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Applied Research at VCC and the “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects” policy

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Do your students do research projects that include interviewing clients or patients? Have you been approached by an external organization wanting to conduct a class survey with your students? Are you enrolled in a course that requires you to complete a research project, and you want to use your co-workers as your subjects? If you answered, “yes” to any of these questions, you may need to apply to VCC’s newly formed Research Ethics Board (REB) for approval before beginning your project. The REB was established as a requirement of the “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects” Policy (A 3 10) that was approved in April, 2007 by the College Board of Governors. Members of the REB include Dr. Alan Davis (VCC), Dr. Deanna Rexe (VCC, Chair), Ginny Cathcart (VCC), Sue Aro (VCC), Dr. Karen Belfer (VCC), Dr. Donald Brunnette (UBC), and Dr. Norman Streat (BCIT). Meetings are held the last Thursday of every month.

The purpose of the policy is to establish principles, practices and procedures to guide and ensure the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects at VCC. The policy meets the requirements outlined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) in its document entitled “Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects.” The Tri-Council consists of three national research organizations – Canadian Institute of Health Research, Natural Sciences & Engineering Research of Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The Tri-Council developed their policy statement based on the guidelines which they have developed over the last few decades, as well as policy statements from the international research community.

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Volunteer Mentorship Opportunity

The Centre for Transportation Trades is looking for volunteers interested in working as mentors in its Inner-City Youth Partnership with the Ray-Cam Community Centre and the Vancouver Police. In addition to building a Cobia kit car and restoring a 1935 Ford sedan, mentors will be assisting the youth in acquiring life skills through role modeling. Volunteers will be needed for after-school hours until the end of June and from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. during July and August. Whether it is one day a week for part of the duration or a longer more extensive commitment you are sure to be rewarded many times over for the experience of working with these youth.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Jason Devisser jdevisser@vcc.ca or Mario Tiettenet mtiettenet@vcc.ca. For more information on the partnership see the media release available on the VCC website at http://www.vcc.ca/about-vcc/news.cfm?NEWS_ID=3823

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The basis for the ethical principles outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement is respect for human dignity. The seven ethical principles developed by Tri-Council include:

1. the requirement for free and informed consent
2. respect for vulnerable persons
3. respect for privacy and confidentiality
4. respect for justice and inclusiveness
5. balancing harm and benefit
6. minimizing harm and maximizing benefit

To determine whether or not a project requires REB approval, the first question to ask is whether or not the project is research. According to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS), research involves "systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge." Secondly, the

research must involve humans as "research subjects." To date, only two projects have been submitted to the REB for approval and both projects were approved.

Despite there being few applications to the REB for approval, the Chair has received several enquiries from members of the college community wondering whether or not the policy was applicable to their situation. Although many of the enquiries involved ethical concerns (protection of privacy, freedom of information, copyright, consent and fairness), the "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects" policy was not applicable. In accordance with the TCPS, the policy does not apply to the normal administration, evaluation or improvement of an operation, program, service or activity within VCC. Such activities may include quality assurance studies, performance reviews or testing

within normal educational requirements

If you have questions regarding whether or not REB approval is required for a project, please refer to the policy. If you require further clarification please contact Deanna Rexe, the Chair of the committee. All requests for Ethics Review must be submitted on the *Request for Ethical Review Form*. The forms are available from the Office of the VP, Education. In addition to completing the forms, all researchers are required to complete the tutorial on the Tri-Council Policy Statement - "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects." The tutorial can be found at <http://www.tre-c.ca/ethicalreview/>. The tutorial is a great way to learn about "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects."

Have fun!

Report from Education Council

During its March meeting, Council approved the revised Granting of Credentials policy (C 1.3) and the revised Program Advisory Committee policy (C 3.1). Council has also approved the new Degree Standards policy.

In April, Council approved the new Affiliation Agreements policy.

Council approved the new CACE Hospitality Careers program in March and the new Telecommunication Convergence program in April.

A motion to cancel the Electronics Telecommunications program has been postponed to the May meeting.

Alan Davis submitted a report to Council on Continuing Studies, based on findings from a review of CS that he has undertaken over the past year.

Council created a subcommittee to review the issue of internet filtering at the College. The subcommittee will be submitting recommendations on the topic of internet filtering and academic freedom at the College.

Alan Davis presented a memo on the 2008-09 Education and Training Plan. Education Council held two extraordinary Council meetings in late April to hear presentations from the College community. The presentations will help Council develop its advice to the Board on the Education and Training Plan. Council will prepare its advice at the regular meeting, May 13th.

Education Council will vote on the following policies at the May 2008 Education Council meeting:

- Aboriginal Enrolment policy (new policy)
- Criteria for the Development or Cancellation of Programs Leading to Certificates, Diplomas or Degrees policy (C.3.3)

From the Centre for Instructional Development...

What does it all mean? Distributed Learning: Level 2 and Level 3

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What is Distributed Learning?

Distributed Learning (DL) at VCC has been defined as the use of information and communication technologies in the delivery of curriculum and course resources, either in a blended/mixed mode (a combination of face-to-face and online instruction), or fully online

Why do we need DL? What are the researched advantages of using technology to deliver courses?

When used effectively, it

- makes the educational process more accessible and flexible,
- enables the presentation of information using different types of media to address the needs of the learners' preferred learning styles,
- increases the level of communication as well as the means of communication for instructors and students,
- provides another opportunity for departments to review and renew their curriculum.

What is the VCC Distributed Learning Plan?

It is a document that is updated annually, and which guides the expansion and implementation of Distributed Learning at VCC until

December 2010. As the Dean of the Centre for Instructional Development, I am responsible for updating the document and supporting the implementation of the Plan

According to the DL Plan, what is the Vision for DL from now to 2010?

The vision for 2010 is to.

- use DL to enhance teaching and learning, and to increase flexibility and choice for students across all VCC college-credit programs and courses by incorporating information and communication technology at three levels

- ◇ DL1: Use of administrative systems to improve the organizational information systems and processes that are intrinsic to our core activity of teaching and learning, e.g. on-line registration, online access to certain services, on-line grade book etc.
- ◇ DL2: Use of applications to support program and course-based organization and logistics to provide updates to the curriculum, and to promote communication and flexibility (e.g. the use of a learning management system such as Moodle for class announcements, email, bulletin boards, and links to resources).
- ◇ DL3: Use of applications that are used to teach and learn (e.g. discussion boards, quizzes, assignments, chats, blogs, wikis)

What is the difference between DL2 and DL3?

According to the DL Plan
The differences between DL2 and DL3 can be classified in terms of the level of teaching done using the technology, and the type of activities that are done with that technology

One way we can describe the difference is based on requirements. So, normally, if the technology is **optional** and is used to enhance communication, flexibility, and access to resources, and so supports classroom and lab activities, then it would be considered to be DL2. If the use of DL is **required** to study in the course - it is an inherent part of the teaching and learning process, whether on or off campus - it would be considered DL3.

But, there is no clear divide between DL2 and DL3: extended and successful use of DL2 will often lead to DL3.

What can you do to help your department achieve the DL 2010 objectives?

Through your department head and Dean, work with the CID staff to identify the technologies available at VCC and find opportunities and synergies for implementation of those technologies in courses within the programs.

Since most programs have gone through the process of determining how educational technologies can be used to enhance the delivery of the curriculum . . .

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2007 VCC Faculty Development Survey

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In November 2007, VCC faculty received an email message requesting that they complete a questionnaire on professional development (PD) and Distributed Learning (DL). The survey commissioned by the Distributed Learning Committee (DLC) was emailed to regular and contract faculty. The questionnaire was designed to provide data to achieve a key goal of the VCC Distributed Learning Plan, the development of a “comprehensive schedule of workshops and other activities that help faculty and staff develop their skills and understanding in order to implement this vision.” A total of 155 questionnaires (online and paper-based) were completed and returned.

Specifically, the committee wanted to ascertain:

1. what level of interest and involvement in DL exists in the faculty component
2. how the College could best support teaching and learning for DL

3. how faculty would prefer to learn new DL skills and knowledge
4. what professional development activities in which faculty would like to engage
5. how teaching and learning environments should be (re)designed to engage learners
6. what educational technology should be available in teaching and learning environments

Key Data on Professional Development

1. Level of faculty interest and involvement in DL
More than half of all respondents reported using or integrating DL technologies into the delivery of course content or resources. Of those who indicated they did not use informational or educational technology in their practice, 47% reported that they were interested in doing so, and 33% reported they were unsure or had some reservations. From the comments offered by faculty in the questionnaire, a general outline emerges of how DL is being used at VCC. Faculty not teaching totally online courses reported using email and department websites to communicate to students, to link students with textbook support websites and additional web-based learning resources, and to present learning

materials in classrooms (power point). Both teaching and student service area faculty indicated an interest in using a range of technologies and online activities from visualizers to blogs. Overall, 70% of all respondents judged their general knowledge of and ability to use distributed learning technologies as weak.

Key Data:

56 % of respondents use DL to deliver curriculum and course resources
47 % of non-user respondents would consider introducing DL strategies into their teaching practice
50 % of respondents indicated that their general knowledge of DL was weak
79 % respondents wanted to improve their IT knowledge and skills
A final point of interest: 71 % of respondents indicated that a lack of interest is not a barrier to the use of DL in their teaching.

The complete report is available on the Common drive, Distributed Learning Committee

Common Faculty PD Funds—

The Common Faculty Professional Development Fund supports various types of professional development activities, such as tuition for additional educational qualifications, speaking/presenting at conferences or events; attending conferences or events, speakers/workshops for Schools or departments on topics related to best practices, future changes in methodology, pedagogy, technology, etc. Funds can be requested for future professional development activities that require advance payment. Applications can be found at: J:\COMMON\PD FUNDS and the PD Leave form can be found at: J:\COMMON\FORMS\Human Resources Forms\Faculty (VCCFA).

Adjudication for requests takes place three times a year. Deadlines for requests are January 15, April 15 and September 30 of each year.

Committee Reports

Distributed Learning Committee

The Committee met to discuss library services for Distance Students. Currently the College pays for the postage to send library resources to students. The Committee discussed how to determine which students could be considered distance/distributed learning students and who should have access to services. VCC has reciprocal library arrangements across BC and between provinces, but doesn't have clear protocol for international distance learners.

Karen Belfer presented a PowerPoint slideshow re the evaluation of the effective implementation of technology. Recommendations from her research include: ensure educational, technical and funding support is available, ensure that support from Management is available, develop context-appropriate criteria for evaluation, develop a tool adoption life cycle, and select future projects based on correspondence of innovation with current teaching practices. The Committee also discussed adapting online course material for use in multiple sections and/or different instructors teaching the same online course.

Education Administrators Group

Maggie Ross visited the Group to discuss the topic of safe emergency evacuation. Maggie informed EAG that the College has no effective system for keeping track of people exiting the building, or for keeping track of people in the building during emergency situations. Attendance isn't normally taken, and there are no College policies with regards to attendance. It was pointed out that Education Service areas don't/can't keep track of whom is on site, and that there is a continual flow of visitors and guests. The topic will continue to be discussed. The Group discussed the impact of the College closure during the 2010 Olympics, TOEFL scores for admission to College programs, and the Articulation and Transfer Credit policy.

Upcoming Events at Vancouver Community College

Education Council Meeting

Downtown Campus Room 420

May 13

Broadway Campus Room 5025

June 03

Design Showcase

Downtown Campus Foyer

May 22 - May 30

Awards Ceremony

Broadway Campus Auditorium

May 22, May 23

Fashion Arts Grad Show

Rocky Mountaineer

July 31

Graduation

Room 240 Downtown Campus

June 20

Broadway Campus Auditorium

June 26, June 27

November 21

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. the next step would be for you, through your department head, to contact the CID to develop a strategy to implement the DL plan. Take advantage of the professional development activities provided by the CID to learn more about the technologies available (e.g. Moodle).

Is there support available to achieve the goal?

CID has a Distributed Support person as well as three IAs who are ready to provide programs with the support that is required to help them achieve their DL goals — feel free to contact us.

Note to Schools:

- With the current budgetary challenges, I've been asked by many faculty if converting courses to DL3 will provide an opportunity for programs to increase their training plan

numbers.

- Unfortunately, the answer is "not necessarily." There should be no automatic expectation that a course that gets converted to DL3 will increase enrollment unless there is a clear and evidence-based business case for reaching a larger audience which is currently underserved (e.g. cannot easily attend VCC, or needs more flexibility).

