

Distance Education Department

ASP for Academic Year 2025-2026

November 2024

Description Of Section

Connection to College Mission

The Distance Education (DE) Department at Cerro Coso Community College partners with faculty, staff, and administrators to advance the college's mission. Together, they provide students with a flexible and alternative pathway to academic success through quality distance learning courses enriched by modern technology. Aligned with the college's strategic goals of maximizing student success, increasing access, and closing equity gaps, the collaborative efforts of the department contribute significantly to the college's standing as a leader in online education among California's community colleges. By meeting the expectations of faculty and students alike, the department pioneers innovative technological solutions and efficient services. It empowers faculty to seamlessly integrate distance learning technologies and instructional methods into the college's learning management system, ensuring the delivery of accredited online degree and credential programs. Through ongoing collaboration, continual enhancement, and a student-centered approach, the department strives to make a meaningful impact within the online education community while advancing the broader mission of the college. Continuous assessment of service effectiveness and compliance with regulations highlights the department's unwavering commitment.

Review And Planning

Performance and Equity Gaps Still to be Addressed

The department recognizes that closing equity and performance gaps requires sustained, multi-year efforts. An analysis of the updated data shows positive trends for economically disadvantaged students, though challenges persist. Success rates for economically disadvantaged students have risen steadily from 64% in AY2019-20 to 71% in AY2023-24, a 7% improvement over five years. This increase exceeds the growth in success rates for non-economically disadvantaged students, which rose from 72% to 78% over the same period. However, the success rate gap between the two groups remains at 7%, reflecting the continued need for focused interventions.

Completion rates for economically disadvantaged students also improved, rising from 81% in AY2019-20 to 87% in AY2023-24. This growth narrowed the gap with their non-economically disadvantaged counterparts, whose completion rates have remained consistently high at 89% since AY2020-21. While the gap in completion rates decreased slightly, from 3% to 2%, economically disadvantaged students continue to face challenges that require attention.

Table 1.0: Distance Education Student Population by Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup

Student Characteristic and Performance Type	AY2019-20	AY2020-21	AY2021-22	AY2022-23	AY2023-24
Economically Disadvantaged -	64%	66%	68%	67%	71%

Success Rate					
Economically Disadvantage - Completion Rate	81%	82%	84%	84%	87%
Not Economically Disadvantaged - Success Rate	72%	78%	77%	75%	78%
Not Economically Disadvantage - Completion Rate	84%	89%	88%	89%	89%

Note: Data Excludes Student with Fraud Hold and Include Excused Withdrawals

The improvement in success rates for economically disadvantaged students, particularly in AY2023-24, is encouraging and suggests that existing efforts may be having a positive impact. However, the ongoing gaps in both success and completion rates highlight the need for continued and enhanced support. The Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) online program pathways remain a key strategy for the online courses, reducing financial barriers by offering free, high-quality educational resources. These pathways are being developed and implemented in Child Development, English and Foreign Languages, Business and Paralegal Studies and Allied Health departments, to ensure greater access and equity in the online programs.

Last Year's Initiatives

Scale Existing and Develop New Web Applications (Continuation)

The department has made progress in this initiative. After assessing existing applications such as CAMS, Canvas Templates, and Popup Messaging, it was determined that adopting a hybrid microservices architecture would enhance scalability while maintaining the stability of the current codebase. To implement this approach, the department has started refactoring the CAMS project code and introduced new features to the Popup LTI, such as the ability to target messages to specific populations, including as first-generation and first-year students in Canvas courses. Also, the department has soft-launched the "Proposer" feature in the Popup LTI, enabling college message proposers to independently create messages without needing

the Popup LTI developer's help.

New LTI developments, including the Canvas Footer LTI and POCR LTI, are also being built using the hybrid microservices architecture, ensuring immediate scalable.

As part of the effort to scale existing applications and create new ones, the department successfully implemented TabPy. TabPy facilitates the integration of Python scripts with Tableau, enabling the college to connect Cerro Coso databases and Canvas API endpoints. This integration permits the ability to visualize and analyze intersectional data from Canvas and Cerro Coso databases with Banner data within Tableau.

The hybrid microservices architecture adoption, along with the improvements to existing applications and the development of new tool, demonstrates the collaborative effort involving various stakeholders. These include the KCCD IT team, student services departments, the IR director, the POCR co-chairs, and ZTC faculty coordinators. By establishing a standard process for developing and enhancing in-house application, this initiative will transition into a routine part of departmental operations, completing this initiative.

Develop and Promote Course Accessibility Manual

During the past academic year, all DE department staff completed the necessary training to qualify as POCR accessibility reviewers, including courses from CommonLook, @ONE, the CCC Accessibility Center, and WebAIM. Currently, two team members are actively reviewing POCR courses, and a third is being mentored to start reviewing in Spring 2025.

Following the training, the team collaborated to establish clear accessibility standards for course reviews, leading to the creation of a "POCR Practice Narratives & Feedback of Section D (Accessibility)" document. This document now provides faculty with targeted, constructive accessibility feedback during POCR reviews. Instead of developing a comprehensive manual on accessibility standards, which might go unused by faculty or DE staff, a practical document was created to connect accessibility best practices directly to course accessibility issues, making the guidance more relevant and actionable. This document has been used to review seven courses since its development in AY2023-24.

This approach supports consistent communication on accessibility standards across reviews. To enhance the POCR process further, a POCR LTI is being developed to integrate this accessibility feedback document. Custom scripts have been developed within UDOIT LTI, the accessibility checker and fixer tool, to inform faculty of resources such as Cerro Coso's training schedule, DSPS information, and tutorial videos, with plans for further UDOIT integration with POCR LTI to streamline accessibility support to faculty.

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

To improve departmental operations and resource allocation, the DE Department conducted a comprehensive assessment of its services as part of its first-ever program review. This review analyzed five years of data, from AY2018-19 to AY2022-23, focusing on trends and patterns in distance education sections, enrollment, headcounts, and comparisons with traditional course offerings, along with other departmental metrics. The department also evaluated its DEIA strategies and practices as part of this process.

The program review led to the development of the department's first formal administrative unit outcomes, along with two-year and five-year goals guided by data-informed decision-making. These goals will serve as the foundation for section plans in the coming years, driving departmental initiatives until the next program review. With the completion of the program review, the initiative to analyze data is considered achieved. By including the integration of Cerro Coso databases, such as Banner and Canvas, with Tableau as part of its two-year program review goals and upcoming section plan, the foundation for data-driven decision-making and DEIA dashboards will be firmly established.

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Implement the ZTC Implementation and Acceleration Grants (Continuation)

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

No

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

To successfully complete the obligations of the ZTC Implementation and Acceleration Grants, the following actions must be completed by Fall 2026.

1. Develop and launch OER Repository LTI.
2. Complete POER certification for ZTC program pathways, including the English degree program, four Child Development certificate programs, the Child Development degree program, and the Social and Human Services Certificate program.
3. Establish and offer four ZTC Child Development certificate program pathways by Fall 2025. By Fall 2026, begin offering the ZTC English degree program pathway, the ZTC Child Development degree program pathway, and the ZTC Social and Human Services program pathway.
4. Develop and implement POER LTI to track progress, collect data, and report outcomes to meet grant requirements.
5. Submit progress and final grant reports in NOVA.

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

Beginning in September 2023, the Distance Education Department collaborated with the ZTC Faculty Coordinators to implement the ZTC Implementation and Acceleration Grants. Early key indicators of the grants' successful implementation will include the development and launch of the POER LTI and the completion of the core courses within each of the ZTC program pathway by the end of Fall 2025.

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

No

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

The initiative goal will be completed with the successful launch of ZTC program pathways, including the first ZTC POER-certified course under the ZTC Implementation grant in Fall 2025, and the first ZTC POER-certified courses under the ZTC Acceleration grants in Fall 2026.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education and ZTC Faculty Coordinators

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a Strategic Plan goal or objective (reminder to the right), It addresses a gap in student equity, It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment, It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy, It addresses an accreditation Quality Focus action item, It addresses a Guided Pathways practice

Develop Tableau Dashboard(s) with Canvas Data (Continuation)**Is this part of a multiyear initiative?**

No

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

To develop Tableau dashboards that visualize and connect from various Cerro Coso databases, Banner and Canvas, the department will take the following steps:

1. Collaborate with IR to obtain stakeholder permission regarding which Canvas data can be used for intersectional analysis.

2. Work with IR to design the dashboard with metric-based visualizations, making sure to include interactive features.
3. Write Python scripts for Tableau. The scripts will help connect Canvas API endpoints with Banner and other Cerro Coso databases.
4. Test the script, validate data accuracy, and if successful, give IR department permission to deploy the Python script.

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

In AY2024-25, the department began connecting some of the databases on the Cerro Coso server with Tableau. The successful integration of these databases with Tableau allows for intersectional analysis in combination with Banner data, providing insights into which additional databases or Canvas data might also be valuable to connect.

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

Yes

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

The successful launch of the Tableau dashboard with Canvas data would complete the initiative goal.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a Strategic Plan goal or objective (reminder to the right), It addresses a gap in student equity, It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy

Switch the College's Web-Based Applications From PHP to Python

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

All current and future in-house LTIs and web-based applications will be written in Python for backend scripting. To transition existing PHP applications, the department will take the following steps:

1. Develop a detailed plan for transitioning the CAMS and the Popup application from PHP to Python.
2. Rewrite the backend business logic for both the CAMS and the Popup application, reimplementing database interactions using appropriate Python libraries.
3. Update the frontend scripts as needed, include REACT if required, and ensure they connect seamlessly with the new Python backend.
4. Test then launch the Python-based versions of the CAMS and Popup applications.

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

In AY24-25, the department began transitioning backend scripts from PHP to Python, starting with the Annual Unit Planning (AUP) LTI and ensuring all new applications are written in Python. The successful migration of the AUP will offer insights into the time required for the CAMS and Popup transitions.

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

No

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

The successful migration of the CAMS and Popup applications to Python would complete the initiative goal.

Person Responsible:

Director of Distance Education

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

Other. Explain below

The department is transition in-house LTIs and applications from PHP to Python to standardize backend scripting. This shift ensures scalability, improved performance, and alignment with future technological advancements, particularly as the department explores developing tools for mobile platforms.

Resource Needs

Facilities

N/A

Information Technology

N/A

Marketing

N/A

Professional Development

The department would like to request for travel budget to attend the Online Teacher Conference (\$1,500 for Director of Distance Education to attend), an annual online education event hosted by CCC TechConnect CA. 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:

- Two science faculty members to request licenses for VisibleBody, a virtual anatomy educational tool costing \$4,000 for 100 licenses, intended for integration into their online courses.
- Pronto, an instant messaging tool facilitating informal or formal faculty-student connections through chat and video, is requested. Priced at \$7,500 for an institutional subscription, it offers accessibility via both mobile and desktop, enhancing student engagement with faculty, college staff, and classmates.

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:

Section Plan Budget Worksheet for Distance Education - FY25

F	Fund	Org Description	Account Description	Program Title	Activity	L	2024		2025		2026	Notes	Increase?	If requesting increase of %5 or more			
							Adopted Budget	Actual Expenses	Adopted Budget	Request				In planning document	Data?	Relevance?	Operational Efficiency?
GU001	Director of Distance Learning	Acad Emp-Inst Non-Cont Stipend/Othr	Other Education		CL		\$ 8,100.00	\$ -	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 2,100.00							
GU001	Director of Distance Learning	Acad Emp - Non-Inst Non Cont	Instnl Support/Academic Admin	CTL001	CI		\$ -	\$ 2,100.00									
GU001	Director of Distance Learning	Non-Inst Supplies & Materials	Instnl Support/Academic Admin		CI		\$ -	\$ 93.13									
GU001	Director of Distance Learning	Employee Travel	Instnl Support/Academic Admin		CI		\$ -	\$ 471.86	\$ -								
GU001	Director of Distance Learning	Employee Travel	Instnl Support/Academic Admin		CL				\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00							
GU001	Director of Distance Learning	Software Licensing/Maintenance Svcs	Instnl Support/Academic Admin		CL		\$ 19,430.00	\$ -									
LR001	Director of Distance Learning	Software Licensing/Maintenance Svcs	Other Education		CI		\$ -	\$ 10,075.48									
LR001	Director of Distance Learning	Software Licensing/Maintenance Svcs	Other Education		CL				\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,500.00		Last year, the increase in cost of Pronto subscription exceeded what I had budgeted. The additional \$500 is planned in anticipation of further cost increases due to inflation or FETEs increase. VisibleBody will maintain the cost. of their tool at the same price as this academic year.					
Resource Requests																	
Type of request		1 time or ongoing?										description/explanation		In planning document		Data?	
Other																Relevance?	
																Operational Efficiency?	