

Distance Education Department
ASP for Academic Year 2021-
2022
November 2020

Description Of Section

Connection to College Mission

The mission of the Distance Education Department is to support Cerro Coso Community College's mission by providing students with a flexible alternative avenue to academic success through quality distance learning courses using contemporary information technology.

The college strives to become a recognized leader in online education among California community colleges and beyond, by creating innovative and cost-effective solutions to overcome challenges in online learning. The Distance Education Department is dedicated to upholding the highest standard of professionalism and advancing the quality of distance education programs to meet or exceed student and faculty expectations.

To accomplish this, the department is committed to supporting the college in several ways:

- Providing quality, accredited online degree and credential programs that satisfy general education and meet the requirements for transferring to bachelor programs
- Helping faculty use distance learning technologies and pedagogies to deliver quality courses and programs
- Enabling local and remote students to fulfill degree, certificate, and transfer requirements in a timely manner with flexible classes
- Constantly assessing the effectiveness of distance education programs and improving their quality and productivity
- Ensuring that distance education programs are conducted in accordance with applicable rules, regulations, and policies stipulated by the college and the state and federal governments

Review And Planning

Performance and Equity Gaps Still to be Addressed

In summer 2020, distance education saw its highest success rate, 76.5%, compared to the previous summer's success rate at 74.3%. The retention rate for summer 2020 was 88.3%, relatively lower than in summer 2019, but similar to the average of the previous three summers.

Table: Distance Education Student Retention and Success Rates by Academic Year and Semester

Academic Year	Semester	Student Retention Rate	Student Success Rate
2020-2021	Summer 2020	88.3%	76.5%
2019-2020	Spring 2020	88.4%	79.0%
	Fall 2019	83.5%	65.8%
	Summer 2019	89.5%	74.3%
	Annual Sum	86.6%	72.4%
	Spring 2019	84.0%	68.4%
2018-2019	Fall 2018	84.2%	67.0%
	Summer 2018	88.0%	73.8%
	Annual Sum	84.9%	69.0%
	Spring 2018	84.3%	68.4%
2018-2019	Fall 2017	85.3%	67.1%
	Summer 2017	87.5%	71.3%
	Annual Sum	85.4%	68.5%

For the past three academic years, a few initiatives have focused on creating accessible content to help disabled students, such as DSPS students. Although the Distance Education department cannot guarantee complete accessibility of online course content, these initiatives have now become a part of the department's operation. There is an expectation that faculty will create accessible content, and the department will evaluate learning tools and write scripts with accessibility as a criterion.

Data for the past three semesters (see below table) demonstrate a need for targeted teaching and student service strategies specific to an ethnic group to narrow success and retention gaps. One select ethnic group that requires attention is African American students, whose success rates are 68.7%, 77.5%, and 66.3% for the past three semesters compared to the average rates of 79.9%, 84.6%, and 74.6%, respectively. In the next academic year, the department will be intentional in narrowing equity gaps for students of color. Three initiatives for this coming year will focus on online course quality, different types of equity strategies for faculty consideration, and developing student engagement tools to improve performance and equity gaps.

Table: Distance Education Student Retention and Success Rates Based on Ethnicity by Academic Year and Semester

Semester	Ethnicity	Student Retention Rate	Student Success Rate
Summer 2020	African American	82.3%	68.7%
	American Indian	90.3%	77.4%
	Asian	93.3%	89.6%
	Filipino	96.1%	88.2%
	Hispanic/Latino	89.6%	77.9%
	Pacific Islander	91.2%	88.2%
	Two or More Races	87.9%	75.0%
	Unknown	89.0%	83.5%
	White	90.8%	81.8%
	Sum	89.4%	79.9%
Spring 2020	African American	88.8%	77.5%
	American Indian	92.7%	85.4%
	Asian	95.2%	90.1%
	Filipino	94.1%	91.9%
	Hispanic/Latino	91.5%	83.1%
	Pacific Islander	88.1%	83.3%
	Two or More Races	89.8%	83.7%
	Unknown	95.6%	93.7%
	White	92.8%	86.4%
	Sum	92.0%	84.6%
Fall 2019	African American	82.6%	66.3%
	American Indian	84.0%	67.9%
	Asian	92.7%	87.0%
	Filipino	95.5%	78.6%
	Hispanic/Latino	87.9%	73.1%
	Pacific Islander	75.4%	62.3%
	Two or More Races	87.0%	69.0%
	Unknown	86.4%	80.0%
	White	89.6%	78.0%
	Sum	88.2%	74.6%

Annual Planning: Actions Taken

Improve Equity in Online Education

Before the COVID-19 lockdown, the plan was to explore how faculty could implement equity strategies for their online courses to improve success and retention for students marginalized by race/ethnicity, income, age, and disability. It was determined that developing an equity course rubric for faculty to follow would help them implement these strategies and narrow the equity gap in online education. To support faculty members' understanding of the equity concept, the Distance Education department promoted workshops, on-demand videos, and articles relating to equity. As the department came to understand more about strategies for narrowing the equity gap, it became unclear how some of the on-ground strategies could be successfully implemented in the online environment. Due to this uncertainty, an equity rubric has not yet been developed.

In this current period of racial unrest and unforeseen pandemic, there have been opportunities to hear a wide variety of opinions and approaches to narrowing the equity gap in online education. Through hearing these perspectives, it has become apparent that developing an equity rubric without an established equity plan for distance education would not result in faculty using the rubric. It is also more apparent that an equity rubric targeted to a specific group of students would be more effective than a general rubric.

However, the department still believes the initiative to narrow the equity gap in online education is essential. Therefore, the department has made developing an equity plan for distance education an initiative for AY2020-21.

Improve Accessibility of College Online Courses

The college's goal is to create an online environment that is equally available and accessible to all student populations, including those with disabilities. A Distance Education Accessibility Plan has already been developed and implemented starting in January 2019 to make course content comply with accessibility laws, specifically Regulation 503 and Title 5. This plan commits the faculty to make their online courses accessible by the end of Fall 2020, and faculty are on track to creating accessible online courses. To support them in this effort, the Distance Education department made a tool called UDOIT available in Canvas, which can help faculty identify and fix their accessibility issues directly. The department has also offered one-on-one training and workshops on accessibility standards, using accessibility tools, and creating accessible Microsoft documents and PDFs. Email distribution to the faculty listserv includes accessibility training and resources to ensure instant awareness of available accessibility information. Plus, faculty are encouraged to submit their course sections to the peer online course review (POCR) process to align their courses with the Online Education Initiative (OEI)'s course design rubric and gain access to an accessibility expert. In the past year, faculty members have made great strides toward accessible content for all their online courses. For the college, the department, and the faculty, offering accessible online courses is a goal we continuously strive to reach.

Increase POCR Approved Online Courses

The Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges System has recommended using the OEI course design rubric as a standard metric for measuring online courses' quality. To have an online course certified as a quality online course by the system, a faculty member must submit it to the POCR process, where it is reviewed and approved for alignment with the rubric. The rubric has four sections: content presentation, interaction, assessment, and accessibility. In the process of getting the first 15 online courses at the college through POCR certification, it has become clear to the Distance Education department that the accessibility section is the most time-consuming and least understood by faculty. Supporting faculty in getting their courses aligned with this section requires providing accessibility training. It also requires the department to provide appropriate tools to assist faculty in creating accessible content. In this period, the department has offered one-on-one training and workshops on the topic. The college currently has 15 POCR-certified courses and 43 courses being reviewed for accessibility issues to go through the formal POCR review process. The department anticipates more faculty will have their courses reviewed and certified in the coming months.

Increase Faculty Sharing of Online Teaching Strategies

Understanding that a newsletter is only successful if it convinces people to keep reading it, the Distance Education department sought out faculty feedback on the title, design, and content of the *InsideOnline* newsletter. In collaboration with the Pedagogy and Technology Committee, the department published the first issue and distributed it by email to full-time and adjunct faculty in January of 2020. A second issue was distributed on October 30, 2020.

For the first issue, a full-time faculty member, Dr. Matt Hightower, wrote two articles, "Increase Student-to-Student Interaction" and "Increase Student-to-Faculty Interaction," which received 64 views and 23 views. To date, three other faculty members have written articles sharing their online teaching strategies and resources with their peers. The department anticipates that more faculty will share online teaching strategies through *InsideOnline* in the coming months.

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Develop Equity Plan for Distance Education

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

The following steps will be taken to improve equity in online education at the College:

1. Collaborate with the Director of Institutional Research and the Pedagogy and Technology Committee to develop the equity plan for distance education.
2. Determine the scope of the plan.
3. Research online equity strategies most effective for students marginalized by race/ethnicity, income, age, and disability.
4. Offer training and resources related to equity strategies in online education to support faculty.
5. Promote student services and academic services that could support faculty and their approach to narrowing the equity gap.
6. Write an equity plan for distance education.
7. Gain approval of stakeholders for implementation.
8. Implement the plan.

Lead Measure of Success:

The Distance Education department gains Academic Senate approval of its newly developed equity plan.

Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?

Yes

Does the department request help to develop these instruments?

No

Lag Measure of Success:

For the courses that faculty members have implemented the equity plan's strategies saw an increase in student success rate compared to the previous comparable semester.

Person Responsible:

Distance of Education Director, Director of Institutional Research and Pedagogy and Technology Committee

It addresses a gap in student equity

Which strategic goal does this initiative address?

Goal 2: Advance Student Equity Measures

Develop CVC-Course-Design Rubric-Based Canvas Templates

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

To continue to have online courses certified as a quality online course by the system, POCR-certified, the Distance Education Department will:

1. Review the OEI course design rubric.
2. Collaborate with the Pedagogy and Technology Committee on the design of three CVC-Course-Design Rubric-Based Canvas templates.
3. Design and develop three CVC-Course-Design Rubric-Based Canvas templates as options for faculty to select for their course section to meet certain criteria to gain POCR review approval.
4. Promote the use of templates to faculty.

Lead Measure of Success:

The Distance Education department gains Academic Senate approval of the three newly developed CVC-course-design rubric-based Canvas templates.

Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?

Yes

Does the department request help to develop these instruments?

No

Lag Measure of Success:

For the courses that faculty members have implemented one of the templates saw an increase in student success rate compared to the previous comparable semester.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment

Which strategic goal does this initiative address?

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success

Develop Canvas Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) Apps for the College

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

The department will take the following steps to develop Canvas LTI apps for the college:

1. Train the Web Developer in LTI development.

2. Research and assess the types of Canvas LTI applications that would be help with student engagement in online education.
3. Find server space for the college's LTIs.
4. Decide on the first two LTIs to be developed by the college.
5. Develop the LTIs.
6. Test the LTIs.
7. Launch the LTIs.

Lead Measure of Success:

The department introduces two Canvas LTIs developed by the college.

Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?

No

Does the department request help to develop these instruments?

No

Lag Measure of Success:

The department gains approval for the implementation of the two Canvas LTIs developed by the college.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distanced Education and Web Developer/Canvas Admin

Other

Which strategic goal does this initiative address?

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success

Resource Needs

Facilities

N/A

Information Technology

The department is requesting an annual subscription Pronto, a real-time communication tool.

Marketing

N/A

Professional Development

The department would like to continue to request an annual budget to support the summer training for faculty teaching their first online courses, a training now required by Title 5, and recommended by the Pedtech Committee and approved by the Academic Senate.

Additionally, the department would like to request for the travel and attendance of the Online Teaching Conference in June 2022.

Research and Data

The department collaborates with the Institutional Research department to develop a fact sheet of equity gaps in distance education.

Staffing Requests Not Already Listed In Unit Plans

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

N/A

Location:

Justification:

2000 Category - Classified Staff

N/A

Location:

Salary Grade:

Number of Months:

Number of Hours per Week:

Salary Amount:

Justification: