Del Mar College can demonstrate it is effectively accomplishing its mission by engagement in ongoing, integrated, and institution wide research-based planning and evaluation resulting in continuing improvement through a series of planning and assessment processes. As a host institution for VCT courses the processes include all distance learning courses as well as those that are VCT hosted courses.

1. The Planning Process

The Del Mar College strategic planning process is directed by the College’s Council on Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. The College’s current Strategic Plan spans academic years 2003 to 2009, and is based on the College’s Mission Statement. Measurable institutional effectiveness indicators are specified for each College objective. VCT student enrollment is addressed as a specific strategic objective. Associated strategies include expanding course offerings and evaluating student satisfaction with VCT and other courses offered through innovative delivery methods. Additionally, the Del Mar College Distance Learning Mission Statement and the Distance Learning Institutional Plan III 2000-2005 detail the goals and objectives of distance learning initiatives, including VCT.

The College’s strategic planning process integrates ongoing involvement of all members of the College community, including students, faculty, general community members, and the Board of Regents. The Board monitors and approves updates to the Mission statement and Strategic Plan; the President and the Council on Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, who evaluate core indicators of institutional effectiveness, monitor changes in the College’s environment, and work with the instructional and support services divisions to supervise appropriate implementation of instructional program reviews and support services administrative reviews; the Office of the Vice President of Business and Finance, who ensures that departmental budgets are appropriately approved and implemented; and the instructional and support services departments, who develop departmental and program unit goals and expected outcomes and identify appropriate measures and means to apply the results of assessment findings.

2. Unit Planning and Assessment

Student learning outcomes are addressed in the College’s planning and assessment process, which includes the development of annual unit plans and the assessment of unit plans on an annual cycle. Each instructional, administrative, and support services unit establishes unit goals and selects specific expected results to be attained during an academic year. At the end of the year, units assess their results and define their use of assessments. In addition, the institutional effectiveness measures are monitored annually to show improvements in student learning outcomes. Distance learning, which includes VCT, is identified as an administrative unit, with unit plans and unit plan assessments.

Directions for Institutional Effectiveness Unit Planning April 2006
Unit Plans 2004-2005
Unit Plan Assessments 2003-004
Del Mar College Core Curriculum April 2006
Del Mar College Core Curriculum Evaluation Report October 2004
3. The Evaluation Process

All instructional units are evaluated on a five-year cycle through the Program Review process. The performance criteria in the program evaluation plan include program goals and assessment; instruction-related activities; curriculum integration; student educational intent; satisfactory mobility; effective personnel utilization; cost effectiveness; and strategic advantage. Specific policies and guidelines are published annually to assist the program review committees in completing comprehensive, formative evaluations of each program. Instructional program review status documents enumerate the instructional programs, their program review cycle, and their current status on program review. Current programs under review include the Del Mar College VCT initiative. Student Learning Outcomes for each instructional program are specified on instructional program review form IPR 003, along with related expected results, courses, and assessment methods.

Similarly, all student support services are evaluated on a five-year cycle through the Support Services Administrative Review process. Support Services include departments or units with separate cost centers that provide for the delivery of student support services or institutional support for the operation of the College. The purpose of this review process is to ensure the long-range success, quality, and efficiency of all student support services. The comprehensive, formative internal review of support services ensures that services are meeting the needs of students, faculty, staff, the institution as a whole, and the community.

The Distance Learning Department, under the supervision of the Vice President of Instruction, is headed by the Director of Distance Learning. The department works closely with the Teaching and Learning Center and Information Technology Department personnel to provide the technological support and training required by VCT and other distance faculty to effectively deliver classes via electronic means. Distance Learning staff provide both group and individual instruction in computer applications needed by VCT and other faculty to provide instruction electronically and work closely with the Teaching and Learning Center in providing training classes for faculty and staff. The Distance Learning staff work closely with the VCT Coordinator and staff of the Counseling and Advising Department to ensure students enroll in courses that are appropriate for their academic and technology skill levels. The VCT Coordinator is responsible for informing prospective students of classes available, including Virtual College of Texas options. The Distance Learning Department also offers an Internet Readiness Test which assesses the computer skills of students registering for Internet classes. The Director of Distance Learning meets regularly with various faculty groups, including Internet and VCT faculty, video conferencing faculty, and television faculty to discuss any evaluation data and/or any problems, to provide information on coming changes in technology, resources, and available training, and to get feedback about any changes needed in the support to students or the administration of their instructional programs.

VCT student data can be tracked by identification numbers specific to VCT courses. This data was used for the data report for VCT Student Course Evaluation Survey Report Fall 2005. Additionally VCT hosted courses can be compared to regular Distance Learning courses and classroom based courses for comparison of student completers, grade distribution, and enrollment. These comparisons utilize data from VCT and focus on student satisfaction and student's ratings of course quality and are based on the information from VCT on their website. Student data is also available from VCT online surveys of students regarding VCT faculty and services. Composite reports from this data is also available from VCT. Data from these sources are additional elements in the evaluation process.

The Distance Learning Advisory Committee advises the Department of Distance Learning on (1) establishment of long and short term programmatic and performance goals; (2) expansion of instructional offerings; (3) coordination of the distance learning programs with other college initiatives; (4) partnerships with other colleges and organizations; (5) faculty recruitment, orientation and development; (6) marketing strategies for promoting distance learning; (7) utilization and evaluation of technology, technical support, and instruction support for distance learning programs; (8) funding resources to support distance learning initiatives; and (9) evaluation of the effectiveness of distance learning efforts.
The **Distance Learning Department** each year makes a detailed study of its success to date in reaching the goals outlined in its plan, using data and information gathered by the department. In addition, the department's staff members meet regularly with distance learning faculty, to get input as to students feedback, faculty needs and suggestions on ways to improve services to students. All departmental goals are documented as measurable outcomes.

**2005-2006 Calendar and Guidelines for the Implementation of Instructional Program Reviews**

- **Instructional Program Review Document Due Dates 2006**
- **Instructional Programs to Be Reviewed in 2005-2006**
- **Guidelines for the Implementation of Support Services Administrative Review 2004**
- **Distance Learning Department**
- **Distance Learning Program Review 2000**
- **Distance Learning Enrollments, Grades, and Survey Results 2000-2004 February 2005**
- **Distance Learning Enrollment, Grades, and Survey Results 1999-2000 May 2001**

**Distance Learning and VCT Testing Information**

- **Distance Learning Handbook for Students**
- **VCT Student Course Evaluation Survey Report Fall 2005**, April 2006
- **Utilizing the Results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement**, April 2005
- **Survey of Student Services Spring 2004 Newsletter**, October 2004
- **Survey of Student Services Spring 2004**, December 2004
- **VCT-related committee meeting minutes**

4. **Using Evaluation to Improve Planning and Implementation**

As unit plans, instructional programs, and support services are reviewed with respect to the College's strategic planning goals, student learning outcomes are identified and addressed, the achievement of student learning outcomes is measured, and the results are assessed. Data on the results of activities designed to achieve measurable outcomes are compiled, analyzed, and assessed using solid research methods. Uses of data driven assessments are enumerated in annual **unit plan assessment** forms which focus on improvement.