Program Review Reflect Form -   Hybrid

Program Name: **Online Education**

Program Review Year: **2016-17**

Program Performance

Analysis/Discussion:

In fall 2016/spring 2017, MiraCosta College offered 688 distance education (DE) course sections, 22.9% of MCC FTES were from DE, 53.0% of MCC students took at least one DE class, and 18.1% of MCC students took only DE classes. All of these numbers continue a steady upward trend, as DE classes play an ever-more critical role at MiraCosta. MiraCosta continues to be a regional and statewide leader in both the absolute amount of DE enrollments and the portion DE represents within the overall enrollment mix. According to CCCCO Datamart, for 2016-17, MiraCosta had 21,416 DE enrollments, accounting for 27.1% of all enrollments. Just five California Community Colleges exceeded MiraCosta in both absolute DE enrollments and percentage of enrollment attributable to DE (Coastline, Foothill, Saddleback, San Joaquin Delta, and West LA).

According to Program Review data, the WSCH/FTEF ratio for DE sections exceeds that of non-DE: 482 vs. 391 (a similar gap has existed for at least the last several years). This demonstrates both the student demand and the administrative appeal of DE. Balancing that, however, are lower success (66% vs. 74%) and retention rates (79% vs. 85%) in DE vs. non-DE. Compared to statewide Datamart data, MiraCosta's 2016-17 DE success rates are slightly ahead (66% vs. 65%), but retention rates are somewhat behind (80% vs. 82%). In 2016-17, MiraCosta was among 11 California Community Colleges with DE enrollment of over 18,000 and DE representing over 18% of all enrollments. MiraCosta's DE success rate is third best among these, and its retention rate is 9th best.

Program review data raises equity concerns about DE gaps for some populations. DE outcomes of Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino populations, with success rates of 50.1% and 59.7%, respectively, are well behind the 70.5% success rate for White and 75.5% for Asian. This is in line with state and national research indicating on-ground achievement gaps between different community college populations are often exacerbated online. DE access data also reveals equity concerns, with Hispanic/Latino population representing about 38% of on-ground enrollment but 34% of DE enrollment, and for males in general with 46% of on-ground enrollment but just 32% of DE enrollment.

The CCCCO resumed its systemwide DE student satisfaction survey in spring 2017 - this was last done in 2014. The CCCCO also conducted a DE faculty satisfaction survey in spring 2017. MiraCosta participated in both surveys but has yet to receive the results.

The Online Ed program continues to be held in high regard. Participation and satisfaction in faculty and student workshops remains very strong. MiraCosta continues as a participant in the CCC Online Education Initiative consortium, and both Online Ed staff have been involved in additional work within the OEI. The faculty director of online education is closely involved in MiraCosta's Guided Pathways work, ensuring that online education is carefully considered as the college redesigns the student experience.

The Online Ed program leads MiraCosta's engagement with DE regulations and effective practices, not only in terms of compliance but also toward continuous improvement. The 2016 accreditation visit resulted in a clean bill of health for the MiraCosta DE program (whereas over the last four accreditation cycles, 23 of 45 CCCs received some form of DE-related recommendation during accreditation). The Online Education Plan remains a vital source of guidance in supporting faculty and students participating in online education.

Program Learning Outcomes

Analysis/Discussion:

The 2015-18 Online Education Plan established the following Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) for the Online Education program:
Develop, implement, evaluate, and refine initiatives designed to improve online education access and equity at MiraCosta College.
Develop, implement, evaluate, and refine initiatives designed to improve distance education class and program success and retention.
Develop, implement, evaluate, and refine initiatives designed to improve student and faculty satisfaction with online education.
Develop, implement, evaluate, and refine initiatives designed to ensure compliance with government regulations and accreditor expectations with regard to distance education.

Several examples of projects undertaken during 2016-17 intended to address one or more of these SAOs follow.

The current Online Education Plan includes an outcome of a program supporting faculty in the use of Open Educational Resources (OER). Research increasingly is showing that use of OER can positively impact student access, success, satisfaction, and equity (SAOs 1, 2, and 3). In 2016-17, MiraCosta won three state grants totalling around $150,000 to support expansion in the use of OER and Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) materials. A task force led by the faculty director of online education has been formed for 2017-18 to guide this ongoing work, including additional grant-seeking, implementation of ZTC programs, and compliance with SB 1359, which requires that ZTC classes are denoted in the online class schedule.

Another project was the development of the MiraCosta Guidelines for Departments: Preparation of Online Faculty. The MiraCosta Online Educators committee developed this document and the Academic Senate approved it in spring 2017. It addresses the Online Education Plan outcome of "guidelines for online teaching assignment," and helps make clear the minimum expectations of faculty preparedness that departments should have when making online teaching assignments. Faculty preparation for online teaching is a matter that affects all four of the SAOs above.

The MiraCosta Online Educators group also undertook a project in 2016-17 to improve response rates of student evaluations of instructors of online classes. This helps address the Online Education Plan outcome of "specific procedures for online class evaluation by students" and can enable better data about student satisfaction and factors related to student success and retention (SAOs 2 and 3). Several evaluation tools were identified and reviewed; one was piloted during summer 2017. The district as a whole is now reconsidering its evaluation tool for all classes and has incorporated the findings of this project into that effort.

Finally, the ongoing effort in support of the transition to Canvas is critical to SAOs 1, 2, and 3 especially. A Canvas Transition Team was established, consisting of several faculty provided with reassigned time to offer various avenues of faculty support. These range from targeted workshops to 4-week online learning opportunities, as well as creation of resources for faculty to use independently. Attendance at Canvas-focused flex workshops in spring 2016 and fall 2017 totalled nearly 850, and 93 faculty have completed the 4-week online Introduction to Teaching with Canvas class.

Program Performance - Service Area

Analysis/Discussion:

No additional service areas.

Program Resources

Analysis/Discussion:

The department is housed in the Teaching/Technology Innovation Center (TIC), OC 1253. The area includes two offices for Online Ed staff; a small lab with four workstations, scanners, printer, phone, office supplies, and small meeting table; and a larger meeting space (1253B) with smart classroom capabilities and a microphone system for simulcasting meetings online. 1253B also includes equipment storage, laptops, and two specialized workstations (one in a soundbooth) for faculty and staff to use in creating instructional materials. 1253B may be reserved via 25Live. AIS updated nearly all workstations as well as the smart classroom control system in 2014-15. Online Education collaborated with AIS to purchase replacement laptops for the room in 2017.

Online Ed has tools to help faculty experiment and innovate; this includes iPads, an Android tablet, a Chromebook, and several small netbooks. At present the checkout of this equipment is managed through a paper-based system; eventually these tools should be more widely promoted and managed online.

Ever since the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was proposed in MiraCosta's strategic plan, the Faculty Director of Online Education has advocated for co-locating or integrating the TIC with the CTL. Over the last year, a plan has been formed between the Office of Instruction and PDP, in collaboration with Online Ed, to do just that. Ultimately, it is hoped a new facility will be developed as part of bond-related construction, but for now a plan is in place to update the TIC space in summer 2018 to become the CTL. Online Ed will continue to collaborate via Program Review, other budgeting and planning processes, and facility/operations to ensure this effort is successful.

The Online Education website (http://tic.miracosta.edu) is a valued, useful source of information and tutorial resources, especially so in support of the Canvas transition. The Online Course Schedule enables faculty to provide important information about DE courses that cannot be included in SURF or print schedules. Faculty and students continue to underutilize this resource; the new student orientation to online learning helps students learn about it; the Online Education program sends personal reminders to DE faculty to update this.

Online Education (in conjunction with AIS) supports resources enabling MiraCosta's online learning environment to remain current and innovative. By summer 2018, Canvas will be the sole course management system used in classes; Blackboard and Moodle will be retired. Important work remains to ensure all faculty are prepared for this transition, and to ensure that we properly move away from Blackboard and Moodle, yet retain access that may be required. Additional tools include: Respondus, for managing question pools for online tests; Turnitin, supporting plagiarism prevention and effective grading and feedback of written work; and CCC Confer and ConferNow, web conferencing tools. A pilot last year of VoiceThread revealed that faculty did not find it to be a necessity and its use has been discontinued. A pilot of PlayPosit, a tool for creating assessments within videos for use within the course management system, is continuing on a limited basis. Exploration this year of tools such as ARC and TechSmith Relay in the Cloud is important if we wish to scale this type of functionality more widely; this is also important as the current hosted TechSmith Relay tool is outdated and no longer fully functional.

As the Online Education Initiative progresses, it is important to determine which tools and resources provided by the OEI should be considered for use at MiraCosta. NetTutor, an online tutoring provider, is currently available for any of our online classes and has been piloted in some classes which do not have online tutoring available through the Western eTutoring Consortium. Proctorio enables computer-based online proctoring and security for high-stakes online assignments, but has not been used yet at MiraCosta.

Program Personnel

Analysis/Discussion:

The Online Education staff consists of the Faculty Director of Online Education (FDOE) and a classified Faculty Technology Specialist (FTS) (likely to be renamed as Online Instructional Technologist). The budget for Online Ed includes sufficient funds for travel and professional development opportunities. This enabled the FTS and FDOE to again attend and present at important regional and national conferences, as well as supporting the attendance of about 12 faculty at the Online Teaching Conference in June. Both the FTS and FDOE also actively participate in online learning opportunities such as webinars and professional communities connected by listservs, discussion groups, and social media. The FDOE is an active participant in MiraCosta Flex activities and the FTS and FDOE each offer numerous Flex workshops as well, increasingly online in order to reach more participants and to capture archives for ongoing availability. The FDOE also builds and maintains professional networks with other CCC DE Coordinators through monthly meetings and online communications of the OEI Consortium, the SDICCCA DE committee, and the statewide CCC DE Coordinators organization.

It has been anticipated for some time that Online Education will need to expand to include a professional instructional designer. At present both the FDOE and FTS can and do provide some instructional design support to interested faculty, though the FTS's expertise is primarily technical, and the FDOE's time is limited in offering 1-1 support to faculty. Pilot efforts providing Instructional Design support for faculty proved fruitful in 2014-15 and 2015-16. Recruiting volunteer faculty for the 2015-16 project resulted in far more interest than could be accommodated. And the 2014-15 project was presented at a fall 2015 Flex workshop attended by 23 faculty; at the close of the workshop, a poll was taken of how many in attendance would be interested in having the support of an instructional designer; everyone present raised their hand.

The Online Ed 2014-15 Program Review included a plan for an instructional design position. This was not funded, but widespread support for this position continued to be acknowledged, particularly given increasing needs to support the Canvas transition, interest in the use of Open Educational Resources, and significant challenges in ensuring that online education materials and tools are fully accessible to students with disabilities. In 2015-16, the office of the Vice President of Instruction submitted the Instructional Designer position as a program review plan, with support from the Office of Online Education, and will do so again in this 2016-17 cycle.

In the interim, Online Education will seek to identify funding which can support temporary instructional design assistance.

Program Curriculum and Students

Analysis/Discussion:

DE curriculum is subject to the same processes of review and approval as all curriculum at MiraCosta. The Faculty Director of Online Education is a permanent member of the Courses & Programs Committee (CPC). This helps ensure that DE issues are thoroughly considered in the approval of courses and programs.

As noted in the first section, program review data shows that 18.1% of MiraCosta's headcount in 2016-17 was comprised of students taking only DE courses. Research needs to be done to learn more about this population, but the existence of this significant portion of DE-only MiraCosta students raises curricular questions. Should more programs be made available completely via DE? Do we need to look more closely at systematically offering DE courses such that programs could viably be completed via DE? The Online Education Plan includes an action plan for establishing comprehensive fully online education programs; MOE worked with the research office in 2016-17 to obtain data on programs MiraCosta is offering that, based on DE class offerings, could at least in theory be completed entirely via DE. 15 such programs were identified. Next, we need to determine whether deans and departments believe that these programs should have DE completion "pathways" that are promoted and supported. If so, it points to a need for rethinking the way DE is promoted in general at MiraCosta. This analysis is important in the coming year, both in the context of fulfilling the current Online Education Plan, and in the context of the efforts to redesign the student experience associated with the implementation of Guided Pathways.

Demographics of MiraCosta students enrolled in at least one DE course in 2016-17 mostly mirror the on-ground MiraCosta population (within 2.5 percentage points), with a few minor distinctions. A smaller portion of first-time college students take DE compared to on-ground classes (26% vs. 31%). Representation of females is higher among DE students (64% vs. 55%) with a corresponding smaller portion of DE students who are male (35% vs. 44%). 18-20 year-olds comprise 34% of on-ground students but only 27% of DE students. Hispanics are slightly less represented among DE students compared to on-ground (34% vs. 37%).

As mentioned in the first section, it is important to conduct additional research to learn more about the performance of students in various demographic groups across various DE modalities, as well as to undertake research on the effects of different approaches to supporting student success, not just in general, but especially with regard to particular demographic groups that have achievement gaps which show up or are magnified in DE courses. The Online Education Plan calls for regular evaluation of online programs, resources, and support services to improve student satisfaction, equity, retention, and success.