURITY ISSUES, U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE]
- IN THE U.S., 97 PERCENT OF FACULTY HAVE ACCESS TO THE WEB AND 68 PERCENT OF CLASSROOMS HAVE INTERNET ACCESS. (CAMPUS COMPUTING 2000)

PERCENT OF PROGRAMS AVAILABLE THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING FORMAT

*Anticipated Changes with Introduction of
ENG 251 and 252 Courses*

Fall 2004

Program of Study	Current	1 Lit	2 Lit
Accounting	66%	71%	76%
Agricultural Science	77%	82%	87%
Art	50%	55%	
Biological Science	72%	77%	81%
Business	71%	76%	81%
Chemistry	66%	70%	75%
Computer Information Systems	81%	86%	91%
Criminal Justice	92%	97%	
Child Development	39%	42%	
Elementary Teacher Education	95%	100%	
English	91%	95%	100%
Family Financial Planning and Counseling	75%	80%	85%
Fire Services Management	67%	72%	
General Education	95%	100%	
Health and Physical Education	73%	78%	83%
Law/Pre-Law	95%	100%	
Mathematics	63%	68%	73%
Pre-Medicine or Pre-Dentistry	78%	83%	88%
Medicine/Pre-Veterinary Medicine	72%	77%	81%
Music Education	64%	69%	
Nursing/Pre-Nursing	84%	89%	
Paralegal Studies	64%	69%	
Pharmacy/Pre-Pharmacy	72%	77%	81%
Secondary Teacher Education	95%	100%	
Theatre Arts	50%	55%	59%

Calhoun's distance learning courses enjoy an 82% subscription rate which indicates they are an attractive option to our students.

Since distance learning courses have been growing steadily at Calhoun over the last ten years, Dr. Marilyn Beck, Calhoun's President, commissioned a study to determine whether Calhoun students were taking distance learning courses from other colleges while simultaneously taking their courses at Calhoun.

The Office of Planning and Research designed a short, three-question survey to determine whether Calhoun students were taking courses at other colleges through distance or traditional formats while simultaneously enrolled at Calhoun. The survey was administered to 260 students during their classes. The results indicated that very few were taking courses at other colleges while actively enrolled in courses at Calhoun, and that only one student was taking a distance learning course from another college while enrolled at Calhoun. The results of the survey are shared below:

OTHER COLLEGES ATTENDED WHILE ATTENDING CALHOUN SURVEY RESULTS

Number of Students Surveyed: **360** (approximately 4½% of student body)

Number of Valid Survey's Completed: **293** (81% of sample)

Number Taking Classes at Calhoun and Other College Simultaneously: **7** (2%)

Traditional format: 6
Distance learning format: 1

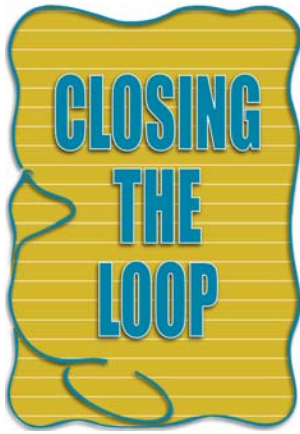
Location of Classes Taken Simultaneously with Calhoun:

Athens State (3)
UAH (1)
Broome Community College, Binghamton, NY (1)
Christian Practice Center (1)
Did not indicate location (1)

Reasons Given for Taking Classes Elsewhere:

Class is not offered at Calhoun at a convenient time (1)
Class is not offered at Calhoun (2)
Student is full-time at Athens, but needed class only offered at Calhoun (2)

The successful history of Calhoun's Distance Learning program suggests an even brighter future. Dr. Carmen Blalock and Calhoun's administrative team remain committed to providing students easy access to education which includes a broad-based distance learning program.



THIS SEGMENT DESCRIBES INSTANCES WHEN INDIVIDUALS, DEPARTMENTS, OR DIVISIONS USED DATA TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT IMPROVED THEIR AREAS. EACH ITEM DETAILS HOW AN ISSUE OR PROBLEM WAS IDENTIFIED (THE PROBLEM), WHAT METHODS WERE USED TO ADDRESS IT (THE STUDY), AND HOW THE RESULTS WERE USED TO IMPROVE (THE SOLUTION). IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ITEM, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH. THIS ISSUE FOCUSES ON DISTANCE LEARNING.

The Problem

In studying the various types of delivery methods for web-based classes, the College determined that a variety of online course management software was being used. Currently, WebCT is the most popular software used by Calhoun faculty, but Blackboard, ThinkWell, and other delivery methods, including what Dr. Blalock calls "homegrown," are currently used. In its [Plan for Student Success](#), the College's Planning Council formed an objective to "Adopt a standard course management/delivery platform for 100% of web-based courses by fall 2004." The question then became, "which platform should the College adopt?"

The Study

Dr. Carmen Blalock was asked to lead the effort to determine which course management software would best meet both student and faculty needs. Dr. Blalock immediately considered student needs first. She identified a group of 22 Calhoun students who had taken distance learning courses between fall 2001 and summer 2004 in every format Calhoun offered. Of the 22 "expert" students, one had taken all his/her classes through distance learning and the others had taken a significant portion of their credits through distance learning. In all, the 22 students had registered for a total of 557 courses, 280 (50%) of which were distance learning courses. Of the 208 distance learning courses, 106 were telecourse sections, 140 were web sections, and 34 were CD sections.

Dr. Blalock designed the Expert Student Survey to assess student satisfaction with the College's Distance Learning program and determine areas for improvement. Twenty-two surveys were administered through mail and seven were completed and returned. The survey addressed several areas in distance learning, such as the student's preference for traditional vs. distance courses, the most desirable features of a distance learning course, and suggestions for improving Calhoun's distance learning program. The results of the entire survey can be viewed on the Calhoun website at: <http://www.calhoun.edu/distancelearning/ExpertStudentSurvey.htm>.

Two items on the survey directly addressed the Planning Council's objective to adopt a common course management software. Those two items and the responses follow:

1. **Do you have a preference for course management software (ThinkWell, CourseCompass, WebCT, and CCC)?**

Yes = 5 students No = 2 students Undecided = 0 students

2. **If you answered "yes" to the previous question, please circle your preference.**

WebCT = 3 students ThinkWell = 1 student CourseCompass = 1 student CCC = 0 students

The Solution

Dr. Blalock presented the results of the survey at the March 14, 2005, Distance Learning Faculty and Staff Meeting. Since only seven students responded to the survey, no decision to adopt a common course management software has been made. A well-informed decision about adopting a common course management software will require further research with an additional group of expert students and input from faculty.



CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
P.O. Box 2216
Decatur, AL 35609-2216