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**Sent:** Friday, January 9, 2026 3:56 PM

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**Subject:** Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) Update

Welcome back Roadrunners,

I hope you had a wonderful and relaxing break!

As we prepare for the upcoming semester, one of our primary goals for distance education courses is to strengthen **regular and substantive interaction (RSI)** between instructors and students. RSI is a key expectation for accreditation review, but more importantly, it plays a significant role in student success, engagement, and retention in online courses.

Research and our own experience consistently show that students are more likely to stay enrolled, persist through challenges, and succeed when they experience frequent, meaningful interaction with their instructor. RSI helps make expectations clear, supports learning as it happens, and reduces the sense of isolation that can occur in online environments.

### **One simple thing you can do right now**

Before the semester begins, one of the easiest ways to make an immediate impact is to clearly communicate **how and when students can expect to interact with you**. We recommend adding (or reviewing) language in your **Home page, syllabus, and assessments** that explains:

- Your preferred method(s) of contact
- How students should reach out with questions about content or assignments
- Your expected response time (no more than 1-2 business days - and sooner when possible)
- Office Hours info
- Links on the Home Page and Course Navigation menu to any discussion boards for class questions and/or any FAQ pages

This small step sets clear expectations, reassures students that you are present in the course, and establishes a foundation for regular interaction from day one.

If you'd like quick template pages that can be imported straight into your course(s) and accomplish everything listed above, please access the Canvas Commons (once logged into Canvas) and search for "chc communication" and "chc office hours" (just searching "chc" will bring up over 500 pages, so use these specific search terms to go straight to the templates). If you've never used Canvas Commons before, this 6-minute video on [How to Use Canvas Commons](#) will help!

### **Looking ahead: regular RSI support newsletters**

A team of distance education faculty leads, directors, deans, and other DE professionals from Region 9 created the attached **ACCJC RSI Chart** to help demystify what regular and substantive interaction looks like in practice. You'll receive a short email every two weeks this semester based on this chart with practical, low-lift strategies you can easily implement in Canvas.

Each message will focus on making RSI visible and effective by highlighting strategies related to one of the following:

- Assessing and providing feedback on student work
- Responding to student questions about course content
- Facilitating group discussion and interaction
- Creating regular opportunities for substantive instructor-initiated engagement
- Monitoring student participation and following up when engagement drops

Our goal is to make RSI feel **manageable, sustainable, and integrated** into what you already do as an instructor - not an added burden. Many faculty find that stronger RSI not only benefits students, but also makes teaching online more efficient, more connected, and more rewarding.

For a deeper dive into all things RSI, be sure to attend *Student-Centered & Accreditation-Ready: RSI Made Easy* with Cynthia Hamlett on January 15, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. (check [in-service schedule](#) for location).

If you have any questions about RSI, please reach out Cynthia Hamlett at [chamlett@craftonhills.edu](mailto:chamlett@craftonhills.edu).

Thank you for the work you do to support our students. We look forward to sharing ideas and resources with you throughout the semester.



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