

Merritt College DE Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2026
9:06am-10:21am

ATTENDANCE:

ATTENDEES		
X	Dr. Monica Ambalal, DE Coordinator / Chair	
X	Ranjeeta Lal	
X	Adoria R. Williams	
AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION / FOLLOW-UP
I. Call to Order	Meeting called to order at 9:06 a.m. -noted that, as of April 16, the committee is no longer under Brown Act requirements. The committee will continue to operate in a Brown Act-like manner for transparency and recordkeeping.	No formal action taken.
II. Minutes / Agenda / Public Comment	Because the meeting was informal and the committee was not operating under Brown Act requirements, prior minutes and the agenda were not formally approved. No separate public comment was taken.	None.
III. Pending Title 5 Distance Education Rulemaking	The committee reviewed pending changes to Title 5 sections 55200, 55204, and 55210. Proposed updates modernize DE definitions and reporting to align with federal regulations. Discussion included DE courses that contain limited in-person activities, the current 51% DE classification, hybrid and HyFlex reporting, forthcoming MIS coding changes, and removal of the separate annual DE efficacy review requirement. The proposed language remains in process and is not final.	DE Coordinator will monitor rulemaking and share updates with campus and district faculty.
IV. New POCR / Online Course Design Rubric	The new statewide online course design rubric was reviewed. Accessibility is now integrated throughout the rubric rather than contained in a separate Section D. New or strengthened areas include technology statements, accessibility of third-party tools and OER, data privacy and security, predictable course design, varied instructional media, clear learner directions, RSI, meaningful instructor feedback, and post-assessment reflection. The group discussed the transition to the new rubric, expectations for already badged courses, and the need for a clear local review pathway.	Develop a local POCR approval pathway/timeline; distribute the new rubric to faculty; clarify expectations and possible compensation for updates to existing badged courses.
V. RSI and Instructor Presence	The committee discussed Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI), with emphasis on instructor-initiated academic interaction and meaningful human presence. Concern was raised about courses running largely on pre-scheduled content or AI-generated instructor bots. Reused announcements may support course organization, but they should not replace active instructor engagement. The group also discussed the need for substantive feedback on student work.	Create a short RSI refresher and one-page faculty guide. Consider workshops on effective Canvas feedback and instructor presence.
VI. Accessibility, UDL, and Title II	Updates were shared regarding Title II web and digital accessibility requirements and the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The discussion emphasized that published digital content, including third-party course materials, must be accessible. DE can provide faculty support and training, but institutional accessibility compliance requires coordinated district and college responsibility rather than being assigned solely to the DE Coordinator or committee.	Continue faculty education and share accessibility resources; reinforce the need for institution-wide coordination.
VII. AI in Teaching and Learning	The committee reviewed the August 3 Chancellor's Office memorandum on building local frameworks for generative and agentic AI in teaching and learning. Recommended areas include privacy, accessibility, equity, academic integrity, student guidance, professional learning, and shared governance. The committee discussed the need for transparency regarding both student and instructor use of AI and noted that a local framework must be developed institutionally with Academic Senate and other governance groups.	

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VIII. Digital Identity, Enrollment Fraud, and Statewide DE Issues	The committee discussed July guidance on digital identity verification and fraudulent enrollment, including bot enrollment and its effects on course seats, faculty workload, student access, financial aid, and reporting. The group also noted statewide DE and educational technology work, including development of an online student support quality rubric and continuing concerns about Canvas outages, data protection, and contingency planning.	Monitor statewide guidance and determine what DE faculty need to know. Continue discussion of backup and alternative-platform planning.
IX. Out-of-State Enrollment and Accreditation	The committee discussed evolving questions related to students taking online courses while located outside California, including potential implications for veterans, deployed students, authorization, and financial aid reporting. The group also reviewed the ACCJC 50% distance education threshold, under which a program that can be completed 50% or more through DE may trigger substantive change consideration. This threshold is separate from POCR certification.	
X. 2026-27 Committee Priorities / DE Plan	Primary priorities identified for the year were preparing faculty for AI, revisiting and implementing the new POCR standards, and collaborating with Laney College's DE team during the merger. The group agreed not to create a new DE plan at this time and to use the existing plan while merger work continues, with the option to revisit the plan later.	Focus current-year work on faculty training, AI readiness, POCR transition, and Laney collaboration.
XI. POCR / ZTC Pipeline	Ranjeeta Lal provided an update on faculty and courses in the POCR/ZTC pipeline. Several faculty and courses remain in progress, including chemistry courses. The group discussed special assignments and the extended implementation timeline for the relevant ZTC impact-grant work, with courses expected to be implemented and offered by Fall 2027.	
XII. Adjournment	The recording concluded at approximately 10:21 a.m. after committee discussion.	No formal motion recorded.