

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Montgomery College

September 11, 2015

Distance Education Issues

Institutions Must Provide the Following Documentation:

Focus 1: Written description of the method(s) used to ensure student identity verification in distance or correspondence education courses. Include information related to the Learning Management Systems (LMS) and integration with college-wide systems.

Peer Reviewers assigned to this verification should consider the following question:

- What methods are used by the institution to verify the student's identity? In your professional judgment, are these methods adequate and effective?

Response: Identity information originates from Banner and is shipped to MyMC (College portal) and Blackboard (College Learning Management System) in real time. Identity information only includes the user's firstname, lastname, mymc id, m# (identity number) but does not include passwords. In other systems that are Blackboard building block based, the identities are transferred between Blackboard and those systems (Not via MyMC). Again, this identity information does not include password to these other systems (such as Examyty). Authentication of users happens on MyMC where users identities are verified using MyMC Id and Password method. Once a user has been properly authenticated to MyMC, external systems such as Blackboard are also authenticated with MyMC in a trust relationship, called Single Sign On. This Single Sign On technology is based on a technology called CAS Central Authentication Systems (CAS).

Focus 2: Written procedure(s) regarding the protection of student privacy in the implementation of such methods. Include information related to the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student record access, and process for resetting student passwords.

Peer Reviewers assigned to this verification should consider the following question:

- What is the procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses? In your professional judgment, are these methods adequate and effective?

Response: MC has a very robust FERPA page which includes links to 1. Asking questions of a college official who handles FERPA, 2) Student info link (very rich, very detailed, with many FAQ's), 3)Parent's page, also rich, 4)Employees page (very detailed) and 5) a link to the Annual

Notification (a PDF document); See

<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/Department2.aspx?id=20084>

Process for resetting student passwords is done by students visiting the Account Management Services page on the MC site. See: <https://idm.montgomerycollege.edu/accountClaiming/home>

Focus 3: Written procedure(s) for notifying students about any projected additional charges associated with student identity verification such as proctoring fees.

Peer Reviewers assigned to this verification should consider the following question:

- What is the procedure for notifying students regarding any additional charges associated with identity verification? In your professional judgment, are these methods adequate and effective? Does the institution notify students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity, such as a separate fee charged by a proctoring service?

Response: There are no proctoring fees for students taking placement exams to attend MC. We are not an open public testing center, so we do not administer placement exams to students that would not attend MC. We have a couple of tests with third party vendors. The TEAS Exam for Nursing and Science programs, and the GED test. The vendors (ATA and Pearson) charge a fee for taking these tests. Students need to register and create accounts with these vendors. Students provide payment directly to these vendors. The assessment centers do not collect payments for these vendors.

Focus 4: Written procedure(s) indicating the office(s) responsible for the consistent application of student identity verification procedures.

Peer Reviewers assigned to this verification should consider the following question:

- What office(s) are responsible for ensuring that the provisions for ensuring student identity verification are consistently applied?

Response: The Office of Enrollment Services and the College Registrar is responsible for protecting student information, (not releasing without student consent unless it's directory information) and they ask for identification when working with students. The Office of Information Technology generates the student M numbers (student identification numbers) and email addresses. Passwords are only set by the student during the Claim Your Account process and resetting is done through the Account Management Services page.