Distance Education Fact Sheet

California community colleges lead the way in online education:

- Nearly 27 percent of all California community college students will take a class offered through distance education this year, up from 12.5 percent in 2005-2006.
- Of all courses offered at California’s community colleges, 12.3 percent are offered through distance education, and it is estimated that nearly half of all courses have some online component.
- California community colleges first started offering distance education courses in 1979.
- Of the 2.4 million students enrolled in 2011-2012 academic year, 621,501 took at least one distance education course.
- The average course load of all California community college students in 2011-12 was 12 units. The average course load of students who enrolled in distance education courses was 15 units.
- Distance education has almost doubled from 21,414 sessions in 2005-06 to 41,354 in 2011-12.
- Two age categories – 18- to 19-year-olds and 20- to -24- year olds – account for 61 percent of those enrolled in distance education courses in 2011-12.
- Thirty-seven percent of students surveyed in 2011 said they enrolled in at least one distance education course because of the convenience.
- Fifty-one percent of California’s community colleges offer certificates and degrees that can be earned without stepping onto campus for classes. This typically includes a combination of both online and television courses.
- The Internet provides California community college students with 94 percent of the distance education offerings. Television is next with 8 percent, followed by correspondence (2 percent) and video conferencing (1 percent).