

Distance Education Department

Annual Section Plan for Academic Year 2017-2018

November 2016

Description Of Section

Mission/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

For academic year 2016-17, the Distance Education Department is addressing operational and performance gaps in two of its section plan initiatives: Implement Canvas Learning Management System and Enhance Student Support Services for Online Students.

The Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) is rich with features and easy to learn and use, and can provide students and faculty with a more user-friendly and interactive online environment to learn and teach. The department hopes the transition of online courses to the Canvas system will help improve operations and shrink performance gaps in student retention, and engagement. Canvas courses were piloted in summer 2016, and online courses will fully transition to Canvas in spring 2017. In fall 2016, 81% of online course faculty volunteered to offer their courses in Canvas, and Canvas was used for 64 on-site courses; as a result, there is already a 2% improvement in retention relative to fall 2015 when all online courses were offered in Moodle LMS.

Second, the expectation for the Enhance Student Support Services for Online Students initiative is that the easily accessible online services within Canvas courses will help online students better engage and connect with the Cerro Coso community. The department goal is to see an increase in retention when these online services are fully implemented and all courses have been transitioned to Canvas. In addition to these two initiatives, for academic year 2016-17, the department is also addressing the gender equity gap by promoting and partnering with military organizations and associations to appeal to more men. Data for the 2014-15

and 2015-16 academic years show a 27% and 25% gender gap respectively; this gap is expected to narrow as more military individuals become aware of the SOC-approved courses and programs through advertisement efforts.

As for academic year 2017-18, a few unit plans have raised issues regarding equity, accessibility, student retention and student success for online students. The department will work with faculty, faculty chairs, and department directors to identify tools that can be integrated with Canvas to help with their interventions. In addition to the unit plans' possible need for resources to address their online equity gaps, the Distance Education Department will be implementing two initiatives to address online performance and equity gaps: Develop College Accessibility Plan for Online Courses and Promote the Use of Classroom Salon in Online Courses.

Progress Made on Prior Year Initiatives

Online Student Enrollment

Following the sectional plan initiative to increase online student enrollment, the department has implemented some of its action plans and revised, withdrawn, or delayed others due to limitations such as the college's restriction on marketing outside of its service area. Below are the changes to and results of the action plans.

1. With the knowledge of the faculty chairs and the Manager of Public Relations, Marketing & Development, the department conducted an assessment on marketing segmentation to identify online education needs and solutions to certain problems. After the assessment, the department and the Manager of Public Relations, Marketing & Development concluded that it is unnecessary to develop a separate marketing plan for distance education programs, since promotion is restricted to the college's service area and all satellite campuses are already promoting online courses to their students when on-site courses are unavailable. The conclusion after the marketing assessment was that it would make the most sense to promote all programs in the college area to maximize marketing dollars.
2. Due to uncontrollable events, the department revised its action plan to implement an online incarcerated student program. Instead, we identified the military as a strategic partner to increase online enrollment, and worked with the Admissions and Records Department and faculty chairs to apply to the Air Force GEM Program and the SOC CTE programs. Both were approved in November 2015 and December 2015 respectively, and added to the college website at the end of December 2015. Currently, the college is in the process of applying for the SOC degree programs.
3. Targeted marketing strategies were initiated with the purchase of two opt-in email distribution lists. The plan is to distribute information about the college's offerings to potential online students, especially those in populations with a wide equity gap for our current online courses. It is expected that the marketing message will be targeted toward senior high school parents and first-year students at four-year universities to be most effective, focusing on the college's transferable courses, the low cost, and Cerro Coso Community College as an option to consider outside of going to work or a four-year university. Unfortunately, due to workload challenges in the marketing department, only one email blast has been completed, in late May 2016. The purchased lists will continue to be used by the marketing department to increase enrollment for spring 2017 online courses.
4. Lastly, the department had planned to promote the new faculty online training to the California Community College community in order to increase enrollment. This action plan has been withdrawn due to the adoption of Canvas, since the training is now being offered by @One.

Despite the changes to these action plans, first-day enrollment and census enrollment for online courses still increased by 3% and 5% respectively from AY2014-15 to AY2015-16. Combined summer and fall semester enrollment decreased by 1% for first-day enrollment and increased by 3% for census enrollment from AY2015-16 to AY2017. This may be due to improvements in processes and customer service instead of marketing efforts; the military partnership and email blast marketing may need more time to show a direct impact on online student enrollment.

Online Student Engagement

The decision of the college to adopt Canvas has had a major impact on the priorities of the department. In the 2015-16 academic year, the Distance Education Department made progress in or changes to its initiative to improve online student engagement as demonstrated below.

1. The department has written scripts to fix accessibility issues on the college Moodle site, including scripts to increase font size and to improve contrast ratio, which helps the visually impaired. When JavaScript is introduced to the college Moodle site to increase interaction, information processing, and control of site content, the department ensures that it does not affect accessibility (e.g., that it is device-independent). Faculty members are also required to caption their videos using DECT grant funds through the department, YouTube, or 3CMedia.

2. The department created mobile-friendly designs for the Cerro Coso course template and the KCCD template using custom JavaScript. Students and faculty have been able to enjoy the mobile-friendly designs since fall 2015.
3. The department has withdrawn its action plan to develop a Moodle 3.0 training course. Instead, the department continues to work with a faculty member on training for new online faculty that covers both Canvas and pedagogy, which will be developed using the competency-based model. Also, the department has offered the "Applying OEI Course Design Rubric" workshop by @One to faculty at the Ridgecrest location.
4. The department produced thirty-four ADA-compliant videos in support of the effort by faculty and the Student Services Department to improve online student engagement. The videos allow students to see images and scenarios and hear from experts in ways that make content more understandable and relevant.
5. The department has withdrawn its action plan to create analytical reports in Moodle. Instead, the department will create these reports in Canvas and is in the process of creating department-specific analytics reports.
6. Camtasia, ConferNow, and Articulate Studios were identified as technology tools that can enrich online student engagement. Camtasia and Articulate Studios are being utilized by at least five faculty members. ConferNow is integrated with Canvas, so its usage has been more widespread since the Canvas adoption in fall 2016, and faculty have been introducing it to each other.

Streamline Distance Education Operational Processes

During academic year 2015-16, the Distance Education Department collaborated with the IT Director, Facility Manager, and LRC Coordinator in its Streamline Distance Education Operational Processes initiative. As a result of the collaborations, the department has:

1. Installed a workstation in its office area. Five faculty members have already utilized the workstation equipment.
2. Identified Proctorio as a vendor to optimize online students' proctoring needs and determined that the college will use an in-house online tutoring service integrated with all Canvas courses. So far, eight students (86 sessions) have utilized the online tutoring service, and 12 courses have implemented Proctorio in year 2016.

In regard to WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA) membership, the California legislature did not approve the state joining W-SARA in June 2016, which would have permitted the college to enroll out-of-state students without approval from the individual states. If California joins W-SARA in the future, the college will budget for the membership to join W-SARA. Currently, to remain compliant with the regulations, the college has determined that it will offer online programs only to residents of those states and territories where it has authorization. The department has added text to the college website to inform out-of-state students about the restrictions. The department is also working with the A&R Department to automatically prevent residents of unauthorized states from registering for courses or unregister them if they do register.

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Prepare the College and Online Courses for the OEI's Online Course Exchange

Action Plan:

1. Gain appropriate stakeholder approvals for the college to adopt the OEI's Online Course Exchange program.
2. Collaborate with the Faculty Chair to recruit faculty with qualifying online courses to participate in the exchange.
3. Collaborate with Cerro Coso POCR faculty to educate faculty who are planning on participating in the online course exchange about the application and course review feedback processes.
4. Collaborate with the Director of A&R and Financial Aid and Director of Counseling to establish/align business processes for seamless registration and transfer of courses across colleges.
5. Collaborate with KCCD IT to ensure technology-based mechanisms are in place to carry out business processes.
6. Train faculty about the OEI Course Design Rubric, copyright law, FERPA, and accessibility laws to ensure that potential Exchange courses meet the OEI's adopted standards.

7. Offer Cerro Coso's approved online courses in the Exchange.

Measure of Success:

Gain approval of Cerro Coso online courses into the OEI's Online Course Exchange Program.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education, Director of A&R and Financial Aid, Director of Counseling, Cerro Coso POCR Faculty, Faculty Chairs (Steve Rogers, Lisa Fuller, Jarrod Bowen, Matthew Jones, Matthew Crow, etc.)

It directly addresses a college Strategic Goal or Objective

Strategic Goal #3: Access - Optimize Student Enrollment

Develop College Accessibility Plan for Online Courses

Action Plan:

1. Collaborate with the Director of ACCESS Programs to assess accessibility issues for online courses.
2. Determine the scope of the plan.
3. Research Regulations 504 and 508 to ensure the college can meet the accessibility requirements under these two laws in the online environment.
4. Offer resources to faculty to make their online course content accessible or provide accommodations.
5. Provide resources to students to make online course content accessible.
6. Establish college best practices on accommodation and accessibility.
7. Write a college accessibility plan.
8. Gain approval of stakeholders for implementation.
9. Implement the plan.

Measure of Success:

A college accessibility plan for online courses.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education and Director of ACCESS Programs

It directly addresses a college Strategic Goal or Objective

Strategic Goal #5: Organization Effectiveness - Meet and Exceed Internal and External Standards and Requirements

Promote the Use of Classroom Salon in Online Courses

Action Plan:

1. Discuss the potential use of Classroom Salon with faculty chairs and individual faculty.
2. Provide training in Classroom Salon to faculty.
3. Help faculty use Classroom Salon in their online courses.
4. Ask faculty to present the usage of Classroom Salon at the college Flex Day and Lunch-n-Learn sessions.

Measure of Success:

At least 10% of online sections using Classroom Salon for the academic year.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

It directly addresses a college Strategic Goal or Objective

Strategic Goal #1: Student Success - Student Engagement

Resource Needs

Facilities

N/A

Information Technology

N/A

Marketing

The Distance Education Department would like to adopt several marketing strategies to increase online course enrollment in academic year 2017-18, including ad purchases in military magazines and on Google and Facebook.

Professional Development

The department would like to present at an online education conference. The budget request is for the travel and attendance of two presenters. Also, the Educational Media Design Specialist is requesting to attend an online conference as part of his professional development.

Additionally, the department would like to request funds for Instructional Tech Council (ITC) and California Community College Distance Education Coordinators' Organization (CCCDECO) memberships. The ITC provides webinars that would benefit faculty in online course development, on topics like copyright, ADA compliance, instructional technologies, assessment, and online pedagogies. The CCCDECO membership will provide the college the opportunity to connect with the California Community College Distance Education community.

Furthermore, the department would like to request an annual budget to support summer training for faculty teaching their first online courses, which was recommended by the PedTech committee and approved by the Academic Senate.

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: