# Distance Learning
at Middlesex Community College

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College Overview

- Founded in 1966 as a branch campus of Manchester Community College.

- Became an independent college in 1968.

- One of 12 community colleges in Connecticut

- Servicing 18 surrounding towns in Middlesex County of Connecticut.

- Main Campus: 38 acres, in Middletown, Connecticut
  - Two branch campuses: Meriden, Old Saybrook

Map of Connecticut
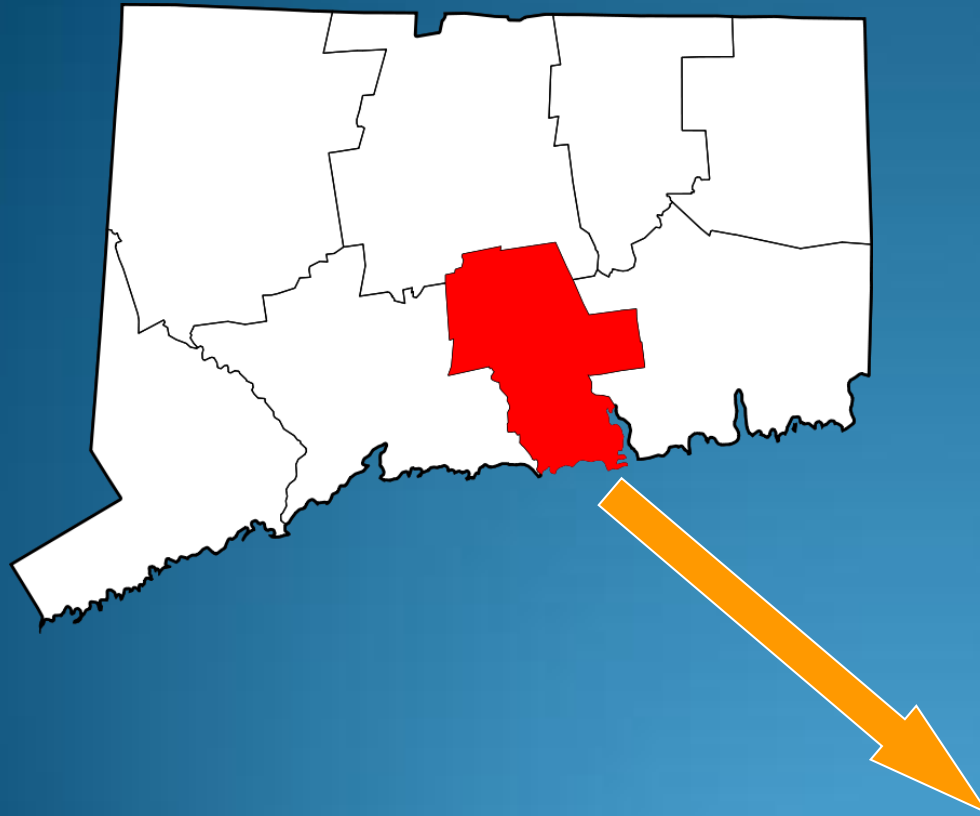
Middlesex County
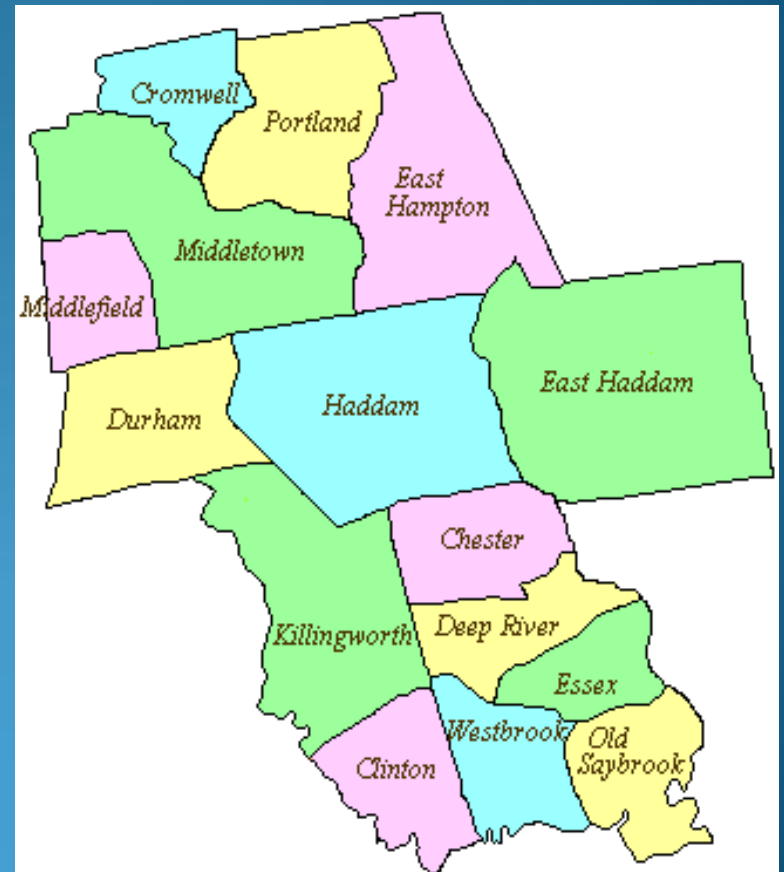
College Overview

- 21 degree programs – Associate Degree
- 24 certificate programs
- 36 fully online classes –credit courses
- 2500 full and part-time students (credit)
- 1,700 continuing education students (non-credit)
- Students' average age, 27.5
- 40% graduates transfer to 4-year college for baccalaureate programs.
- 80% of graduates are employed, 65% full-time.

Student Characteristics

- Adult learners
- Work and study
- Cannot attend scheduled classes on campus
- Take some classes on campuses at their free time

Distance Learning

- Take credit courses at their convenience time
- Speed up degree seeking process
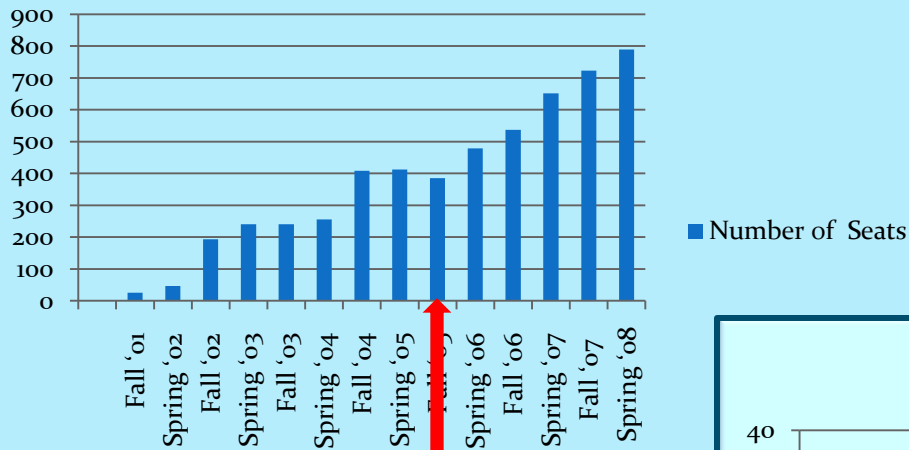
Distance Learning

- First 100% online class in 2000.
- Spring of 2001: two online classes, 48 seats
  - Art History and Financial Accounting
- Spring 2008, 34 online courses, 798 seats
  - Accounting, Anthropology, Biology, Business, Communication, Computers, Education, Economics, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology

Growth: Online Classes

| Semester	Number of Classes	Number of Seats	Total Seats	Percentage	Average Per Class
Fall '01	2	26	5607	0.46%	13
Spring '02	3	47	5333	0.88%	15.7
Fall '02	10	193	6152	3.14%	19.3
Spring '03	11	241	5622	4.29%	21.9
Fall '03	11	241	6187	3.90%	21.9
Spring '04	13	256	5711	4.48%	19.7
Fall '04	18	408	6472	6.30%	22.7
Spring '05	18	412	5939	6.94%	22.9
Fall '05	18	385	6339	6.07%	21.4
Spring '06	21	479	6154	7.78%	22.8
Fall '06	24	537	6738	7.97%	22.4
Spring '07	28	651	6346	10.26%	23.3
Fall '07	30	723	7279	9.93%	24
Spring '08	34	789	6606	11.94%	23.2

Growth: Online Classes

Number of Seats

Quality Control starting Fall 2005

Number of Classes

Quality Control starting Fall 2005
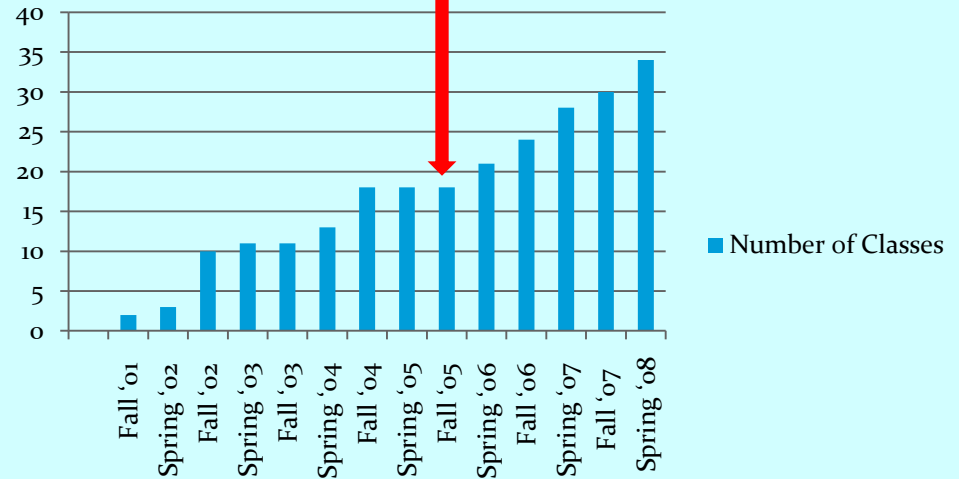
Nature of Online Classes

- Course Management System: Blackboard Vista
- Member of Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium
  - Server administration
  - Technical support for students
- 100% online credit courses
- 24/7 access
- Anytime, Anywhere
- 567 students (22%) taking at least one online classes in Spring 08.

Staff Supporting Online Learning

- Director of Distance Learning, full time-permanent, 70%
  - Design online classes
  - Train faculty teaching online
  - Technical assistance for online faculty and online students
  - On-campus orientation
- Educational Technology Specialist, full time-temporary, 80%
  - Academic advising for online students
  - Online student registration
  - Technical assistance for online faculty and online students
  - On-campus orientations
- Distance Learning Assistants
  - 2 , 20 hours/week each
  - Office administrative tasks
  - Assist development of online classes

Characteristics of Online Students

- Spring 2008
  - Female: 72%
  - Male: 28%
  - Traditional: 51%
  - Non-Traditional, 49%
  - Service Area: 69%
  - Non-Service Area: 31%

Grade Comparison – Fall 2007

Grades	Online	On-Ground
A, A-	33.4%	25.7%
B-, B, B+	20.8%	25.6%
C-, C, C+	10.1%	15%
D-, D, D+	2.4%	4.4%
F, I, N, W	33.4%	28.1%

Online Classes

- Class Information
  - Syllabus, lecture notes, outline, glossary, PowerPoint Presentations
- Assignments
  - Discussions, projects, exercises, papers, etc.
- Assessments
  - Online exams, projects, papers, etc.
- Communications
  - Email, discussions, chat

Technology Tools

- Blackboard Vista
  - Syllabus
  - Notes and Files: Learning Modules
  - Communications: Announcements, Mail, Discussion Board, Chat
  - Assignments: Assignments drop boxes
  - Exams: online Quizzes
  - E-packs: notes, outlines, summary, question banks, videos, animations, etc.
  - Examples: Statistics, Life Span Development, Technical Writing.

Pedagogy

- Rich learning context: lecture notes, resources from professor and textbook Publisher

- Active Participation: weekly discussions with thought provoking, open ended questions.

- Multiple assessments: class participation, quizzes, tests, projects, research paper, etc.

Online Student Services

- Technical Help Desk: 76 hours/week including evenings and weekends.
- Online Registration: current students
- Online Orientation: http://www.mxcc.commnet.edu/distance/start.shtml
- On-campus orientations
- Library Database: off-campus
  - http://www.mxcc.commnet.edu/library/index.shtml
- Online Advising: Blackboard Vista
- Virtual Campus: Blackboard Vista
- Online Tutoring: Math, Accounting, English.
  - http://www.etutoring.org
- Financial Aid

Quality Control of Online Classes

- Development of the classes
  - [Guideline for Developing Online Classes](#)
    - Nine months prior to the first day of class.
      - Online class proposal
      - Approval process: program coordinator, chair, director of distance learning, Dean of Learning and Student Development.
      - The approved classes can be put on schedule.
    - Three months prior to the first day of class
      - Professor work with Distance Learning staff to develop the course.
      - Professor receives basic training for online teaching pedagogy while working with Distance Learning staff.
    - Two weeks prior to the first day of class
      - Evaluate the course based on the course evaluation criteria.

Quality Control of Online Classes

- Students
  - Required: Take Online Orientation to start
  - On-campus orientation for first online learners needing personal assistance.
  - Resolving technical problems
  - E-tutoring
- Faculty: Effective Online Teaching Guideline
  - Train faculty how to teach effectively online.
  - Based on students' feedback, constantly revise the course.

Evaluation of Online Learning

- On-going evaluation
  - Department chairs have access to online classes
- In the end of the semester
  - [Online Course Evaluation from CTDLC](#)
- Evaluation results are sent to individual professors and department chairs.
- Revise the online classes based on the student evaluation.

Current Issues

- Students Assistance
  - Some students need one-on-one personal assistance throughout the course.
- Technology
  - Server could be slow during busy time.
  - Server was down during exam weeks.
- 6% more "no shows" online than on-ground.
- Lack of funding for staff support and advanced technology
  - Podcasting, Vidcasting, videos, etc.
  - Student advising prior to registration

Trends

- More funding
- Better and more stable technological support system
- More support hours
- More qualified support staff
- More advanced technology
- More collaboration across institutions

Questions/Answers

College Mission

- A college education should be available to everyone.
- It is committed to providing excellence in teaching as well as personal support in developing the genius of each student.
- The educational goal of the college is to promote understanding, learning, ethics, and self-discipline by encouraging critical thinking.
- Faculty and staff are dedicated to helping students achieve their academic, professional and career potentials.
- This support is a continual process that recognizes student diversity in both background and learning ability.

Institution Goals

To fulfill its mission, Middlesex has established the following goals in its advancement of the principle of lifelong learning:

- **General Education** - To provide a range of courses enabling students to achieve occupational, educational, philosophical, recreational and personal goals for more satisfying lives.
- **College Transfer Education** - To provide appropriate programs and courses for those desiring to continue their education at baccalaureate institutions.
- **Technical and Career Education** - To offer associate degree and certificate programs of study for specific occupations.
- **Student Services** - To provide personal, career, and job support services that help students reach their academic potential; to serve students with special needs, and to create an environment supportive of students from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- **Community Services** - To provide credit-free courses, workshops and conferences for skill development, career enhancement and personal enrichment.
- **Business and Industry Services** - To assist area firms through consultation and educational services to take advantage of new technology and to improve staff skills.