

Distance Learning Committee (DLC)

Report to Academic Senate

March 14, 2024

Core Inquiry #4: Concerns About Regular Substantive Interaction (RSI) and DLC Responses

In our recent accreditation review, the review team viewed a random sample of distance education sections in both Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. In both reviews, the team found that a “notable number of sections did not appear to have regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.” When asked for more clarification, the team stated the number of courses was “not in the minority.”

Members of the DLC met with the review team on February 28, and sent more evidence after that meeting.

Our takeaways from these communications are:

- The review team found a lack of substantive instructor feedback, typically found in the Speedgrader section of the LMS. A note to DL Faculty: feedback is one of the only RSI elements that stays in the Canvas shell!
 - Faculty are urged to include substantive feedback on assessments weekly in the following ways: feedback comments; detailed embedded rubrics; annotations; video or audio feedback.
 - Note that substantive involves the content of the course, i.e., is not only “good job” or emojis or any feedback that is mostly encouraging or descriptive of emotional reaction. It’s great to be encouraging. There **also** needs to be a substantive part to the feedback.
- The review team stated that the campus should determine what constitutes “discussion facilitation.” This will be a topic at upcoming DLC meetings.
- The review team referred to a Distance Learning Handbook that is in the works at DLC. The DLC will make this handbook available this spring.

To help you assess if your course has RSI, a self-assessment rubric and an explanatory PowerPoint is provided for you to use. This rubric includes drop-down boxes so it should be downloaded on your hard drive; it will not work in Preview mode or a One Drive folder. Be sure to note the frequency of your interactions.

This self-assessment rubric has already been emailed to all faculty on the DL Listserv. If you or one of your SPOT-certified department faculty did not receive it, please contact Carol Impara to be sure you are on the Listserv.

Other ways that faculty can get RSI help are:

- Instructional designers with the FCLT will review your course to see if its design supports RSI.
- The FCLT regularly publishes “News Bytes” that frequently feature RSI.
- Workshops on RSI are coming in the spring.

SPOT Updates in the Works

The DLC has been overseeing an overhaul of SPOT. Faculty were surveyed about SPOT last year and indicated an overall positive experience, but some items stood out as needing attention.

Items being worked on include:

- SPOT does not teach Canvas. Faculty whose Canvas skills are poor often have difficulty completing SPOT. The group discussed integrating a Canvas questionnaire at the start of SPOT which faculty can use to self-assess proficiency. Soft recommendation for faculty with low skills to take Growing with Canvas.
- Copy a SPOT template into new SPOT course shells for faculty to use as guideline for SPOT creation. It is based on templates created by the instructional designers.
- Introduce a new task, Create an RSI Plan, for faculty to complete. These forms can then be submitted to department chair or designee to fulfill contract 13.A.5.
- Propose that Academic Senate approve a “living” orientation and syllabus that faculty can use to update their courses with timely information.
- Condense and/or remove some tasks; condense and reformat the SPOT rubric; redesign SPOT to take advantage of CidiLabs and other features.

Some of these changes are quite extensive. We are hoping to introduce them this spring.

SPOT Recertification Reminders

Your recertification due date is every four years from the year you were first SPOT certified. You must complete four **approved** continuing education hours by your recertification due date. One of those hours must be Regulations Update for SPOT Recertification. Recertification evidence is due July 31. The webpage can be found at the following link:

<https://www.mtsac.edu/distancelearning/spotrecert.html>

You can find your recertification (SPOT Expires On) date by going to [SPOT Certified Faculty](#). (If this page link doesn't work, google SPOT certified faculty mtsac.)

Of 911 SPOT-certified faculty, 207 faculty have their SPOT recertification due July 31, 2024. 98 have already achieved recertified – congratulations!

If your recert is due:

1. **Do not sign up for SPOT again.** You need to complete four hours of **DLC-approved** distance learning activities, of which one hour is a required Regulations Update session.
2. **Complete Regulations Update Online.** (Note: only one Regs Update counts per SPOT Recertification cycle.) [CLICK HERE TO ENROLL IN REGS UPDATE ONLINE](#)
3. **Check the SPOT Recertification webpage for other DLC approved courses.** Under **Search for Approved Workshops here!** search to see if workshops you took count or find new ones.

4. If you need more sessions, you can sort by Workshop Type to find self-paced sessions you can use. (These are generally found under Featured Training in the POD Connect site.)
5. There will also be new sessions offered in April.
6. To submit your evidence, follow the instructions under step 3, Submit your recertification transcripts.
7. **IMPORTANT! Banner can only “add four years” to your date. Even if you complete your training early, do not submit evidence until the school year that your recertification is due.**
 - For example, if your recert is due July 31, 2024, you can use approved training that you took from August 1, 2020-July 31, 2024, but only submit the evidence from August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024.
8. If your online course was aligned to the CVC rubric under the POCR process during your training period, you only need to take Regs Update. You can then submit your certificate.

To download evidence of attendance, go to your POD transcript.

- When in POD, click the round Transcript icon. The page will load with Active courses (ones that have not been logged into POD). Under Filter by Training Status, choose Completed. This is the section that you can download attendance certificates from.
- POD processes this section by hand. Allow 2-3 weeks for them to register your training as Completed. If a training you took recently is Active, it will need to become Completed for you to download a certificate.
- Download your certificates. Just choose four hours’ worth. Be sure you get the Regulations Update certificate.
- Contact pod@mtsac.edu with questions. Your transcript is part of HR and I do not have access to it.

Respectfully submitted,
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