# Online Education Discussion Paper
## Michael Orkin and Patricia Nelson

## Evaluation of Data

### Purpose and Need
As technology advances, online education is moving into the mainstream of higher education. Community college students, many of whom have full-time jobs and family responsibilities, are attracted to online courses for ease of scheduling and remote access. As PCCD develops online courses it is necessary to maintain educational standards, provide faculty and student support, acquire state-of-the-art technology, and develop a coordinated, district-wide effort to support the colleges once they have articulated their strategic plans.

### Description of Current Efforts
Efforts at the district level include modest marketing, limited technology support, and some professional development opportunities. There is considerable student enthusiasm for online education. This, coupled with the efforts of some faculty, has resulted in initial successes for online courses. Average enrollment in online courses is 45 students. Over 700 FTES have been generated by online courses alone in the past two years.

### External Data
Data from the State Chancellor's Office and anecdotal evidence suggests Peralta's average 45-student enrollment is consistent with state data. Peralta lags behind other California Community Colleges in funding and must provide adequate support staff, student services, technology acquisition, and professional development opportunities to ensure successful online education efforts.

### Best Practices
PCCD online best practices are built on the model suggested by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (www.ihep.org ). Best practices areas include institutional support, course development, course structure, student services support, faculty support, evaluation, and assessment.

### Standards
PCCD faculty have embraced standards of academic excellence for online education. As mentioned earlier, the district needs to provide sufficient funding to successfully develop an online education program comparable to some other California community colleges (e.g., San Diego Community College District and Los Angeles Community College District).. Standards must include methods of evaluation as well as coordinated efforts to make online courses ADA compliant.

## Strategy and Goals

Educational Principles
The PCCD Online Education Program will be developed in accordance with state and national DE best practices. As part of these efforts, PCCD service centers will need to facilitate collaboration among the colleges, identify and implement training opportunities, as well as develop internal support networks for faculty, administration, staff, and students. Colleges are encouraged to identify and develop their role in online education according to individual strengths and educational plans. The district will support campuses in applying their course and student learning assessments and outcomes.

Quantitative and Qualitative Goals

Qualitative:
- Increase FTES without affecting physical plant
- Comply with accessibility and usability guidelines and requirements
- Increase community access to education
- Increase the number of qualified online instructors
- Increase inter-campus collaboration
- Make use of state-of-the-art online technology.
- Integrate Student Services with online programs
- Train high-quality online educators.
- Develop academically rigorous online courses.
- Develop online courses that fit the strategic plans of individual campuses.
- Increase marketing efforts to effectively reach target populations by including mention of online course possibilities in all PCCD marketing material (target populations include students with scheduling difficulties, students within district who can't come to campus, students out of district).
- Post schedule of online classes on Peralta and college web sites.

Quantitative
- Increase District enrollment by at least 2% per academic year.
- Hire at least one full-time online education technical support person at each campus.
- Provide funding for .5 faculty support on each campus.
- Increase funding through Measure A and other sources for purchasing new technology relevant to the goals of each campus and the role of the District as a support agent.
- Create a permanent budget line item to support professional development opportunities, marketing, and related activities.

Strategies
- Individual campuses must take the lead in aggressively developing online education plans.
- The District will help campus distance education committees share/collaborate across the District.

Performance Standards and Evaluation Approach
- Qualitative and quantitative goals above include evaluation criteria.
- Faculty and staff professional development will be required and funded by the district.
- Through the District Staff Development Officer, CIPD, DAS and faculty/course evaluations, the District will assist the Colleges in assuring that any and all Standards of accessibility and usability (e.g., ADA guidelines) will be followed.

Timeline (depends on adequate funding by district)
- Campuses complete articulation of individual DE plans as part of the Strategic Plan – December 2007.
- Reconvene committee formed in Spring 2007 to report on Course Management System findings, in conjunction with campus DE plans – Spring 2008.
- Integration of student support services – 2007-09
- CMS demonstration and evaluation – Spring and Fall 2008.
- Infrastructure development – campus-wide 2007-08, district-wide 2008-09
- Additional staffing – 2007-08.
- RFP process for CMS – Fall 2008.
- Course delivery system(s) established, supported and fully functioning – 2008-2009
- Faculty training – ongoing, begins Fall 2007.
- Evaluation, assessment, and outcome development – ongoing, began Spring 2007