SUBJECT: Distance Education

I. Introduction

Midland College recognizes the importance of distance education as a means of ensuring accessibility of higher education opportunities. As advancements in technology continue, new methods for providing distance education courses will evolve, and the demand for this flexible course delivery method will continue to grow. Through the provisions of this policy Midland College is ensuring:

- quality, academic rigor, and academic integrity of distance education courses and programs,
- faculty competency for developing and teaching distance education courses,
- adequate access to the range of academic and student support services appropriate for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs, and
- all distance education courses and programs meet the definitions provided below and are not correspondence courses.

II. Definitions

Distance Education – Distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors, as well as between other students) occurs when students and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Online – Instruction occurs via the internet using a learning management system (LMS) to deliver online instruction and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor. Face-to-face class meetings are minimal (no more than 15% of instructional time) or do not occur at all.

Hybrid – A course in which the majority (more than 50% but less than 85%) of planned instruction occurs when the instructor and student(s) are not in the same place,

Interactive Videoconference— Synchronous instruction occurs with two or more classrooms connecting via an interactive videoconference with two-way video and audio.
III. Policy Provisions

A. All distance education courses and programs will comply with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges *Principles of Accreditation* and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Distance Education Policy and Procedures.

B. All online courses will incorporate the use of LMS tools to support instruction, timely feedback, and regular and substantive interaction (student – student and student – instructor).

C. All distance education courses and programs will be reviewed to ensure course rigor and quality.

D. All faculty who teach a distance education course will complete a professional development program designed to support faculty in developing and teaching distance education courses.

E. All faculty who teach a distance education course will maintain currency of distance education technologies and pedagogy by participating in ongoing professional development activities.

F. All students enrolled in a distance education course will have access to appropriate academic and student support services.

G. All distance education courses will comply with Midland College’s ADA policy.

H. All distance education courses will comply with Public Law 100-315, Higher Education Opportunity Act, and will include measures to demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.

I. All distance education courses will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as stated in Midland College’s Privacy Policy.

IV. Distance Learning Committee

The Distance Learning Standing Committee is charged with the review and revision of this policy, to ensure currency of best practices, effectiveness of implementation, and compliance with accreditation agencies.