REGULAR AND SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION

The U.S. Department of Education regulations for distance education (https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-09-02/pdf/2020-18636.pdf) require regular and substantive interaction (RSI) between instructors and their students. The Department of Education defines substantive interaction (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart-A/section-600.2/) as engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

1. Providing direct instruction;
2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
4. Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
5. Other instructional activities approved by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) or the program's accrediting agency.

An institution ensures regular interaction (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart-A/section-600.2/) between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency:

1. Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
2. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

What is Kirkwood Community College Doing to Ensure RSI?

Kirkwood Community College recognizes regular and substantive interaction is more than a compliance requirement, it is essential to effective teaching and learning. At Kirkwood all instructors will regularly assess or provide feedback on a student's coursework and provide information or respond to questions about course content or course competency. Additionally, faculty may facilitate group discussions regarding content of a course or competency.

RSI principles are embedded in the learning management system Instructor Training module and in training materials for new instructors teaching online, Web-live, and hybrid modalities. Instructional designers support faculty integration of RSI principles as they develop online courses. Kirkwood includes a RSI statement in all course syllabi. Additionally, syllabus training encourages faculty to provide clear expectations for student-faculty interaction, publish weekly student help hours, and communicate their plan to respond to questions and provide feedback on submitted work.