

Intro/Abstract

Where are we now?

In 2008, Cañada's Technology Advisory Committee was formed. Their mission included a goal to "utilize technology to improve teaching and learning, enhance accessibility, improve communications, and deliver instruction in a variety of modalities," but the focus of the committee was to improve and secure technology across the campus (see, Cañada Technology Plan, 2009). In Spring 2010, the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CIETL) was developed, with a focus on professional development, teaching practices, teaching assessments, and student success. In line with CIETL's mission, a subcommittee focusing on distance education, including faculty development, pedagogy and best practices, course development, and student success, was formed in Fall 2010. This committee essentially replaced the distance education component of the Technology Advisory Committee.

Cañada's Distance Education Advisory Committee (CDEAC), under CIETL's umbrella, reports to the Vice President of Instruction, and includes a chair (the dean responsible for distance education), distance education coordinator (currently a faculty position), instructional designer (faculty), a representative from the District Distance Education Committee, 3 faculty members, and 2 classified staff. The committee has been charged with developing a distance education plan that focuses on growing and strengthening our distance education initiative.

To accomplish this task, the committee first compiled a **report** assessing the current distance education practices at Cañada, within our district, and at our neighboring community colleges. Our initial findings suggested that, compared to other colleges, Cañada's distance education is in its nascent stage. While catching up seems daunting, there is great opportunity to intentionally shape distance education at Cañada using insights gained from other college's trial and error. To develop our plan, we looked at numerous distance education offerings across the state, studied our current distance education course offerings, and also carefully considered the following documents and surveys:

- Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education (ACCJC/WASC)
- Periodic Report on Distance Education and Learning (CCC Chancellor's Office)
- Distance Education Guidelines (CCC Chancellor's Office)
- Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines
- SMCCCD Distance Education Strategic Plan
- College of San Mateo's Distance Education Committee Institutional Plan—Fall 2010

- Survey of Distance Education Faculty, Spring 2011

Our findings

Course Offerings: Cañada has approved 76 courses for distance education. As of this revision we offer 28 courses in various disciplines fully online, as well as 31 hybrid courses in various subjects. The remaining 17 courses, though approved for distance delivery, have yet to be developed and implemented. Though the number of courses offered as distance education remains somewhat limited: this last year we saw an increase of (###numbers here##) in the number of courses approved for distance education and are poised to offer two AA degrees fully online in the upcoming academic year, students will have the option to complete an AA degree completely online. Students completing the AA degree online will also have the option to complete their general education requirements for transfer via online courses. We have identified two challenges for implementing our online AA degree programs. The first is the 2-unit physical education requirement. Our second challenge, one that is not exclusive to our college, is authentication. Faculty, staff, and administrators are exploring possible solutions to fulfill the physical education requirement completely online in a bona fide manner. We are also searching viable solutions to the need for authentication.

Faculty Development: There is a central core of both full time and part time faculty teaching distance education, and most also teach on campus. In February 2011, the sixteen faculty currently teaching fully online courses were surveyed to gather feedback on Cañada's distance education. All sixteen faculty members responded to the survey, with two noting they were *not* currently teaching online.

Of the fourteen remaining faculty members, only four had been through the District STOT training for online teachers. The STOT Program (Structured Training for Online Teaching) consists of preparatory seminars and hands-on workshops designed to help faculty learn to teach effectively online. Upon completing the mini-STOT workshops, faculty become eligible for (but not guaranteed the right to participate in) the STOT Program. Participation requires recommendation by a faculty member's dean or campus VPI. Records indicate 16 Cañada faculty members have completed at least the first portion of STOT. Well over half (78%) of the faculty members currently teaching online are using WebAccess, Cañada's implementation of the Learning Management System Moodle, though some augment with publisher information. More than half (64%) were interested in workshops/training on distance education learning theory and WebAccess. Five faculty members expressed interest in mentoring faculty developing their first online or hybrid course. In response to an open-ended question assessing distance education faculty, 35% reported a need for more opportunities to share ideas with other distance education faculty.

A second survey went out to all Cañada faculty members in March 2011 to gauge interest in distance education training, development of new courses, enhancement

of face-to-face courses with technology, and teaching online. Thirty faculty responded to the survey, with almost 70% reporting high to extremely high interest in developing courses and teaching online, enhancing their traditional courses, and participating in training or workshops.

Student Support and Success:

SWOT

Strengths

- *Administration Support of DE:* In the Spring semester of 2011, by recommendation of the Vice President of Instruction, the college hired a part-time instructional designer to work with CIETL and CDEAC to provide training and support for faculty interested in teaching distance education courses.
- *Other Supports for DE:* CDEAC is committed to the college's core mission of ensuring student success by building and supporting a distance education program that meets the varied academic plans of Cañada's students while supporting training, professional development, collegiality, and community building among faculty members.
- We have CIETL
- We have a group of faculty from across the College interested in developing distance education
- We have access to regular training, through STOT, that is tailored to our CMS and the needs of our faculty
- We have excellent IT support (both at the district and college level)
- We have excellent support from our library
- We have an instructional designer
- We have A CMS (Moodle/WebAccess) to offer all De courses through one avenue instead of multiple unconnected websites

Weaknesses

- We have a lack of articulated practice, policies, and guidelines for developing robust courses and programs;
- We have few courses that fulfill GE requirements;
- We have limited trained faculty;
- We have limited faculty resources, and DE may not be a priority for many;
- Our courses are concentrated in limited disciplines

- There are not District-wide policies for faculty assessment
- Some faculty are reluctant to adopt Moodle

Opportunities

- Measure G funding
- There is currently excellent training that is subsidized by the state (@one)
- CMS offers the ability to assess course materials and student performance, and courses are easy to modify in response to feedback;
- There is a rising tide of resources available, including best practices from more developed models

Threats

- Budget
- Well-developed programs at neighboring colleges may draw DE students away from Cañada
- Lack of articulation paths, transferability in some courses
- Changes may create a climate of unease among faculty members
- Rising costs and rapid changes in technology may prohibit maintaining state-of-the-art
- Authentication

Where are we going?

Because distance education at Cañada is in its foundational stages, we have the opportunity to build a well-designed, student-centered, and robust distance education initiative that will decisively propel Cañada College towards excellence in distance education. Given input from faculty members, consideration of best practices, and limited resources, we believe our goals should focus on developing a community of well-trained faculty members and strategically growing our distance education offerings to support degree, certificate, and transfer paths.

In support of this vision, our major goals will focus on developing faculty and courses. Survey results suggest there is increasing faculty interest in incorporating distance education and technology into current classes, developing hybrid and online classes, and supporting one another through this process. Significant effort needs to be made to develop new training and enhance existing training, create spaces—both physical and virtual—for community and collaboration, and engage in rigorous discussion about course development

How will we get there?

Mission

The mission of the distance education initiative is to increase opportunities for our diverse student population by offering flexible and innovative instruction via technology. In keeping with the mission of the College, the distance education initiative is committed to meeting the changing needs of our community by developing distance learning opportunities that increase student access, support student success, and provide quality instruction in general, transfer, career, and basic skills education, while also fostering relationships between faculty, staff and students.

Goal #1: Broaden distance education course offerings to meet the needs of Cañada students

Objective 1.1 The distance education coordinator, division deans, and office of instruction will work together to identify, develop, and implement AA/AS degrees and CSUGE transfer paths through DE by Summer 2012

Objective 1.2 Increase the number of online courses each semester by adding 2-4 course sections per semester

1.2.1 Hire an instructional designer to aid and support faculty in the development and implementation of DE courses

1.2.2 The instructional designer will offer an ongoing series of workshops, and one-on-one trainings, to aid faculty members in designing distance education courses of the highest quality

Objective 1.3 Increase the number of hybrid courses each semester by adding 2-4 course sections per semester

Goal #2: Develop a community of well-trained DE faculty members

Objective 2.1 Provide comprehensive training and support for faculty interested in teaching DE

2.1.1 The college will fund up to 2 faculty per division to get a certificate in distance education through @ONE

2.1.2 Offer faculty development workshops during Flex Days in the areas of technology, pedagogy, and best practices in DE

2.1.3 Encourage faculty to attend DE conferences and share their experience with their colleagues

2.1.4 Create a Handbook for DE faculty

Objective 2.2 Build a support community for DE faculty and support staff

2.2.1 Create a mentorship program for faculty designing their first online course

2.2.2 Designate a physical space for faculty to meet and share ideas

2.2.3 Construct a virtual space for faculty to meet and share ideas

2.2.4 Collaborate with CIETL to identify areas of faculty development need

Goal #3: Develop DE assessment

Objective 3.1 Work with Curriculum Committee on approval process for courses with DE appendix

Objective 3.2 Develop and validate assessment tool to use specifically with DE courses, and work with the union to negotiate use of the tool

Objective 3.3 DE Courses are reviewed by a peer reviewer using the tool

Objective 3.4 Performance of DE students is routinely assessed through various methods including formative and summative assessments

Goal #4: Increase student awareness, retention, and success (get details from Research Office)

Objective 4.1 Create ample opportunities for student self-assessment of readiness for distance education

4.1.1 Link the self-assessment of student readiness for distance education to course descriptions on our web page

4.1.2 Offer workshops for students to prepare them to be successful online learners

4.1.3 Clarify course descriptions for students to prevent misconceptions about courses

Objective 4.2 Create mechanisms to support student success in distance education

4.2.1 Provide eLibrary services equivalent to the services provided to on-campus students

4.2.2 Provide program advising and eCounseling services equivalent to the services provided to on-campus students

4.2.3 Provide accessibility services equivalent to the services provided to on-campus DSPS students

4.2.4 Provide eTutoring through the Learning Center for students enrolled in DE courses

4.2.5 Provide links to online writing resources to assist students in developing their writing skills

4.2.6 Develop an "online bill of rights/code of conduct" and a transparent ombuds process for DE students

4.2.7 Develop and implement DE courses to support students enrolled in the College for Working Adults program

Objective 4.3 Provide technology support for DE students (HOW? ITS, ID,)

4.3.1

4.3.2