

## MEMORANDUM

**To: Nick Chang**  
**From: Alisa Klinger**  
**Date: August 26, 2010**  
**Re: Online Student Authentication**

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I am following up from our meeting of Tuesday, August 24, now that I have considered the letter to President Harrison, dated August 17, 2010, from Barbara A. Beno, and received feedback from 5 knowledgeable colleagues at other California community colleges.

Below is a summary of the most current interpretation of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) regarding authenticating the identity of online students from "August 2010 - Student Authentication, Academic Integrity, and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008:"

<http://www.compassknowledge.com/august-2010/>

- Institutions that offer online courses to students are presently in compliance with the HEOA if they have, at a minimum, a pass code/password system in place as means to authenticate students, or proctored exams, or technologies and practices which are effective in verifying student identification.
- As new identification technologies are developed and become more sophisticated, less expensive and more mainstream, accrediting agencies or associations and institutions will consider their use in the future and we can assume that institutions will be adopting these measures accordingly.
- Institutions must protect student privacy as part of the authentication process and if there are extra fees associated with this as part of the online course, students need to be made aware of this prior to enrollment.

Additional reference: <http://wcet.wiche.edu/learn/student-authentication>

### **CURRENT PRACTICE AT COLLEGE OF MARIN**

The issue of student authentication is both pedagogical and technological, underscoring the importance of academic integrity online and off.

## Technology

1. Our MyCom Portal is password protected, as is our learning management system (Blackboard).

## Pedagogy

2. Instructors use multiple measures to ensure student authentication, including proctored exams, mandatory in-person meetings, reliance on written assignments and threaded discussions, group work, randomized question assessments, timed tests, test banks, interactive assignments and assessments, frequent and varied assessments rather than high stakes assessments, and so forth. Semester-to-semester modifications also discourage cheating. Student codes of conduct, course communication policies, statements about academic integrity and dishonesty, and collaborative honor codes are also part of the discussion that occurs in online courses to discourage cheating. Course policies on course syllabi also articulate appropriate student conduct.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

1. Specifically mention Distance Education in Student Conduct Policy and 2010-2011 Catalog - Page 38 - Student Conduct (Student Services Part 3 - Is this really the best place for a Student Conduct Policy?) (Cathy Summa-Wolfe? Greta Siegel?)

Cheating, plagiarism (including plagiarism in a student publication), or engaging in other academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to:

- a. Copying, in part or whole, another student's quiz or examination answers.
- b. Submitting work previously submitted in another course, if contrary to the rules of either course.
- c. Altering or interfering with grading.
- d. Using or consulting any sources or materials, including electronic devices, during an examination unless expressly authorized by the instructor or as a permitted accommodation.
- e. Misrepresentation or falsification of academic work for purposes of obtaining a higher grade.
- f. Submitting a paper purchased from a research or term paper service, or written by another student, and falsely representing it as one's own work.
- g. Purposely allowing another student to copy answers during a test.
- h. Knowingly providing homework, a term paper, or other academic work for another student.
- i. Having another person submit any work in one's name, for purposes of deceiving the instructor to obtain a higher grade.
- j. Lying to an instructor or District official to obtain a higher grade.
- k. Altering graded work after it has been returned and resubmitting the work for grading without the instructor's permission.
- l. Removing tests or examinations from the classroom without the permission of the instructor.
- m. Stealing tests or examinations.
  - Dishonesty; forgery; alteration or misuse of college documents, records or identification; or knowingly furnishing false information to the District.
  - Unauthorized entry upon or use of District facilities.
  - Lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct on District-owned or controlled property, or at District-sponsored or supervised functions.
  - Engaging in expression which is obscene; libelous or slanderous; or which so incites students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on District premises, or the violation of lawful District administrative procedures, or the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the District.
  - Persistent, serious misconduct where other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct.

- Unauthorized preparation, giving, selling, transfer, distribution, or publication, for any commercial purpose, of any contemporaneous recording of an academic presentation in a classroom or equivalent site of instruction, including but not limited to handwritten or typewritten class notes, except as permitted by any District policy or administrative procedure.

The college will provide legal defense in any proceeding brought against an employee for any act or omission made within the scope of his or her employment by the college, to the full extent provided by law, including but not limited to Government Code 995, et seq.

2. Include academic integrity (Student Conduct Regarding Academic Honesty) on Student Services Campus Policies web page, specifically referencing Distance Education: <http://www.marin.edu/admissions/policies.html> (Dean of Student Development, Student and Special Services, Greta Siegel?)

3. Link Student Conduct Regarding Academic Honesty Policy referencing Distance Education to Distance Education web page: <http://www.marin.edu/distance/index.htm> and Learning Resources web page: [http://www.marin.edu/student\\_services/owc.htm](http://www.marin.edu/student_services/owc.htm) (Nancy Kutcher? Shook Chung?)

4. Include Student Conduct Regarding Academic Policy in Faculty Handbook with specific reference to Distance Education: <http://www.marin.edu/faculty/handbook/default.htm> (Sara McKinnon?)

5. Formalize Regular Effective Contact Statement for Online Instruction (discussed DE Think Tank meeting of 2/11/2010. Agenda Item C - modeled on MJCC Regular Effective Contact Policy: [http://www.msjc.edu/CollegeInformation/Administration/Committees/CurriculumCommittee/Documents/Regular\\_Effective\\_Contactv5.pdf](http://www.msjc.edu/CollegeInformation/Administration/Committees/CurriculumCommittee/Documents/Regular_Effective_Contactv5.pdf) (Academic Senate? Nick Chang?)

6. Include student authentication best practices in DE faculty trainings and in DE@COM. (Alisa Klinger)

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR SUMMER 2011**

1. Move to a single supported, campus-wide CMS, providing all instructors with a password protected course shell. (Nick Chang?)

## STATEMENT FOR COMMISSION

At the College of Marin, we promote academic integrity, including identity authentication of distance education students, through the following measures:

1. Student Conduct Policy - the institution's policies on academic integrity include explicit references to on-line learning
2. Log in and password (MyCom and Blackboard)
3. The campus Regular Effective Contact Statement for Online Instruction encourages academic integrity
4. Issues of academic integrity are addressed by instructors on their syllabi and in their course orientations, as well as in their use of multiple, varied assessment measures, including proctored exams, written assignments, and group work
5. Training for faculty members engaged in distance education includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating
6. Ongoing consideration of emerging technology authentication systems, as we consider a new Course Management System for Summer 2011