

# Survey Results:

## Online Learning Services at A-B Tech

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Following is a summary of results of an informal e-mail survey mailed to A-B Tech instructors and staff on Friday, February 6, 2009. The purpose of the survey was to capture key support issues associated with the College's online learning environment, and obtain useful feedback and suggestions. An email rather than form-based approach was selected to increase submission rates and encourage anecdotal responses.

This approach proved quite successful. Many responders took trouble to add comments, even when answering multiple choice questions. The extent and quality of these comments provide a rich overview of our current support infrastructure, and capture widespread concerns regarding these services. Ambiguities in the multiple choice questions were often clarified in the commentaries.

While many support issues are significant and require attention, instructor training and improvements to the student orientation are clearly uppermost. The survey results reflect the most critical support needs identified by instructional support staff, following their experiences during the opening weeks of the Spring 200 semester:

- Simple improvements to the structure and content of the campus Distance Learning Web site, along with a more consistent approach to student email addresses in Blackboard, should significantly reduce student problems with logins and other start up issues.
- Short videos, online FAQ's, hands-on orientation services, improved help desk routing, and more consistent design and technical standards will help students become comfortable with the online learning environment.
- Support for instructors should include:
  - Training and workshops
  - Just-in-time services (online FAQ's and manuals, skilled and effective help desk support, walk-in services and technical help)
  - Templates and content standards for consistency and ease of development.
- Common technology and format standards will go a long way to achieving a consistent, supportable environment for instructors and students (standards should be platform-independent, cost-effective, and feasible for non-technical instructors and students).

Steps are now being taken to implement these improvements. A status report will be provided at the end of the spring 2009 semester.

## The Survey Questions

### SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS:

1. Based on what you hear, how would you rate our day-to-day Help Desk support for students?  
(a) Excellent (b) Adequate (c) Inadequate (d) Poor (e) No opinion

2. What concerns do you hear most frequently from students?

3. What can we do to improve support for students? Indicate all that apply

- (a) Improved Help Desk services
- (b) Online Orientation and FAQ's
- (c) Remedial support services for students who need help working online
- (d) Other:

### SUPPORTING OUR INSTRUCTORS:

4. How would you rate our current orientation and training for instructors with regard to Blackboard and online learning?

- (a) Excellent (b) Adequate (c) Inadequate (d) Poor (e) No opinion

5. How would you rate our day-to-day support for instructors with regard to Blackboard and online learning?

- (a) Excellent (b) Adequate (c) Inadequate (d) Poor (e) No opinion

6. What will help provide for your day-to-day support needs in this area? (indicate all that apply)

- (a) A responsive individual you can call/email with questions and problems
- (b) Online FAQ's and how-to tutorials
- (c) An "Instructor Resource Lab" to get hands-on help when you need it
- (d) Scheduled training and workshops (e) Other

### GENERAL FEEDBACK:

7. Please provide your candid comments and suggestions. What are we doing right, what can we do better, what is missing?

### YOUR ROLE:

8. Please indicate your primary role:

- (a) FT Faculty (b) Adjunct Faculty
- (c) Student Services Staff (d) Technical Staff or Instructional Support Staff
- (e) Other Staff (f) College Administrator

## Summary of Responses

Total number of survey responses: 66

Breakdown of primary roles of survey responders (as identified by responder):

Full-time Faculty	30	46.9%	*****
Part-time (adjunct Faculty)	16	25.0%	*****
Staff	7	10.9%	***
Technical Staff	6	9.4%	**
College Administrator (all levels)	4	6.3%	**
Other Staff	1	1.6%	*

## Responses to Multiple Choice Questions

### SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS:

1. Based on what you hear, how would you rate our day-to-day Help Desk support for students?

(a) Excellent	12	20.3%	****
(b) Adequate	16	27.1%	*****
(c) Inadequate	7	11.9%	***
(d) Poor	3	5.1%	*
(e) No opinion	21	35.6%	*****

3. What can we do to improve support for students? Indicate all that apply

(a) Improved Help Desk services	17	18.7%	****
(b) Online Orientation and FAQ's	30	33.0%	*****
(c) Remedial support services for students who need help working online	32	35.2%	*****
(d) Other	12	13.2%	***

**SUPPORTING OUR INSTRUCTORS:**

4. How would you rate our current orientation and training for instructors with regard to Blackboard and online learning?

(a) Excellent	8	15.1%	***
(b) Adequate	10	18.9%	****
(c) Inadequate	14	26.4%	*****
(d) Poor	7	13.2%	***
(e) No opinion	14	26.4%	*****

5. How would you rate our day-to-day support for instructors with regard to Blackboard and online learning?

(a) Excellent	16	27.6%	*****
(b) Adequate	14	24.1%	*****
(c) Inadequate	7	12.1%	***
(d) Poor	2	3.4%	*
(e) No opinion	19	32.8%	*****

6. What will help provide for your day-to-day support needs in this area? (indicate all that apply)

(a) A responsive individual you can call/email with questions and problems	44	29.3%	*****
(b) Online FAQ's and how-to tutorials	28	18.7%	****
(c) An "Instructor Resource Lab" to get hands-on help when you need it	33	22.0%	****
(d) Scheduled training and workshops	34	22.7%	*****
(e) Other	11	7.3%	**

## Commentaries

### SUPPORT FOR OUR STUDENTS

#### 1. Based on what you hear, how would you rate our day-to-day Help Desk support for students?

COMMENT: This semester I have not heard much but in the past there has been a little frustration with the help desk.

COMMENT: (b) Adequate. "My" ACA 115 students tend to initially contact me before going to the Helpdesk option. If need be, I now refer students to either Mike, or to the Helpdesk. Some issues require that Laurie Manley be contacted.

COMMENT: b Some of the help desk people are inadequately prepared and don't know the answers to what should be easy questions to answer or they provide wrong information. I have personally experienced this when I called on behalf of a student and students tell me this all the time.

COMMENT: Haven't gotten any feedback. I do know they are generally unaware that help is available for technical issues--I always have to tell them. They don't routinely read text that comes up on the website and are generally mystified by what occurs online.

COMMENT: No opinion: Students usually direct their questions to me even if it's technical

COMMENT: E: this semester I haven't had any students talk about support, it was D (Poor) last semester and before.

COMMENT: Inadequate - students don't realize there is a toll free number. When they call it they are often on hold for long periods.

COMMENT: I am not aware of any of my students having to use the Help Desk. I did use it personally at the start of the semester and they had the presence of mind to acknowledge that you were in a better position to help.

COMMENT: The feedback I hear is about the 24 hour helpdesk service and it's pretty bad!!! LONG waits and no real help.

COMMENT: (e) I haven't heard anyone comment on the Help Desk. I find the BB help to be very good.

COMMENT: My students have not commented on whether they have used the support or not.

COMMENT: No opinion. I have not heard students say they have needed to access this service.

COMMENT: Inadequate--the information and the willingness to help is excellent, but no part-time person (no matter who it is) can take care of the needs of all the students and faculty who are involved in Blackboard courses. This is physically impossible.

COMMENT: I have not heard anything from the students, but I have received some really good help myself!

COMMENT: (e) - I have never had a student express a concern.

COMMENT: The 866 number that students call for assistance is inadequate. Many students stay on hold and never get help. I hesitate to even give out the card with the number on it and instead try to help the student here in the TAC.

COMMENT: I hear both adequate and inadequate

COMMENT: Very Good to Excellent at times - based on my own experience and what my students have told me

COMMENT: Students who have been referred to the Help number always come back to class with, that got it!

COMMENT: I choose "D" based on my own experience with the Help Desk support line. I've called this number three times in the past. Each time I stayed on the line for fifteen minutes waiting for someone to pick up; listening to the recorded music all the while. Then I hung up after fifteen minutes. I have never received help using this phone line.

## 2. What concerns do you hear most frequently from students?

COMMENT: Students need more help navigating the course.....they have a difficult time figuring out the dropbox, and if they are using a Mac rather than a PC they have real difficulties.

COMMENT: Students weren't given good information regarding the requirements for taking an online class (access to fast internet service/provider, comfort level in using a computer and the internet, amount of time needed to be a successful student in the class, etc.)

COMMENT: They can't find the assignment through the many menu buttons (I've learned not to embed too much and just keep it simple). Most of the issues they bring up is a result of not really examining the site thoroughly at the start of the class. Many have computer issues and many are totally not prepared to take an online class. I think it would be good to have students "qualify" for online by asking them a series of question --- do you have a computer at home, do you now how to save files, what is your

comfort level with technology etc. I get students who are totally unprepared and not suited well to the online experience.

COMMENT: (1) Students report that taking ACA 115 online is an excellent way to learn not only ACA 115's curriculum but also to learn how to successfully navigate Blackboard. (2) The number concern I see and hear from all ACA 115 students is that they were not informed at registration about what a W, Y or O course is exactly and how and when to login. This, on occasion, causes some students to never login; they were "out there" waiting for "something."

COMMENT: no "easily" accessible computer; then I remind them of all the possibilities on campus

COMMENT: That they are waiting for someone from the helpdesk to call them back, sometimes a couple of days later.

COMMENT: each teacher uses bb differently and it's hard to remember where things are for each class.

COMMENT: So far I haven't heard anything from students about available help desk support. I'm wondering if they know it is available. This might be the only useful information I can provide.

COMMENT: They get popped off of Blackboard, sometimes while taking exams

COMMENT: They take a test and the system goes down and they lose all their material. My husband took an on-line class in the Fall and he was constantly having trouble having access to his class or the assignments.

COMMENT: Honestly, I hear of no concerns

COMMENT: Fear of not selecting the proper ways or means to leave information where needed.

COMMENT: They think something's wrong with their computers when they use an application Bb won't accept and it doesn't go through. Sometimes they wait for days before saying anything about it and then only when I ask what the problem is! They also tend to assume that there's something wrong with themselves (I'm too stupid to do this!) instead of seeking help.

COMMENT: I didn't realize what I was signing up for in an on-line class. No one told me the requirements or what was expected

COMMENT: Confusion between BB and e-mail.

COMMENT: I have had a few students who could not gain access or who gained access without being able to locate the posting. In every case, I found that the student was at fault.

COMMENT: Two questions: 1. What is my password? 2. Why can I still see last semester's classes?

COMMENT: Most students do fine. The ones that are not as comfortable on the computer are the ones that struggle with technology components of blackboard.

COMMENT: They don't know how to submit assignments, they never mention the Help Desk. However several have had continual problems so I wonder if they are getting the assistance they need.

COMMENT: How do they print things from BlackBoard is sometimes asked.

COMMENT: "I'm not getting my email." Students either don't know how to check the student email, or their email address is incorrect or not entered. I usually go into control panel and add the email address.

COMMENT: They have difficulty learning how to do what the instructor is asking of them.

COMMENT: They have difficulty navigating when they first get on, and knowing how to download assignments. usually correctable when I talk them through it on the phone.

COMMENT: I work with High School Programs and i was told several of the issues were just referred on to a national BlackBoard contact. The people I work with felt like they were just being passed off to someone else.

COMMENT: One student went into detail about how unhelpful the first contact to the help desk people was. Once she got to the "Technical Person", she said it was very good and she was impressed by the MAT 161/161A software. She had trouble downloading the plug-ins. She had a Macintosh computer, too.

COMMENT: 1) Wait times are extensive. 2) Students can log in to BlackBoard but cannot find their courses.

COMMENT: My students had problems with the exams, emailed me and I received help from Mike. However, I still am unclear as to the problem.

In the past, not being able to log on or having direct contact with someone over Blackboard to troubleshoot.

COMMENT: Generally their concerns stem from unfamiliarity with use of Blackboard functions and navigation. At the beginning of the Fall semester, we frequently do not have near enough time to do a complete tutorial of Blackboard use for our nursing students, and many of them feel like they floundering when they get home and try it on their own.

COMMENT: Can't get on or their AB Tech email doesn't work

COMMENT: No concerns, just the need for help in getting logged on the first time which I repeat as needed.

COMMENT: Involvement is limited but feedback from students seems to indicate long hold times and lack of resolution by the Presidium helpdesk. (IST would probably only receive the more difficult access issues many of which cannot be resolved by Presidium as they do not have sufficient access to the student information.)

COMMENT: Once they initially get in (done together in class) they don't seem to have any issues.

COMMENT: can't access stuff from home; forgotten userid/password

COMMENT: Navigation, Teacher contact info, Forgotten password

COMMENT: cannot login

COMMENT: Students are worried when they see classes they have taken in a prior term still listed on Datatel. Basically, old classes need to be automatically cleaned out of the system once they are over. Also, some students think they should see all their classes listed even if they aren't Web Classes. It concerns them when they aren't all listed. The answer to those questions would fit nicely in a FAQ file.

COMMENT: Login issues

COMMENT: just be able to get started

COMMENT: can't log in

COMMENT: I have had a couple of student tell me that they have had trouble accessing the Blackboard. I also had a student call who had a class in her Blackboard classes that she took 2 semesters ago.

COMMENT: Login problems.

COMMENT: Problem with getting kicked out of exams by Bb

COMMENT: technical issues and being familiar with how things work

COMMENT: students get very frustrated with long wait times and give up as have I.

COMMENT: They might reach someone but it may be days before anyone responds.

COMMENT: Changes frequently. Deadlines are off. Files won't open.

COMMENT: Problems with online testing such as screen freezing, no timer viewable, Bb shutdown on save. However, the Help Desk has been pretty good about helping those students who call them.

COMMENT: I don't hear any concerns from students except when they are trying to log in at the beginning of the semester. After they call Help, they never mention Blackboard again to me.

COMMENT: Most of the complaints I hear from students are about other instructors who do not make important information available on BB (as promised), but expect assignments or tests to be turned in on time anyway.

COMMENT: My most frequent concerns are from students who do not own their own computers and who refuse to take advantage of the free computer access on campus. It is a fact of life that they need a computer for class, and they refuse to acknowledge that. I'm not sure that this is something Distance Learning can change.

COMMENT: Most students do fine. The ones that are not as comfortable on the computer are the ones that struggle with technology components of blackboard.

### **3. What can we do to improve support for students? Indicate all that apply**

COMMENT: C and D - train advisors within departments ( the advisors in the Counseling Center have had this already) in the physical requirements needed for online classes as well as the personality type/successful student profile (e.g., if a student has a hard time making it to a traditional class and completing work, they most likely will have an even harder time with an online class, student needs to have good time management skills, etc.), as well as the differences between online instruction in various subject matters (e.g. a history class versus a computer class).

COMMENT: (b) My suggestion would be to inform students at Registration of the particular type of course he/she is registering for. Perhaps a brightly colored 3x5 card given out at Registration would help. Also, can the college use the student email system to inform students to login to Blackboard, as appropriate?

COMMENT: ?? maybe "c"....I don't think it's a matter of not knowing how to use BlackBoard, its a matter of getting use to a "new way" of taking classes

COMMENT: I think it might be useful to enlist some extra hands at the beginning of the semester when lots of students are having questions. If students feel frustrated during this early period, they tend to drop, thinking that an online class is more trouble than it is worth. I would love to see the online orientation revert to being required again (I don't think it is anymore, but I'm not 100% sure). I have had more and more students in the last semester or so who just have no idea what they are doing. I suppose this could also be due to an increased number of students taking online classes!

COMMENT: I think we need more people like Mike O'Kane, who is actually on the ball!

COMMENT: be sure all teachers are using bb similarly, maybe have more structure to program?

COMMENT:(b) Online Orientation and FAQ's and (c) Remedial support services for students who need help working online. I'd like to see CTS 060 offered every semester, regardless of low enrollment numbers. I think that anytime a student expresses a need for that course, or advisors see a need for a student to be in that course, that is should be offered. I've placed a student into that course, only to have it cancelled. That should never happen with that course. I'd also suggest an expanded role for on-line orientation be incorporated into ACA 115.

COMMENT:A thru C. I see a lot of students who still need computer assurance.

COMMENT: I would say all of the above. All faculty that does advising should also be given some tools and/or orientation regarding online courses and assessing students' readiness to take one--this would help greatly with retention in online courses as well

COMMENT: Just keep up the good work.

COMMENT: I am not aware of any areas that need improvement, but I feel that instructors should be sufficiently conversant with the system to act as the first source of assistance for students. For those students who prefer to be more independent, the Online Orientation/FAQ section should be clear and comprehensive. The Remedial support service should also be helpful - if students are willing to spare the time to use it.

COMMENT: All of the Above especially C. Someone who would be available to do the step by step if necessary.

COMMENT: The students have good support, if they would only use it!

COMMENT: The student who when into detail with me suggested one optional class meeting for the instructor to explain how to work with the software and their expectations for the course and all of the places on campus where they can access computers and when.

COMMENT: a; c; d - provide a better log in page with more detailed instructions and a link for online assistance.

COMMENT: b. I think this would be helpful as some students were a little confused at the start.

COMMENT: I worked with a hybrid class at WCU several years ago. At the beginning of the class, students were given a CD that was made specifically for that particular department. This CD walked them through everything they needed to know to successfully navigate the course. It helped them start out on a positive note and they had the CD to use any time they forgot something or needed a little refresher. As instructors, we have found that we are responsible for teaching students about Blackboard. When we have to do that, it takes precious time away from what we are supposed to be teaching--content. It is very frustrating to have to take the time to walk student after student through the process of taking an online class. We have offered to meet with them on campus to answer questions and show them how to navigate the course, but we can't require them to come. Consequently, the average attendance has been 20% or less. The students are frustrated and the instructors are frustrated. The A-B Tech help desk is very helpful, but the Blackboard 24/7 is often more frustrating than helpful.

COMMENT: I think maybe the older students who are not computer savvy may need number c.

COMMENT: d. Someone and someplace they can go to when "over-the-phone" doesn't work.

COMMENT: D: at this moment I think it is on a teacher by teacher basis what is needed. (some teachers include more information than others)

COMMENT: I am able to assist most students with resetting passwords from my desk which is probably a tremendous help as I probably reset at least 100 each term here in the TAC. Unfortunately, I am unfamiliar with anything beyond basic questions. Additional training for me so I can better assist students would be helpful. They ask me how to email their instructors, find syllabus, get to certain items and print studyguides and powerpoints. I muddle thru but a lot of classes seem to have different formats. I also know absolutely nothing about Course Compass.

COMMENT: I believe that b and c will help. In student services we attempt to make sure that the students are prepared for online classes before they sign up. We do this by requiring that they have taken some type of computer class, have experience with computers, or if push comes to shove making them do the Online Orientation just to make sure that they understand how to access the Blackboard. However, there are student's that I have seen who have fallen through the cracks. By having remedial services the students who fall through the cracks will benefit because there will be extra assistance for those who need it.

COMMENT: Online orientation? Would that be on campus or on-line? I think that there are what amount to FAQs in the semester course catalog. Still, new online students could be better prepared. I think that some help with challenged online students would be good. Sometimes I have those who have a great difficulty with uploading assignments or even cut and paste! The best student support for my science online courses (and on campus courses) would be to teach them how to study and be organized. I thought that the ACA courses were doing that, but students are telling me ACA courses are teaching everything but that.. :(

COMMENT: All apply however as far as the online orientation, I don't know if I would make it online. I would want all registered online students to come to a class (you could offer it at different times) to get hands on experience (in a class setting) with Blackboard and a live person there to coast them through. Online already assumes they know how to get to Blackboard. Some of them need more basic instruction in person.

COMMENT: Remedial support services for students who need help working online. Also: Tutorial needed. (One student referred to another college's required online tutorial before the student could continue with online work).

COMMENT: Most of my students are good with computers and just need Help Desk services if they have a connection problem at home.

## **SUPPORTING OUR INSTRUCTORS:**

### **4. How would you rate our current orientation and training for instructors with regard to Blackboard and online learning?**

COMMENT: (d) poor to non-existent. Virtually all of the Bb training done for the ACA 115 Instructors (FT/PT) is done via the ACA 115 Coordinator.

COMMENT: Excellent, if the instructor asks for it....

COMMENT: I can't really answer this. When I started teaching online classes a few years ago, there was no real training. One of my fellow faculty members gave me a brief orientation and then I figured it out for myself.

COMMENT:(c) Inadequate - There should be more immediate instruction on how to add multimedia into online courses. Also, I remain unconvinced that offering exams in an unproctored, on-line setting can ever be an acceptable substitute for on campus testing in my courses. Perhaps detailed sessions on how to test on line could be offered.

COMMENT: C, I just dove in and question things as I progress. I would like to know how others are doing.

COMMENT: Probably adequate. I had already taught several online courses using it before coming to ABTech, so I'm not the best judge.

COMMENT: (d) Poor (or I don't know about it). If I have a new adjunct who needs to learn BB we don't have a mechanism to do this. If experienced users need more training it isn't available.

COMMENT: I have no information here. I personally used the information that is available within Blackboard and have found it capable of answering almost every question. Any instructor who has the time to use it should get a great deal of help from it.

COMMENT: I can only address two examples of instructors I took courses from online and neither knew what they were doing. I believe they had the best of intentions but did not have the instruction and or guidance to be teaching online.

COMMENT: (d) Poor Never got an orientation to anything as a part-time.

COMMENT: Inadequate: I've never received any training except for other teachers helping me out. For the most part, I have been on my own. It would be helpful to have Blackboard training sessions and to classify them as Beginning, Middle and advanced. I know my basic way around Blackboard, but there are areas I don't have time to explore on my own (like the tests on line or the possibility of being on line in real time). I would explore this and improve my classes if there were regular Blackboard training sessions (beginner, middle and advanced).

COMMENT: What orientation and training for instructors? I was never aware of any training.

COMMENT: (c) what training is that??? :o)

COMMENT: d. As a new online instructor I had no orientation or training and spent literally dozens of hours trying to understand the program, upload information/files, and I even purchased books to help

me, etc. And, as you know, we are not compensated for course development and the amount of time (and frustration!) was unbelievable. If I had not received help from another online instructor, by chance, I am not sure my courses would have been ready by the first day of the semester.

COMMENT: In our Nursing department, we have a collaborative group of fellow instructors who are willing to share information and tips with each other. We experiment with the functions, and when we learn something new we pass it on! It's maybe not the best way, but we've all learned this way, since our schedules vary so much and often prevent us to all attend Professional Development times for "mass learning".

COMMENT: Inadequate. I think that there should be a certain amount of orientation and training (annually, not just once) in Blackboard that is required of every instructor who uses it. This should include refreshers and new information. I would like to see the DT & L staff do some of the trainings.

COMMENT: Adequate....I would like to see some workshops teaching advanced skills for Blackboard.

COMMENT: d. we need a class to help setup online classes. Now it is trial and error and call Mike.

COMMENT:(e) No opinion -- I don't use Bb -- it doesn't work well for foreign languages and we had a disastrous experience trying to use a course cartridge for Bb a few years ago.

COMMENT: E: I haven't been through the current orientation and training

COMMENT: Honestly was not aware it was provided

COMMENT: I was "trained" by NAME REMOVED, which was a nightmare for me. He's totally unclear in his presentation, and takes forever to tell a person nothing. I had to learn by trial and error, and there's something to be said for that, but it's not an efficient use of time.

COMMENT: C- I had about a 10 minute run through and was given a folder and pretty much had to figure it out on my own. There are still things I am unclear of how to do as an instructor in blackboard.

COMMENT: I did not know there ever was any training. I taught myself. It was not difficult.

COMMENT: I don't want to pick an answer from the list. Those involved in support are super to work with and extremely helpful. We just need more of them.

COMMENT: I feel very confident in our Blackboard support.

## **5. How would you rate our day-to-day support for instructors with regard to Blackboard and online learning?**

COMMENT: (a)/(b) Mike O'Kane has been responsive and effective in answering the questions of ACA 115 Instructors and students this semester.

COMMENT: Again, excellent, but the instructor needs to initiate the need for support

COMMENT: Anytime I've had a question about BB, I send Elizabeth an e-mail and she gets right back to me. She is awesome!

COMMENT:a Mike O'kane is very quick to respond and help! Thanks!

COMMENT: a (But this is only heresay.) The other instructors in my department have sent in emails and heard back with a solution in a reasonable amount of time

COMMENT: A , Excellent if we know what to ask!

COMMENT: It has been ABYSMAL, both with the previous "manager" and the period without any manager at all--now that there is a competent person at the helm that has already changed dramatically.

COMMENT: (a) Excellent - Since Mike has been providing support it is timely and correct.

COMMENT: a + + +

COMMENT: Same as 4. I can only address two examples of instructors I took courses from online and neither knew what they were doing. I believe they had the best of intentions but did not have the instruction and or guidance to be teaching online.

COMMENT: up until this semester, it has been poor. Now it is adequate to excellent.

COMMENT: I used another instructor as my mentor and coach.

COMMENT: (a) I have had only good experiences with support. I don't think BB is that good a system, however. It has some very odd quirks. For example, the student names cannot be listed by LAST name in the student list. Only by FIRST name. Seems odd.

COMMENT: Mike is fantastic! I give him the 'A' above! If he was not available to help me with the glitches my students have encountered on their exams (and the fact that I had no training) I am not sure what I would have done!

COMMENT: b - At times, though, I have experienced a lag time between my "I need help now" and a response.

COMMENT:Somewhere between B and C; I believe it's getting better

COMMENT: Inadequate--the help we receive is very good, but with all of the courses that are being taught, we need much more personnel than we have. There is more support for those doing DT & L, but not everyone has access to the few DT& L staff.

COMMENT: (b) - every concern I've had has been addressed very quickly, but the help I received from the remote support was minimal. The support person was trying hard but did not seem to know enough

about our environment. When I talked to ABTech staff the answer was immediately provided (had to do with copying only portions of classes and leaving out the gradebook).

COMMENT:d. we need a class to help setup online classes. Now it is trial and error and call Mike.

COMMENT: E: I haven't needed to use the day-to-day support as of yet.

COMMENT: At present, excellent. Previously, abysmal. NEGATIVE COMMENTS WITH NAMED INDIVIDUALS REMOVED.

COMMENT:C - if you call the 866 number you have to wait. I have never called that I did not wait at least 20 min. That gets very frustrating when you are trying to complete something or are having problems that impact your classroom.

COMMENT: There is no support for teaching science lab courses online. I do not think many are doing that. No other teachers are doing that here at ABTECH to my knowledge. I find that these courses are very different to develop and to teach. It would be nice to have support. I do appreciate that Cris Harshman is so helpful with technical issues (problems embedding videos etc.).

COMMENT: No opinion. I'm fine with the easy stuff on Blackboard but I have not even tried to seek help with the advanced Blackboard questions. I need a formal class to learn and I would come to these classes if they were available.

COMMENT: (repeated from 4) I don't want to pick an answer from the list. Those involved in support are super to work with and extremely helpful. We just need more of them.

COMMENT: I am very satisfied with how interactive Blackboard is--the ability to go open courses that I have taught previously, copy material from that site, then hide the course(s) again. This ability has helped me tremendously in building my courses.

COMMENT: Whenever I call with a problem, you either help me right then, or contact someone who can. I feel that my day-to-day support is good.

## **6. What will help provide for your day-to-day support needs in this area? (indicate all that apply)**

COMMENT: I find that my questions are usually specific, so a. is the most helpful resource for me.

COMMENT: I realize this is for Blackboard and I'm using Moodle. Marlene has created a FAQ. It sounds like a good idea but I haven't used it yet because I haven't run into too many problems with Moodle.

COMMENT: A thru D, I am always trying and frustrated.

COMMENT: a & c, plus some version of a user-friendly online handbook or manual. The one we have at ECU is outstanding!

COMMENT: In my case, (a) would be most helpful since I already use (b) and (c) is available within Blackboard.

COMMENT: I feel A - D apply however some teachers do not know that they do not know how to teach online. At some point there has to be a competency demonstration or at least some manner of review and response. One of the teachers who taught online said of my concern that there was not enough content in his online course that there we're no complaints from other students. To me that only means the students have no idea what they're missing so why would they say anything?

COMMENT: My own interest level would have to increase first. I don't use it much, to be honest.

COMMENT: not involved in day-to-day support.

COMMENT: We already have 'a' with Mike. But I would like to see 'b', 'c' and 'd' in some form; with 'd' being my preference.

COMMENT: A...and I think that's getting better with Mike

COMMENT: D ....frequently and especially several weeks before a semester begins.

COMMENT: What you are doing now is great.

COMMENT: (a) - certainly there now! and (b)

COMMENT: Honestly was not aware it was provided

COMMENT: A, D When I'm in a bind, I love it when somebody answers the phone to assist me.

COMMENT: Answer would be a) for a short, help needed now problem; c) for help with integrating e-lectures I plan to incorporate in my Course Documents section; and d) for ways to incorporate discussion threads, other means of assessments, etc.

## **7. Please provide your candid comments and suggestions. What are we doing right, what can we do better, what is missing?**

COMMENT: The support has gotten better (I haven't heard any complaints from students).

COMMENT: (1) It would be helpful if there were specific efforts by the College to inform each student at Registration of the type of course being registered for; (2) use student email to alert students about Bb; (3) Mike O'Kane has been very helpful this semester for both students and Instructors.

COMMENT: Well, now that we have an individual specifically for BB, that helps.

I teach for Waketech Community College and we have a "course" on Blackboard where we can discuss, as online faculty, topics related to distance teaching and share information, documents, ideas, etc. It's a great platform to have, and a great place to get ideas for how to handle common situations (such as testing). Also, online tutorials are so handy to have for looking up how to do something technical (such as adding hyperlinks or creating surveys...) Having a helpdesk is wonderful for students and faculty, especially when it is a 24/7 helpdesk.

COMMENT: I think we should stick with Blackboard....it's what most of us are accustomed to at this point, and with the budget being the way it is, I don't think we need to spend money on something new....many of us are just now getting the hang of blackboard and to completely switch now seems a little daunting....

COMMENT: I feel it is getting easier as I use it. I wonder if there is a way to have an assignment that has the grades for individual components averaged together for a final grade?

COMMENT: After using Blackboard and now Moodle, I can say that Moodle is a superior product. There are a few things that I don't like about it such as not being able to download all of the student's grades for a given assignment, but overall it is a good product. I decided (for better or worse) to jump in and put all of my classes in Moodle this term. I didn't want to jump back and forth between two CMS. I would not recommend this approach for other instructors. I made some mistakes that would be easy to avoid if I knew a little bit more about Moodle when I started. Should ABTech make the Moodle leap, I would recommend that they offer a 2 hour how to set up and use Moodle seminar. I don't think instructors would need much more than that.

COMMENT: I like the updated instruction on the campus homepage regarding blackboard. PLEASE don't change to Moodle! I have deep concerns about how user friendly it is for our less tech-friendly students, and also how the lack of publisher support might effect course delivery.

COMMENT: More training for students and staff. Your overall support has been great, there is a lot more to learn. I would also like to have a way to transfer micro- word documents , etc. into test pools.

COMMENT: You're already moving in the right direction--just keep it up!

COMMENT: I think the biggest thing missing is an easy way to train instructors on using BB.

COMMENT: Overall good job!

COMMENT: Personally, I use Blackboard - almost exclusively - to communicate with students and I would not trade it for anything. Since i do not teach a course he is 100% online, the part of Blackboard that is use is quite adequate for my purpose.

COMMENT: Same as 6. .. some teachers do not know that they do not know how to teach online. At some point there has to be a competency demonstration or at least some manner of review and

response. One of the teachers who taught online said of my concern that there was not enough content in his online course that there we're no complaints from other students. To me that only means the students have no idea what they're missing so why would they say anything?

COMMENT: I truly do not know the role of the Distance Learning Office at ABTCC. As a new part-time adjunct faculty member, I received no orientation to Blackboard, email, Webadvisor or what was expected of me in terms of reports, etc. I was assisted by another faculty member who has taught at AB Tech before. That was my source of information. I would suggest some initial support for new online instructors until they can get oriented to their new role.

COMMENT: I have been shocked to hear from parent/students that their children are learning to type and use laptop computers instead of being taught to write with pencils on paper. I may be too old-timey, but that is a terrible path to follow, in my opinion. Therefore, I only use online teaching at a minimum. I probably should have hand written this to you to prove my point.

COMMENT: I can't think of anything you can do better, really. Given the system you have to work with, the support is excellent. It would be nice to be able to delete students who drop the course, but that's a minor complaint. Again, thanks for asking.

COMMENT: Students need a bit more assistance when they are taking their first online class. Perhaps instructors could have doing an assessment be the "activity" which confirms that they are "present" in a class.

COMMENT: I am glad we are increasing our use of on-line teaching and think we will have a steep learning curve as we grow in this area. One suggestion I have is to have a way for students to log-on ahead of the class start date so they can make sure they know what they are doing. When on-line classes aren't made available until the first day then students don't know if they have a problem until it is too late and then they feel like they are behind once the problem gets resolved.

COMMENT:I will be better able to answer that question at the end of the semester.

COMMENT: For any question that I have had so far I have received a quick reply

COMMENT: More access to A-B Tech folks would be helpful as they are more connected with our students' needs and abilities. Additionally, having a dedicated number students can find and call without having to be routed from Student Services. This is an instructional services issue and student services is already handling help desk calls for e-mail and WebAdvisor. BlackBoard needs to have completely separate contact info that is clearly published so students are directed to the right people FIRST rather than after calling Student Services. Featuring the numbers prominently on the BlackBoard login page would be very helpful - it is currently buried in a lengthy instructions page and our students won't read far enough to get the number.

COMMENT: All I would ask is that we (instructors) have training on Blackboard several months before the start of a semester so that we can design our course and build it and then if we encounter a problem

have email support. What you are doing right is having excellent and responsive tech support by email (Mike). What is missing is instructor training. Online courses are the future for many colleges and universities and I feel it has to be as effective and smooth a process as a face-to-face course.

COMMENT: Mike, your approach is appreciated. I think that in the past many felt there was a "holier-than-thou" attitude coming out of the position. I haven't had much need for day-to-day help. There needs to be an orientation for advisors to make them aware that online courses are HARDER and more demanding than seated classes. You can't just put anybody in an online class.

COMMENT: Thank you for thi9s survey and listening to our needs! Number 6 sums up my needs well. I've enjoyed learning Blackboard and it's benefits for my classes. I hope we can get the students oriented to it somehow that does not require a lot of teacher time and effort.

COMMENT: I had experience with Bb during my graduate program. I feel very comfortable using this program. The only thing I miss with this system, compared to the one I used at ECU, was the tab located in Bb, called Bb support. This link would take you directly to troubleshooting straight from Bb. I am not sure if it was the same version we have, but I gained some valuable info this.

COMMENT: I did not have many calls personally. There is little I could do anyway. I don't know if our phone help desk received many calls (they were temporary employees, no longer working for us). My suggestions are the same as always:

1) Phone tech support needs to be able to "fix" passwords, verify registration and determine if the course is available. Without all three, the callers are sent around in a frustrating journey through "I can check this but not that."

2) Turn on courses a week before the term starts and display only a splash page and syllabus. That will get students interested in participating and should help resolve access problems prior to the beginning of the term.

COMMENT: Most of my comments and suggestions are in the answers above. I would like to reiterate the fact that one part time support person cannot physically do everything that is needed for this college. If you look at the number of online classes that are taught this semester and compare that to the number taught 5 years ago (or even 2 years ago), and then look at the support we have access to now, there is no way we are going to be able to keep up with the needs of the students and staff. I think the 24/7 support sounds good, but that is not always the case. The students and staff find it very frustrating to deal with the 24/7 support.

COMMENT: (same as 6) What you are doing now is great.

COMMENT: IST gets an occasional call from faculty requesting help with course management issues. These can sometimes be addressed by selected IST personnel due to previous experience with Blackboard, but since IST does not always have knowledge of current policies or procedures of distance learning and has other priorities, BlackBoard support other than account issues should be addressed by

other means. A helpdesk that can address a wide range of student issues may be indicated. This would include BlackBoard, student email, Web Advisor, and numerous other issues. With sufficient training and staffing, such a helpdesk could provide many answers for curriculum and continuing education students without referral to higher levels. Developing such a helpdesk would require significant resources but should lessen workloads for several areas and provide a much better support level for student issues.

COMMENT: My frustrations have been with the technical limitations of blackboard and not the support community. I like to have online resources (examples and tutorials) for when I want to try something new or explore the capabilities a little further. Having scheduled training is usually not my first choice. Thanks for taking this role Mike.

COMMENT: Students need more training on how the system works. A mandatory tutorial would be great.

COMMENT: Only thing missing is an orientation and setup class for teachers, and perhaps a last resort person to go see for students.

COMMENT: I handle withdrawals and witness a lot of students withdrawing from online classes. They seem to have difficulty with keeping up and staying motivated in an online format. We try to explain to them the challenges of online classes when advising them, but it seems they have to experience them firsthand. Many students state they'll never take online classes again, once they've taken one. Other students appear to thrive on them. I'm glad we're able to offer an entire AA degree online to students who need the format althou I believe that nothing replaces the interactions of an actual classroom setting. The blended classes offer a nice option for instructors althou students get confused, show up for a class that's not meeting and come to me wondering where everybody is.

COMMENT: Training for troubleshooting, frequent problems students run into, developing courses online. In all fairness to you, you had a tough job in the first place. So good training for me and for the students, I think we could get up to speed. The computer savy don't seem to have a problem

COMMENT: I personally am self taught, I am sure there are many helpful features I have yet to figure out and typically learn things from my peers

COMMENT: Right = Providing online classes, Better = better support for students and staff, missing = training

COMMENT: I believe that the Help Desk services provided by our Distance Learning department is working well. I am not sure if more students have figured the online system out or if less students are taking online classes this semester but I have not personally received as many calls about issues with the system.

COMMENT: From what I hear from others, the Presidium help desk is not as helpful as it claims to be.

COMMENT: I'm not an instructor so I don't have BlackBoard classes, but I'd like to have some kind of access and training so I can help our instructors and students. 6 (b) and (d) would be helpful for me. You're doing great so far with your emails to everyone!

COMMENT: I know you can tell I've been quite candid already. Why pretend, after all?

COMMENT: I like the idea of having people somewhere locally that I can talk to or go visit for help. I think we're doing pretty good considering the way resources have been shifted.

COMMENT: I once taught an online class and felt I did not get adequate training before I started. Once I got started I found the help desk very available and easy to work with.

COMMENT: What would really be great is to organize a meeting of instructors who have taught a good bit online and instructors new to the online setting. We could really help each other with the tricks we've learned -- not just technical tricks but some general advise about teaching on line. On line is just as challenging to us as it is to the students. This may not be an IT thing but I thought I would mention it to you. I benefitted greatly from a friend who had taught on Blackboard and who gave me some very helpful tips not only about the technology but about how to teach an online class. Anyway it's just a thought. Since I have so many online classes this semester (not exactly by choice but more because of finances and getting laid off of my teaching job at UNCA) that one of my goals has been to make the online class as personable as possible. I've been trying some new things out with the discussion board etc. I would be happy to be a part of such a meeting between experienced online teachers and newcomers. I think it would be a very valuable experience for both.

COMMENT: I feel that if I had a better understanding of Blackboard in the beginning it would have made the transition much easier. I spent a lot of time trying to figure things out when preparing my classes initially and was unable to be a useful resource for my students because of my own ineptness.

COMMENT: We have got to have the number of people in that division that can actually run it smoothly as well as be available to instructional staff to help them fine tune their courses.

COMMENT: It would be nice to have others to share ideas and problems with. I have found this to some degree with webinars. I find most workshops, training, and tutorials to be directed to non science courses without labs. They are usually not helpful in any way to me at this point. I have figured out most (possibly all that I need) things about how Bb works.

COMMENT: Screen students or require that they take a Blackboard mini class or something before taking an online class. It will also be important to explain the differences between live and online classes. I find that on-line classes require a lot more reading and writing than live classes because we don't have the "in class together" experience. I would like to see a way to record my lectures so that students could log in and actually see and hear me give the lecture. I have a feeling they would listen to the lecture, because currently many of them are not reading the lectures posted on the site.

I would like to see more attempts to make online classes more like live classes (even though it will never be the same). I worry about how much students are actually learning in this format.

Again, I would like to see a lot more training for students and teachers for online classes. Students desperately need it and I would really appreciate more advanced training. There is a lot that I have never even tried on Blackboard because I'm not sure how to use it. I would experiment with the full capabilities of Blackboard but I can't do that on my own very well. I need a class.

COMMENT: Thank you for asking these questions. This assures me that I am not a "bother" when I need to know about how to do or fix Blackboard associated content. This is so much better that I had to previously do---call around to instructors that I knew used Blackboard and ask them.

COMMENT: I teach hybrid online classes- not totally online courses. The way I have been supported this semester (Spring 2009) has worked well for me. I can't think of any need for improvement.

COMMENT: I hate BlackBoard. I sigh every time I have to log on. I feel that it is an extremely confusing and unattractive platform for both students and instructors. There are much better options out there. I am very smart and tech savvy, and I still hate BlackBoard. In contrast, I have been using WebStudy for the past four years, and I cannot say enough good things about WebStudy. BlackBoard was one of the first online platforms for teaching, but it has not kept up with the times. If AB Tech is committed to expanding their online course offerings, then I truly believe a new platform should be considered. I hate BlackBoard. I really can't say that too many times.

## **8. Please indicate your primary role:**

COMMENT: b (btw, the "a" choice should be "salaried" faculty--a large proportion of adjuncts work full time and more!)