

Sylvia A. Alva, Ph.D.

Executive Vice Chancellor

CSU Office of the Chancellor

401 Golden Shore, Long Beach, CA 90802

www.calstate.edu

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MEMORANDUM

TO: CSU Presidents

FROM: Sylvia A. Alva, Ph.D.
Executive Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: WSCUC Expectation for Substantive Change Approval for Distance Education

We would like to provide clarification on two matters that have arisen because of recent communications from the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

Spring and Summer 2022 Distance Education Authorization Related to the Pandemic

WSCUC has [extended](#) the authorization for remote instruction through the spring and summer terms of 2022. Your campus Accreditation Liaison Officers (ALO) are aware of the process for requesting this authorization. This request must be submitted before courses begin for the spring 2022 term.

Revised Requirements for Permanent Addition of Distance Education Programs

The second issue is related to the requirements for permanent addition of distance education programs. Previous guidance from WSCUC maintained that the 50% threshold that defined a program as “distance education” pertained only to the major portion of undergraduate programs. This is no longer the case. The updated guidance clarifies that it pertains to the entire set of courses/units a student undertakes to complete the program. For undergraduate programs, this includes major courses, general education and any additional courses needed to reach the minimum 120 semester unit threshold.

This updated guidance requires institutions to obtain substantive change approval for programs in which 50% or more of the program (units for completion of the program) may be offered through distance education. In the context of the substantive change review requirement for programs, WSCUC considers a distance education course to be one in which 50% or more of the instruction and interaction occurs using one or more of the technologies included in the

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definition of distance education, with the faculty and students being physically separate. Your campus ALO is aware of this definition of distance education as cited in the Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR § 600.2.

The change related to permanent addition of distance education programs does *not* obligate the campus to offer degree programs in a fully online mode; instead, it is a reporting requirement to WSCUC. In the CSU Degrees Database, and in Cal State Apply, we will *not* display these programs as available for online delivery unless the program meets the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) [definition](#) for distance education and the campus requests us to do so.

Your campus ALOs have the most up-to-date information on these changes from WSCUC. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Alison Wrynn, associate vice chancellor for Academic Programs, Innovations and Faculty Development, at awrynn@calstate.edu for clarification.

c: Joseph I. Castro, Chancellor
CSU Provosts and Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs
CSU Accreditation Liaison Officers
Alison M. Wrynn, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Programs, Innovations and
Faculty Development