

Report of VCT Coordinators' Summer Meeting

Highland Business Center, Austin Community College

May 22-23, 2006

Colleges Represented:

Alamo-Northwest Vista	Howard College	Temple
Alamo-Palo Alto	Lee College	Texas Southmost College
Alamo-San Antonio	Midland	TSTC-Harlingen
Alamo-St. Philip's College	North Central TX	TSTC-Marshall
Angelina	Northeast TX Comm. Col.	Tyler
Austin	North Harris Montgomery CCD	Victoria College
Blinn	Odessa	*Vernon College
Cisco	Panola	Weatherford
College of the Mainland	Paris Jr. College	Wharton
*Collin CCCD	San Jacinto	
Del Mar	South Texas College	
El Paso	Southwest TX Jr. College	
Frank Phillips College	Tarrant	

*participated via audioconference

VCT Orientation

This session was directed to new or recently appointed VCT Coordinators who could benefit from a systematic review of VCT's foundational understandings, agreements, practices and operational procedures. Ron Thomson conducted the session. Points covered in the orientation are included at the end of this report, pages 9-10.

VCT Status Report

Ron Thomson reported on the current status of VCT operations and new initiatives. ([Powerpoint presentation](#))

Enrollments. Enrollments down around 25% in FY 06 but we anticipate enrollments to steadily increase once the SACS review is complete. VCT course enrollments accounted for approximately 3% of community college distance learning enrollments statewide in FY 2004.

Other FY 05 Accomplishments

- Overall satisfaction with VCT: 5.57 on 6-pt. scale (FY 05 Coordinators Evaluation of VCT)
- Website improvements ([list of website changes implemented since Fall '05](#))
 - Final grade reports
 - Day of record rosters
 - Faculty rosters
 - Local and state credit course schedules
 - Archived rosters available anytime
 - Sort rosters by showing or excluding withdrawals
 - Improved emailing features on class rosters
- Four grant-funded program development projects for 2005-2007 biennium

Provider college access to DOR and Grade Reports. When designing the new DOR and Grade Report areas, Provider college access was inadvertently overlooked. Our programmer will be creating a new area for Provider colleges to track whether their instructors have signed off on rosters and grade reports. This should be ready within a few weeks.

Faculty rosters (faculty qualifications). Ron demonstrated the new system which will make it easier to maintain more universally consistent Faculty Rosters (faculty qualifications information) among all the colleges.

Collaborative degree programs. Due to the SACS review, this initiative has been put on the back burner. At some point in the future, the VCT website probably will have a page where colleges may list online degree programs that they offer that can accommodate additional students. At their discretion, other colleges could let their own students know about these programs. Students would enroll in the local college for common-core courses, but they would enroll in the degree-offering college for the discipline-specific courses. Ultimately, all coursework would transfer to the degree-offering college. This arrangement does not work by the Host-Provider principles that apply to individual courses. Partnering pairs of individual colleges who participate in collaborative program arrangements described here will likely sign an agreement specific to their partnership.

SACS Statewide Review

Ron Thomson reported on the status of the [VCT-SACS review's progress](#).

Essential documents of VCT. VCT Memorandum of Understanding, Host-Provider College Practices and Responsibilities and the VCT Operations Manual. The VCT Operations Manual is currently being revised to reflect new VCT practices resulting from the DLAC's assessment of VCT, Spring 05, in the context of the upcoming SACS review of VCT and improvements to the VCT website.

Single Compliance Certification (Summative). Ron Brey, our consultant for the SACS review, is reviewing all colleges' narratives. Narratives for the Single Compliance Certification will be inclusive of the Host colleges. The SACS review committee will review 11 randomly selected colleges, tracking the standards for which one or more colleges is out of compliance. All colleges will be examined for those standards for which more than one college is found to be noncompliant by the committee in its random sample. The review will be conducted off-site unless the team decides an on-site is warranted.

SACS will a single VCT review report to colleges and VCT. Each college will receive individual recommendation(s), as appropriate, and colleges must respond individually to each.

Committee's Review Schedule

- 9/1 – 9/15:** Review the Single Compliance Certification
- 9/18 – 9/25:** Review the full institution-specific Compliance Certifications of 11 colleges
- 10/2 – 10/13:** Review the institution-specific Compliance Certifications of remaining 32 colleges

10/16 – 10/27: Complete report and transmit to colleges

Post Report Schedule

April 17: All recommendations need to be responded to
May 15: Debriefing report
June 2007: Report will be before commission to formally act upon

VCT should not be reviewed by SACS in colleges' cyclical reaffirmation of accreditation until 2008. If a visiting team tries to examine VCT prior to that, let Ron Thomson know, and he will contact Dr. Benberg.

Dr. Tom Benberg of SACS and Dr. Ellen Weed (Chair of VCT-SACS Review Committee) will be joining the Distance Learning Advisory Committee meeting on June 15th.

VCT Coordinators' role in review. Review your college's Compliance Certification and confirm that the college's VCT practices are represented fully and accurately.

Critical items of the Abbreviated Compliance Certification (ACC)

- Writing narrative with a prominent VCT focus
- E.g., 2.5: OK to present the college's IE plan/strategy but how/where, specifically, does it apply to VCT?
- Is VCT treated as an identifiable "unit?"
- Unsupported assertions
- Non-working links
- Links to large documents without reference to any specific page or section
- Connecting Single Compliance Certification to individual colleges' Compliance Certifications
- ACC forms that need to be signed by Presidents and Chancellors should be scanned and linked to from each college's ACC.

SACS Standards:

3.4.12 Faculty responsible for content, *quality*, effectiveness of curriculum

- Must have a process for getting faculty approval of hosted courses
- VCT Support: Online syllabi, VCT Evaluation of Instruction and Services

3.7.1 Competent, qualified faculty

- Process for reviewing faculty qualifications
- VCT Support: Online Faculty Rosters and access to full credentials through electronic document system

1.5 Systematic IE processes; Examples:

- Checked indicators at our school and tied in for both local and DL for substantive change for those categories. Kept attrition at 20%.
- Compared data. Included VCT data from evaluations and other data off of the VCT website.

3.3.1 Outcomes for educational programs and admin and educational support services; improvements

- College participates in IE process of “VCT state collaborative organization” and makes improvements based upon results.
- VCT is integrated into college’s IE processes
- VCT support: VCT Evaluation of Instruct. and Services, data maintained at VCT website. Use evaluations, internal processes. Regular/routine college evaluations may tie into VCT..

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Ron asked Coordinators for more ideas for collecting data on a state level to address IE issues.

3.7.1 Qualified faculty qualifications

- Process for confirming faculty qualifications
- Faculty Rosters at VCT website: info on qualifications, such as that required by SACS faculty rosters
- Online faculty credentials

3.7.2 Faculty effectiveness

- Host evaluates
- VCT Support: VCT Evaluation of Instruction and Services (2 sections relevant to instructor effectiveness)

3.7.3 Professional development

- The Provider College will provide professional development policies and practices and Host college will confirm that its meets their requirements. Provider colleges will send Aleta Garcia (agarcia2@austincc.edu) a document that describes the college’s practices related to Professional Deveopment.

Internet Teachers at Every College Data. Gay Howard from Tyler pulled Internet Teachers at Every College data (i.e., courses, colleges, number of faculty). A link to that data will be included in the summative. An excel spreadsheet of the data will be put up at the VCT website on the SACS page under IE. The Internet Teachers training had a major impact; it gave big kick-start for providing distance learning on a much wider scale throughout the state. A few colleges are still delivering the training through CE, but they are no longer free. Any college may use the curriculum; there are no copywrite issues because the training was funded with Perkins funds.

Annual Reports. Every year VCT submits an annual report to the Coordinating Board. Those reports contain an enormous amount of data. A link to the reports is now available at the VCT website on the SACS page under Institutional Effectiveness.

VCT in compliance certification narratives. Narratives must provide an appropriate VCT focus.

Rationale for Participating in VCT. Explain how VCT fits the needs of your college. Explain how VCT fits into your college’s mission and goals.

- **Link the state single compliance certification to the individual college compliance certification.** A summary statement at the beginning of some narratives, it was proposed, would help focus the review team on VCT. There was no final consensus on whether or not to incorporate such statements.

Tuesday, May 23rd Breakout Sessions

Coordinators were divided into four breakout groups and given a charge to brainstorm ways to focus VCT more prominently in Compliance Certification criteria, spend extra legislative funds that may be awarded to VCT in the future and they were encouraged to consider new website services, improved practices and procedures other than web-based, internal practices, or any other approach/strategy that may be useful.

The following suggestions came from the small-group meetings.

Group 1 (Vicenta)

Website Suggestions

- Allow colleges to input a unique identifier on the grading database so registrars can enter grades more easily.
- Identify which colleges are *not* using the new DOR Rosters and Grade Reports.
- Replace or repair the online editor so that when you upload or edit your syllabus at the website, the website does not time out and allow for more options to upload file types instead of only being able to use the online editor.
- Add a link to the Instructor's List page (make "Instructor List" a hotlink) from the Course Listing Form.
- Currently, Host colleges are only able to see faculty rosters for courses that their students have enrolled in. It was proposed to add a Master List to the Host Faculty Roster drop-down menu so that you may view all colleges' Faculty Rosters and thereby allowing Host colleges to pre-approve instructors. In turn, the local schedule may be used more frequently since it allows for a pre-approved course list.
- On the Faculty Roster list relevant coursework if it is a problem area (i.e., technical writing, fine arts).
- Restore instructor information on the course listing form viewable in the student schedule. [Meeting participants voted to restore this information.]
- Add more options to VCT Contacts. "Generic" or "Other."
- Change title of "initial" in grade reports to "Final." ["Initial" column has already been removed.]
- If requested, assign more users to the Fortis online credentials system at colleges. [Ron will talk with Austin CC.]

Group 2 (Drew)

Compliance Certification Suggestions

- Write an overview statement for all 34 criteria (modified per college).

- Add check box or radio button for each criteria indicating college is doing substantive change.
- For rationale follow suggested format of “Summary of Key Host Practices”

Website Suggestions

- View overall Host state data for VCT student success from VCT website. Compare Host student grade success rate to statewide grade success rate.
- Simplify process of entering information for new instructors. [Also mentioned by Group 1]
- Allow colleges to copy courses from semester to semester. Coordinators do not want to have to copy from the Master List and have to retype the same information each time.
- Provide feedback to Provider from Host explaining why they are not selecting to Host their course. [Ron Thomson commented that this is a sensitive area. We are not a state system and we don’t have state criteria for how anybody does anything. Credentials are all over the map. Proctored tests is a huge one. Grading criteria is another one. Coordinators thought some Provider colleges would want the feedback. Ron Thomson will present this subject at the DLAC meeting in June.]

Legislative Funds

- Hire someone to be used as a writing consultant for grant writing or unique projects or instruction manuals.
- Work on an initiative for dual credit. Major national funding for something to compete with TX Tech’s correspondence courses, especially with vouchers and home schooled kids.

Group 3 (Sheri)

Grants

- In 2007, provide colleges with complete update on grants that have been funded and revise RFP.

Website Suggestions

- Add a logout button to administrative page
- Copy course listing form from semester to semester. (Group 2 also requested)
- Add a student blog on the website to provide feedback.

Legislative Funds

- Write a student services monograph
- Consortium (TCET has one) Buying power. How do we know that other colleges want to do a consortium? Wish list. What process do we use to assess and identify common needs? Via a survey? Plagiarism software. Course management systems. Facilitating software.
- Statewide services. Library services has been cut. Statewide funding opportunities.
- Orientation for VCT students through VCT website. If someone has developed a really nice orientation online for Blackboard, WebCT. South TX College has a good one.
- Faculty workshop for disability compliance. Host a couple of short session workshops on ADA compliance and copy write issues as well.
- Needs assessment--rural areas in reference to grants.

Group 4 (Stan)

Compliance Certification Suggestions

- Each college add summary statements as applicable. [See proposed summary statements for eleven criteria items. Ron, do you have the “proposed compromise” document as a Word file?]

Website Suggestions

- Online invoices should be generated by coordinators not business office.
- Link to syllabus from course listing form when making a reservation [Syllabus is already linked to from the state course schedule.]
- Add logout to Administrators page. [Also requested by Group 3.]
- Create course selection drop-down menu so each college can “build a schedule” of approved courses and copy from semester to semester.
- Fact Book. Compare VCT data to state and national data. Pass/fail rates and retention rates. [Also requested by Group 2.]

Points Covered in the VCT Orientation

Fundamental VCT Principles. The session began with an affirmation of two fundamental principles that undergird VCT’s operation as a member-driven organization:

1. VCT is first and foremost a *service* of the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC).
2. It is a *collaborative* of all Texas public two-year colleges.

VCT History. VCT began as an initiative of community college presidents. They saw that distance learning was changing the face of higher education, and Texas two-year colleges needed to respond proactively. In meetings during the summer and fall of 1996, they conceived the host-provider model under which VCT operates, and they appointed a TACC Distance Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) to address issues that the model posed. Meeting frequently between February 1997 through summer 1998, the DLAC delineated the responsibilities of host and provider colleges and resolved VCT operational issues in preparation for a three-year pilot project. The pilot project was launched in the fall semester of 1998, and it came to a successful conclusion in August 2001. VCT began operating as an on-going service in the 2001 fall semester.

Mission. The mission of VCT is to enhance access to higher education by sharing distance learning resources among member colleges. Those resources include courses, faculty, student services, technology, and administrative support. The mission statement will be examined by the TACC Distance Learning Advisory Committee in their summer meeting in June.

Host-Provider Model. The host-provider model is the strategic foundation that makes distance learning resource sharing possible on a statewide scale. With this model, local (host) colleges enroll students to take courses offered by remote (provider) colleges. The host provides student

support services and transcripts the course. Collecting all tuition and fees, the host college pays the provider college an instructional lease fee, an amount determined by the provider, which typically does not exceed what the host receives in contact-hour reimbursement from the state. (Note: This fee structure may need to be modified for Continuing Education).

Critical Key. A critical key to making VCT's host-provider model work is the common course numbering system. Without common course numbers, it would be much more difficult to transcript courses locally that are provided by remote colleges.

Governance. Governance of the Virtual College of Texas rests squarely with the Texas Association of Community Colleges. For operational guidance, VCT relies upon the counsel of the TACC Distance Learning Advisory Committee, the Distance Learning Advisory Committee of Texas Administrators of Continuing Education (TACE), and extensive input from member colleges.

Ron called attention to the foundational VCT documents listed below. He then presented a synthesis of basic VCT agreements contained in all of them, followed by a more detailed look at the *VCT Operations Manual*. Each document is available at the VCT website (www.vct.org).

VCT foundational documents:

- VCT MOU (revised)
 - One-page document specifying basic VCT agreements. A revised MOU has been approved and will be signed by CEO's of institutions participating in VCT.
- VCT Host and Provider Practices and Responsibilities
 - Summary of issues and responsibilities related to VCT and who (host or provider) is responsible for addressing them
- VCT Operations Manual

This document delineates actions that various categories of college personnel need to take to make VCT work at member colleges serving in both host and provider roles. Personnel include: VCT Coordinators, Advisors and Counselors, Instructors, Registrar's Office, and Business Office. VCT actions are to be taken in these four time periods:

 - Before a semester begins
 - During advisement and registration
 - During a semester
 - End of semester

Coordinating Board Reports. Host colleges submit the following reports to the Coordinating Board. Specific instructions for each report are detailed in the Powerpoint presentation which you can access below. For Providers, no special reporting concerns regarding VCT. Providers DO NOT report VCT-enrolled students.

- CBM001 - Student Report
- CBM004 - Class Report
- CBM008 - Faculty Report