

Distance Education Department

ASP for Academic Year 2023-2024

November 2022

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

The Distance Education Department has established the DSPS, first generation, economically disadvantage, African American, and Hispanic populations as target populations for narrowing performance and equity gaps. In the past few years, the department undertook several initiatives to support these targeted online populations. Some of the initiatives were unsuccessful, but others provided more precise direction for the department regarding optimal methods to support online students. For the next academic year, the department will attempt to narrow the performance and equity gaps with three initiatives: scaling existing web applications and developing new ones, developing and promoting the Course Accessibility Manual, and analyzing current DEIA strategies and applications to develop dashboard(s) for the online environment.

Last Year's Initiatives

Develop Equity Plan for Distance Education

The Distance Education Department discussed developing a Distance Education Equity Plan with the Pedtech Committee in the academic year 2020-21. Then, in mid-2021, the department collaborated with the Institutional Research Department to understand performance trends in the online student population by ethnicity, income, age, and disability. This provided statistical data to present in meetings about the plan with the heads of Marketing, ESCC campus, KRV campus, Student Outreach, CTE, Liberal Arts, Career Center, Library, and Tutoring. More importantly, the department recruited help from other departments to

produce a draft Distance Education Plan, which awaits feedback from the Pedtech Committee before presenting it to the Senate. Thus far, the KRV campus, Marketing, and Student Outreach have already implemented the strategies they committed to in the draft plan. Additionally, the Distance Education Department has started building applications to support some of the strategies in the plan.

Develop CVC-Course-Design Rubric-Based Canvas Templates

In previous years, the Distance Education Department proposed Canvas template changes to the Senate to vote on, as all college Canvas courses had to be uniform, instead of providing template options for individuals to choose. However, after various discussions with the Pedtech Committee, the department came to understand that the optimal approach to adopting any Canvas template is to make it an optional tool available in all Canvas courses, whether individual faculty decide to use it or not. With this in mind, the department found several templates in Canvas Commons that align with the CVC course design rubric. As a next step, the department plans to build a Canvas template LTI that enables faculty to choose various templates that align with the rubric. The department is currently completing the infrastructure to allow for the development of advanced LTI applications. It plans to make this LTI available to faculty to pilot in Fall 2023.

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

Following the sectional plan initiative, the Distance Education Department successfully developed the college's first Canvas in-house LTI using previously written web-based Annual Unit Planning scripts. As part of achieving this goal, the department accomplished the following:

- Provided just-in-time training to its web developer on Canvas LTI development, database development, and application programming interfaces (APIs).
- Created an environment where the web developer could learn, test, and apply real-world scripts, databases, and APIs.
- Collaborated with KCCD IT and Cerro Coso IT on creating a virtual server space where Cerro Coso can develop and host databases and web applications such as LTIs. In the first quarter of 2022, KCCD IT installed and configured two Apache servers on the KCCD AWS server for college use.

In the same period, the department also started developing a second LTI, to be launched in the first quarter of 2023.

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Scale Existing and Develop New Web Applications (Continuation)

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

The department will take the following steps in the development of web applications such as LTIs:

- Review existing web applications, CAMS, Canvas Templates, and Popup Messaging to ensure scaling is not required. If scaling is needed, refactor and rewrite code to achieve greater efficiency.
- Assess the potential integration of the CAMS application with Canvas and Tableau, and initiate implementation if KCCD IT approves.
- Research and identify opportunity gaps in web applications. Discuss gaps and opportunities with stakeholders, then develop a new web application(s) that will help the college implement DEIA strategies in Canvas.

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s):

Meet with the KCCD and Cerro Coso IT departments about integration of CAMS with Tableau and Canvas. Discuss with the Instructional and Student Service units, Marketing and IR departments, CIC, Outcomes, Local POOR, and Pedtech Committees to improve understanding of their challenges in serving online students.

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

No

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s):

- Complete the refactoring and rewriting of existing applications such as CAMS, Canvas Templates, and Popup Messaging.
- Complete the CAMS application integration with Canvas and Tableau if approved by KCCD IT.
- Complete initial project timelines for designing and developing the new application(s).

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a gap in student equity, It addresses a Guided Pathways practice, It addresses a Strategic Plan goal or objective, It addresses a Student Equity and Achievement Plan goal

Develop and Promote Course Accessibility Manual

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

No

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

The department will take the following steps to develop and promote the Course Accessibility Manual:

- Take accessibility training from CommonLooks and @One, CCC Accessibility Center, and WebAims to identify their interpretation and approach to WCAG 2.0 standards. Then, select the most prevalent standards to add to Cerro Coso's Course Accessibility Manual. Finally, adopt the established standards when reviewing course accessibility issues for the POCR review process and the Canvas course accessibility check.
- Update UDOIT to version 3.x, then add in-house scripts that will allow the department to add and promote accessibility information, such as Cerro Coso's available training schedule, DSPS information, and on-demand tutorial videos, within the UDOIT application.

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s):

Meet with DSPS staff to understand the types of DSPS information they want to see in the UDOIT application. Gain feedback from faculty on navigating the UDOIT tool to know where to add Cerro Coso's available training schedule, DSPS information, and on-demand tutorial videos in the UDOIT application.

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

No

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s):

- Complete Cerro Coso's Course Accessibility Manual.
- Complete installation of UDOIT 3.x version that has Cerro Coso's available training schedule, DSPS information, and on-demand tutorial videos within the UDOIT tool.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a gap in student equity, It addresses a Strategic Plan goal or objective, It addresses a Student Equity and Achievement Plan goal

Analyze Recent DEIA Strategies and Applications to Develop Dashboard(s)

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

The department will take the following steps to analyze and improve on the recently developed and implemented DEIA strategies and applications:

- Gather application usage statistics to set tracking data points, then build dashboards for existing application(s). Analyze quantitative and qualitative data on the implemented DEIA strategies to gain deeper insight into the effectiveness of techniques and processes, then make appropriate changes.
- Use student performance outcomes to drive strategy changes and application development. Share findings with stakeholders.

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s):

- Completed the data collection and analysis on application(s) and DEIA strategies.

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

No

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s):

- Make changes to application(s) or DEIA strategies wherever appropriate.
- Build application dashboard(s).

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a gap in student equity, It addresses a Strategic Plan goal or objective, It addresses a Student Equity and Achievement Plan goal

Resource Needs

Facilities

N/A

Information Technology

N/A

Marketing

N/A

Professional Development

As a professional development goal, the department would like to offer personnel opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies by attending conferences:

- The Online Teacher Conference (\$1,500 for Director of Distance Education to attend) is an annual online education conference hosted by CCC TechConnect in Long Beach, CA.
- InstructureCon (\$4,500 for Director of Distance Education and Canvas Web Developer to attend) is an annual Canvas conference hosted by the owner of Canvas in Denver, CO.

Additionally, the department would like to continue its request of an annual budget of \$2,100 to support the summer training for faculty teaching their first online courses, a training that aligns with Title 5 Distance Education regulations and has been recommended by the Pedtech Committee and approved by the Academic Senate.

Other Needs

The department is requesting the following purchases in order of priority:

- Labster (\$850 for 57 licenses) is a virtual lab and science simulation tool. Two science faculty members would like to request it for their online courses.
- VisibleBody (\$3,800 for 95 licenses) is a virtual anatomy educational tool. Two science faculty members would like to request it for their online courses.
- Blackboard Ally (\$6,300 for an institutional licensing subscription) is an accessibility checker that gives faculty insight into the overall accessibility of their Canvas content and suggests solutions to resolve accessibility issues in their Canvas pages, Microsoft documents, and PDFs. Additionally, the tool acts as a screen reader and generates an alternative format for the disabled.
- Pronto (\$6,600 for an institutional subscription) is an instant messaging tool to help faculty and students connect informally or formally via chat and video. The messaging tool is accessible by mobile or desktop, making it convenient for student engagement and interaction with faculty and classmates.
- Allyant PDF (formerly CommonLook, \$1,880 for 2 licenses) is an accessibility tool that enables users to produce high-quality, error-free PDF documents compliant with the WCAG 2.0 standards. It is used by the remediation service company that currently produces the college's complex accessible PDF documents. The Distance Education Department tested it using CommonLook's 30-day trial, and can confirm that CommonLook/Allyant PDF is a powerful, time-saving tool for correcting tagging order, tables, lists, contents, and structures that move between pages.

The budget estimates for the tools include inflation and price increase.

Also, the department would like to request an annual budget of \$6,000 to support the POCR review of ten liberal arts course sections and ten CTE course sections.

Staffing Requests Not Already Listed In Unit Plans

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

2000 Category - Classified Staff

Canvas Web Developer

Location:

CC Online

Salary Grade:

51.5

Number of Months:

12

Number of Hours per Week:

40

Salary Amount:

Justification:

The current Canvas web developer in the Distance Education Department divides her time between supporting faculty and students with Canvas technical issues and accessibility issues and developing tutorial videos and web applications for both Canvas and the CAMS project. Unfortunately, this workload and juggling of tasks can sometimes lead to losing focus on web application development projects. Therefore, the department is requesting another web developer to provide additional support in developing and maintaining web-based educational applications that enhance the student and faculty experience in the online environment. In addition, the new web developer position could help faculty address Canvas course accessibility issues. The department would like someone in the position to have experience writing client-side script (e.g. CSS, HTML, and javascript) and server-side codes (e.g. PHP programming language); designing relational databases; and installing API connections. It is also preferred that the person have knowledge of WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards.