

Student Services Program Review Report

Sierra College, 2017-18

Department/Program Name: Distance Learning and Instructional Technology

Date Submitted: February 23, 2018

Submitted By: Suzanne Davenport

Ideally, the writing of a Program Review Report should be a collaborative process of full-time and part time faculty as well as the appropriate educational administrator, instructional assistants, classified staff members and students who have an interest in the present and future vision of the program at all sites throughout the district. The Program Review Committee needs as much information as possible to evaluate the past and current performance, assessment, and planning of your program.

1) Relevancy: This section assesses the program's significance to the students, the college, and the community.

1a) To provide context for the information that follows, describe the basic functions of your area and/or program.

If applicable, also explain how the program aligns with state mandates, priorities set by external agencies, or any other relevant organizations.

The Distance Learning program provides students with an opportunity to meet their educational goals by completing courses asynchronously from anyplace at anytime through the utilization of technology. In addition to fully online courses, hybrid courses, a blend of online and face-to-face instruction, are also a component of the program.

The Distance Learning department is responsible for providing faculty support for the online, hybrid and web-enhanced (utilization of Canvas in face-to-face courses) classroom, through pedagogical and technological training and the administrative support of Canvas. Student support is provided for those learning how to utilize the technology and effectively meet the demands of the online classroom.

The Distance Learning department is now responsible for all video production services on campus (formerly a segment of the Marketing department).

Adhering to state and federal regulations regarding Accessibility, Regular and Substantive Contact and State Authorization are all conditions of the program.

1b) How does your program support the district mission, as quoted below, and align with student needs? Please include an analysis of how your program supports ISLOs (Institutional Student Learning Outcomes) or the district's strategic planning goals.

“Sierra College provides an academic environment that is challenging and supportive for students of diverse backgrounds, needs, abilities, and goals with a focus on access, equity, student-centered learning, and achievement. The college is committed to practicing diversity and inclusion, and recognizes that a diverse and inclusive curriculum and workforce promotes its educational goals and values. Institutional learning outcomes guide the college’s programs and services, encouraging students to identify and expand their potential by developing knowledge, skills, and values to be fully engaged and contributing members of the global community. Sierra prepares students by offering Associate’s and transfer degrees, certificates, career and technical education, foundational skills, as well as lifelong learning and enrichment.”

The Distance Learning program is committed to supporting the four focused areas: access, equity, student-centered and achievement, of the district mission.

The primary function of the Distance Learning program is to provide equal access to course content to all students through an Internet connection. As stated earlier, courses can be accessed from anyplace at anytime. This flexibility allows students the opportunity to align their learning and personal goals based upon their individual needs. In many instances, students would not have the option of achieving their academic goals if they did not have access to the online classroom.

Through training, faculty are provided with the tools to develop a student-centered learning environment in the online classroom. A Title V condition of online instruction is that Regular and Substantive Contact (student/instructor and student/student contact) needs to be developed so it differentiates from a correspondence course. Tools used to actively engage students in this learning environment include the discussion board, VoiceThreads, groups, blogs, wikis, collaboration sessions within Canvas, and feedback provided on assignments and assessments.

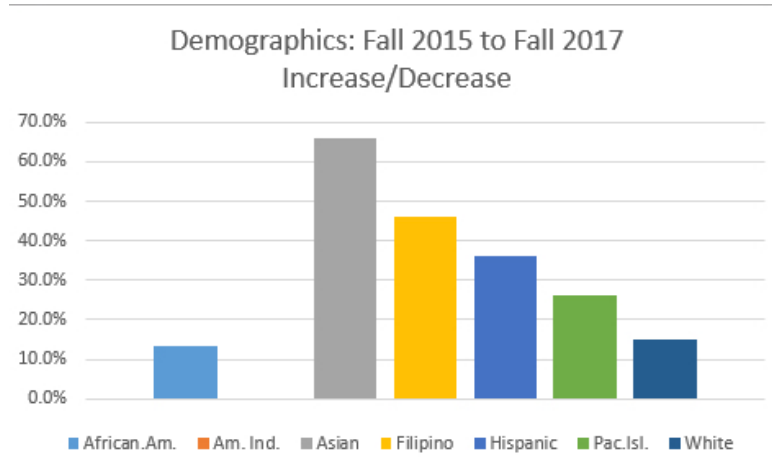
1c) Please analyze your program and its success in supporting each of the strategic goals with which your program aligns. Please provide evidence in support of this analysis, including program goals and outcomes in this analysis, as appropriate. When relevant, please refer to student learning outcomes, assessment, and evaluation in your reply.

Goal 1: Achieve equitable access and increase student success, retention and persistence in order to increase the number of students who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to four year colleges and universities while maintaining high levels of academic integrity.

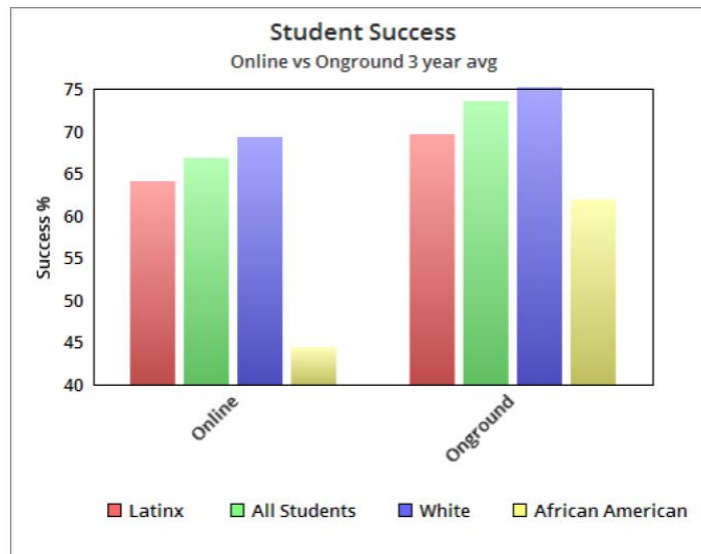
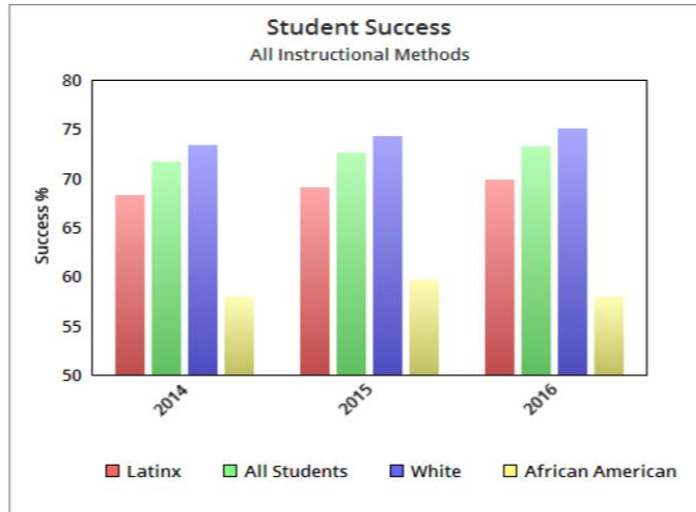
The nature of learning online automatically provides students the flexibility to access courses on a schedule that meets their own personal demands. Over the past ten years, we have slowly seen an increase in online retention and success. A number of factors, which will be emphasized throughout this report, have contributed to these increased numbers.

Goal 2: Identify and close success and equity gaps amongst underserved and/or underrepresented student populations.

Online courses should be an option for all students, and as indicated below, many student populations have seen an expansion in enrollments in this modality. African American students make up just over 10% of this increase and the Native American population has remained flat with an increase from 32 to 37 online students over the two-year period.



We recognize there is work required to close the success and equity gap amongst underserved and underrepresented student populations. Given the information on the two slides on the next page, it is clear that the African American online success rate is not in balance with all students. DLIT will need to address the inequities and determine solutions to ensure equal access to online courses for all student populations. Whether it be a lack of Internet access, student preparation, or even marketing, we have to meet these challenges. While it may be a positive trend to see most student populations displaying an interest in online courses, it is not merely enrollments we need to be concerned with, but with student success as well.



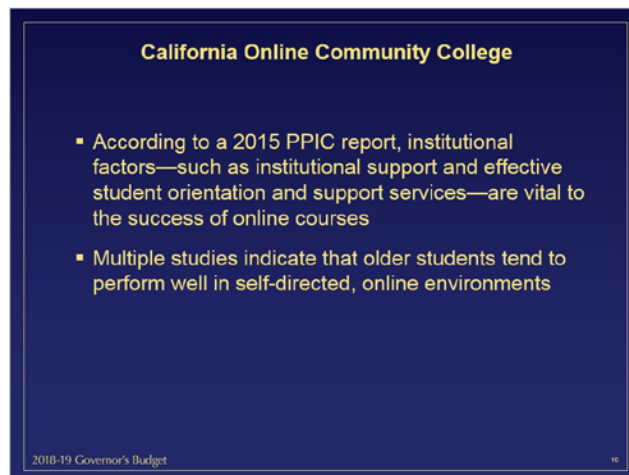
Goal 3: Provide professional growth and develop a climate of inclusion in order to support highly effective and innovative teaching and learning, support services, operations, and collaboration.

The Distance Learning department has always maintained a close working relationship with the DLIT (Distance Learning and Instructional Technology) Committee. This was evident through the selection of the course management system when we moved from Blackboard to Canvas. Although the department's level of frustration with Blackboard was high we had to have support from DLIT to successfully make such a change that impacted the department and campus community.

A more recent instance that illustrates the connection between the Distance Learning department and DLIT was with the decision to discontinue the TV program in spring 2016. After much consideration and discussion with administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students, we collaboratively agreed that the direction of the Distance Learning program was to focus on the online student by increasing our course offerings to meet their demands and develop practices to increase success and retention in this modality.

The Distance Learning department was very fortunate to have been able to hire an Instructional Designer this past year to specifically support faculty in developing effective and innovate curriculum for both the on ground and online classroom. In addition to working one-on-one with faculty developing course material, the designer has also offered workshops on Online Course Design and Accessibility, and is developing more to meet the growing needs of the faculty. Other regularly scheduled professional development opportunities offered by the Distance Learning department include, Online Training which faculty must complete in order to be eligible to teach online, and the SOS (Sierra Online Summit), an intense three day workshop in which faculty are emerged in technology and given effective tools to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Although preparing faculty to be successful in the online classroom is an important element of the program, it is just as important to consider the support services that ultimately play a considerable role in the overall success of the online student. Current online Support Services we offer include Online Counseling; the Online Librarian available via chat, email and embedded into a particular course through Canvas; and Online Tutoring through Tutor.com. Research indicates that providing these services supports the overall success of the student not only at Sierra but also on a statewide level as referenced in the slide below.



Goal 4: Meet and exceed external standards through an outcomes based framework for continuous quality improvement.

In 2009 DLIT developed the Online Course Review Process (as noted in previous Program Reviews) in an effort to increase student success in the online and hybrid classroom. Over time, we strongly feel that this process has been one of the primary contributing factors to the success in progressing towards this goal. Although very labor intensive, the process requires three faculty members using a common rubric to review each new online course (average of 25 and 50 per semester) and has resulted in more rigorous course offerings. Faculty are required to complete 25% of their online course for the review. They must include elements of best practices in course design, accessibility rules and regulations (closed-captioning for videos, alt tags for images, and transcripts for narrations and formatting for text), demonstrate how effective student contact will take place, assignments and assessments, discussion areas and any other element that may be unique to their online classroom.

In the past two years, the statewide OEI (Online Education Initiative) has also adopted their own rubric for Best Practices in Online Instruction and is encouraging all campuses to use the document and develop a process for reviewing online courses. We strongly encourage any support that is provided statewide to all Distance Learning programs, but we also recognize that here at Sierra College our faculty began to collaborate on the issue of student success nearly ten years ago with the implementation of our own Online Course Review Process.

Goal 5: Modernize, revitalize and develop new facilities and infrastructure based on the current Facilities and Technology Master Plans.

The office that Distance Learning staff resides in underwent a recent facelift. The original built-in cabinetry and large furniture pieces purchased over twenty years were replaced with modernized pieces to accommodate space for three employees and features a “drop in” area for faculty or students needing technical assistance. In addition to minor structural modifications in the room, outdated computer equipment was also replaced.

After the last semester of utilizing the broadcast facilities for the TV program, the department worked collaboratively with DLIT in determining the new function of the studio. The newly reconfigured Technology Studio features designated space for faculty to learn how to effectively use innovative tools to engage their students; produce video productions in a studio setting complete with a camera, lighting, green screen, production set and technical staff; and utilize video streaming technology.

Goal 6: Expand community partnerships and funding opportunities to support strategic goals and leverage resources.

In 2014 the Online Education Initiative (OEI) was developed as the Governor had released an allocation of \$16.5 million dollars to fund online education and required the Chancellor's Office to create a group to oversee and manage the Initiative. The primary focus for Phase One of the project was for the OEI to select a course management system which would be available to colleges free of charge. The purpose of this was to provide all colleges with equal resources to offer online courses. Sierra College had a vested interest in the state selecting Canvas as we had already been using the system for two years. Representatives from the OEI met with faculty, students, administrators, and staff from both Pasadena and Sierra College as we were the only two users of the system at the time. Canvas was awarded the contract and any colleges using the cms would have their license fee paid for through the OEI. The intent was for each campus to reinvest the amount of money they saved on license fees back into the Distance Learning department to provide necessary resources to increase student success and retention. Our annual license fee to Canvas was \$164,000, which was substantially lower than the \$205,000, previously paid to Blackboard. The one missing element of Canvas was that it did not have a plagiarism detection tool within the system. To continue providing the feature we had to contract with TurnItIn.com for their services (license fee for 2017/18 was \$38,452). Unfortunately, this was the only savings from our course management license fee that was reinvested in the Distance Learning program at Sierra.

Please include an analysis of program goals and service area outcomes in your description, as appropriate, and discuss any developments related to R4S that have impacted and/or will impact your programs efforts in supporting these goals.

1d) Optional Additional Data: Describe any other contributions of your program not incorporated in the prompts above and relevant to the district goals, mission, and values. These may include but are not limited to contributions to diversity, campus climate, cultural enrichment, community ties, partnerships and service. Please include specific data and examples when these are available and relevant to the analysis.

2) Currency

2a) Service Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Considering any relevant information, please describe and analyze your program's development and assessment of Service Assessment Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes, including any relevant information regarding student equity goals. Please describe any improvements or changes made to the program as a result of this analysis.

Outcomes and outcome data:

The following SSAO's are copied directly from the forms previously filled out by the department. Included is the outcome, data and assessment all together in each individual SSAO.

SSAO 1: Provide excellent customer service to all audiences through all modalities (2013-2014) - Need to develop online student support services for all students, but with the specific intent to reach online students. The two primary services to be developed include an Online Writing Center and Online Tutoring. Had vendor demonstrations for an online tutoring service and selected Tutor.com as a pilot while we concurrently developed a "home-grown" online writing center. During the pilot in fall 2014 data indicated that students who utilized the tutoring services did significantly better than those who did not. We ultimately moved beyond the pilot phase and implemented Tutor.com. Unfortunately, there was little support for the Online Writing Center and the service is on hold.

Provide resources for faculty to stay current on online learning best practices and tools. Making sure that curriculum is constantly updated and meets the changing needs of the students, as well as changing technologies.

SSAO 2: Establish, maintain and communicate clear, effective processes for accessing services. (2014/15) – Pilot a four-week online session during summer 2015. If successful then we can consider offering a four-week session during the winter "intersession" break. We did complete this pilot session with eight online courses from various disciplines. The data indicated that the overall success rate (66%) of the four-week pilot program was lower than the traditional eight-week online session (74%). While the Research department did comment on the rates being "satisfactory" we decided that this may not be in the best interest of the students, although we would not restrict faculty from trying it again in the future. Individual faculty and departments will be allowed to analyze the data and determine whether or not they have an interest in offering four week online sessions in the future. The Distance Learning department will not make a "push" for this in an effort to increase enrollments.

SSAO 4: Identify and maintain comprehensive array of student services and information that meet students needs, address barriers and support student success. (2015-2016) – At this point we recognized that we had to consider whether or not the TV program was still a viable modality to provide students given the declining enrollments and expansion of the online program. We began the process with a Retreat that was attended by TV faculty, DLIT members, students and administrators to look at the options. From that point we conducted a survey that was sent out to students and faculty and ultimately came to the conclusion that it was best to discontinue the program in May 2016.

Assessment of outcomes:

In the space below, please describe or attach the cycle you have developed for outcomes assessment.

2b) Professional Development: Describe how departmental activities serve to improve teaching, learning and scholarship. Please be sure to specifically include flex activities, departmental meetings and activities, conferences, outreach to other colleges, research and implementation of best practices, changes in legislation, mandates from regulatory agencies, required faculty certifications, health and safety trainings or other factors. How do these activities contribute to your program's self-assessment and planning?

Our training facility (LRC 127) for faculty has been shared in recent years with Student Services. They use the space for student orientations during large chunks of the year. Given the time allocated for these orientations, faculty training activities have primarily been offered during flex weeks only. This was a big factor when planning the Technology Studio and resulted in a designated space for faculty training and workshops. We opted to equip the facility with laptops instead of desktop computers and were able to purchase twelve due at this time and will add an additional twelve next year.

Current professional development activities regularly offered by the department and others associated with online learning include Using Canvas, Online Course Design, Best Practices in Online Teaching and Learning, Accessibility, Sierra Online Summit (SOS), Using Rubrics and Course Outcomes, Roundtable Discussions on Distance Learning issues, Faculty Online Training. With our new facility in place March 2018, we will have the opportunity to offer additional sessions and are encouraging faculty to share their expertise and knowledge on specific software, applications and other technologies with their peers.

All faculty interested in teaching online must go through a process that certifies they are ready to teach in the online environment. First, it must be assumed that they are comfortable with Canvas (or the current course management system) and then they must complete the five-week Faculty Online Training. After completing training, they are required to develop 25% of their course for the Online Course Review Process during one of the review periods (fall courses due on March 1st, spring courses due on September 1st, and summer courses due on November 15th).

In addition to our regular DLIT meetings, in fall 2017 Distance Learning became the temporary home to oversee the newly formed Accessibility work group. This group is not technically a committee but rather a group of stakeholders given the task of ensuring that all courses, whether online, hybrid or on ground are accessible to all students. One of our primary concerns on campus was the use of third party vendor products used in both the online and on ground classroom. Many of these software tools and textbook components are advertised as being accessible and ADA compliant when in fact that is not entirely true. After one of our initial meetings, we discovered that it would be best to bring in the experts on Accessibility and conduct an Accessibility Forum. Gaeir Dietrich, Director of the HTCTU and Sean Keegan, Director of Accessibility of the CCC Tech Center shared their expertise on current online accessibility including, legal requirements, institutional responsibilities, practical solutions, and strategies for successful implementation.

Over 75 people attended at least one of the sessions in the theater and we considered the event to be a success in bringing this information to our campus. Continued Accessibility meetings will be held until a working plan on achieving accessibility for all aspects of the campus is in place.

On a monthly basis, I am involved in the statewide Distance Learning Coordinator's webinar where items discussed are pertinent to online education, including topics on accessibility, state authorization, regular and substantive contact, best practices, and legal requirements.

Faculty are encouraged to attend off-campus workshops and conferences that will help them to further develop their online teaching skills. One of the popular conferences that faculty attend is the OTC (Online Teaching Conference) located in California each year. I am usually able to set aside money from the Distance Learning budget (\$24,000) each year to fund three or four faculty to attend this session.

2c) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

I strongly believe that the Distance Learning support staff contributes greatly to the overall success of the program. Without their knowledge, expertise and passion for what they do, the program would not be as successful as it is today.

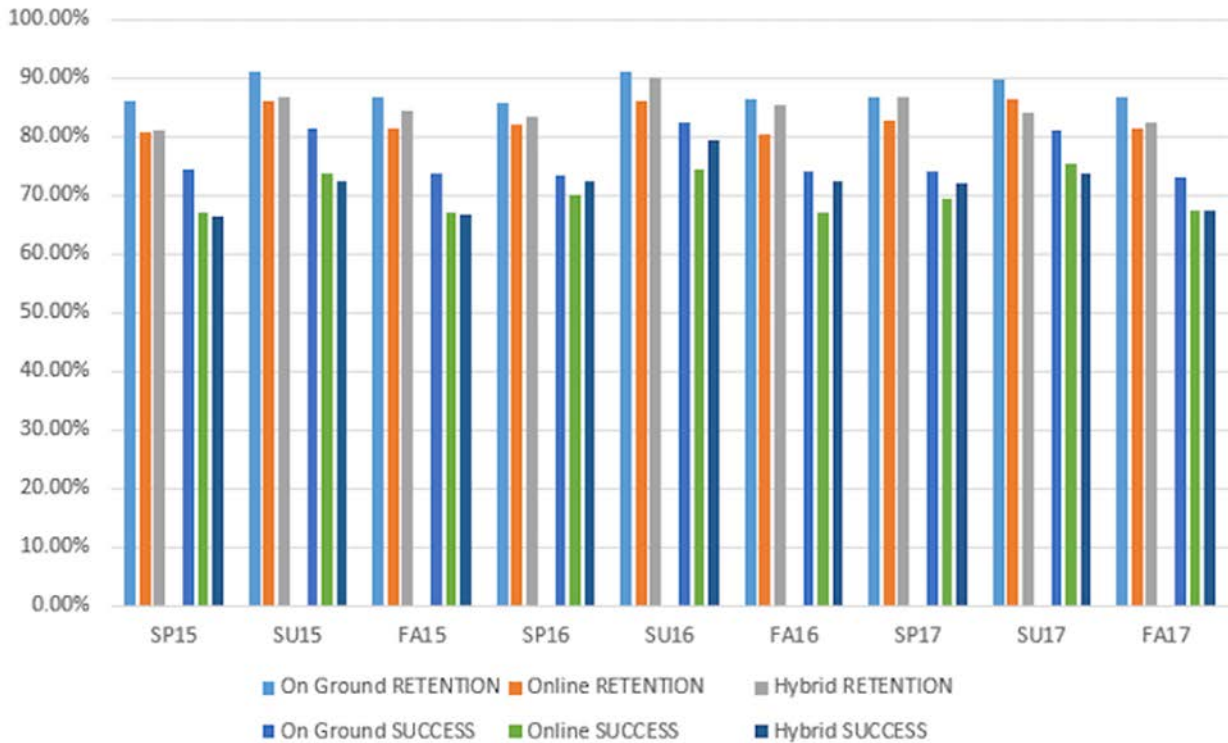
3) Effectiveness: This section assesses the effectiveness of the program in light of traditional measurements.

3a) Retention and Success/Service Outcomes – Please analyze your success in achieving your program goals (including Service Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes), using whatever data is relevant to your program. Describe any changes you have made that have improved the effectiveness of the program as well as any barriers you may have encountered in making these or other changes. Please include any analysis related to Student Success or Equity. If you determine that you need to improve the program's performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

It was ten years ago when DLIT started to recognize the large discrepancy between the online and on ground success rates and decided to do something about it. Although success rates were lower across the state for online courses, this was an alarming trend and the Distance Learning department and DLIT began exploring ways to increase these figures. These changes included increased faculty training with an emphasis on Best Practices, Sierra Online Summit, and the Online Course Review Process, evaluations in all modalities, increased online Student Support Services, student familiarity with Canvas and the development of Skill Development 10.

Our effort paid off as the success rates for online students began to move – in the positive direction. During a ten-year span, we have steadily moved upward while on ground courses have remained about the same. Success rates for the online classroom have remained relatively consistent between 73 and 74%, with summer sessions in the 80's, over the past three years. Today the rates are five to seven percent below on ground and in spring 2016, they only lagged on ground figures by 3.6%. Hybrid courses (35 such offerings in fall 2017) have even more impressive figures in the past two years with some semesters only being 1 to 2% behind the on ground population. This is a significant increase from where we were ten years ago when success rates hovered around 10 to 13% below that of the on ground rates. The graph on the following page provides an illustration of how much the gap is closing between the on ground, online and hybrid modalities of instruction.

Retention & Success



An area of concern that we do need to address is that these figures may not accurately reflect what is truly going on with our overall online success rate. There is reason to believe that they should actually be higher than what the data reflects. One of the key elements we need to address as far as success and retention is what happens to the student who accesses Canvas in the first two weeks of the semester but then no longer shows up. Where did they go, and why did they not come back to class? Since students are able to access a course and actively “look” without participating, an instructor may fail to drop them prior to census. The problem is that many of these students never access the course after their initial exposure and then have to withdraw from the class, or the instructor withdraws them and in some instances assigns a failing grade.

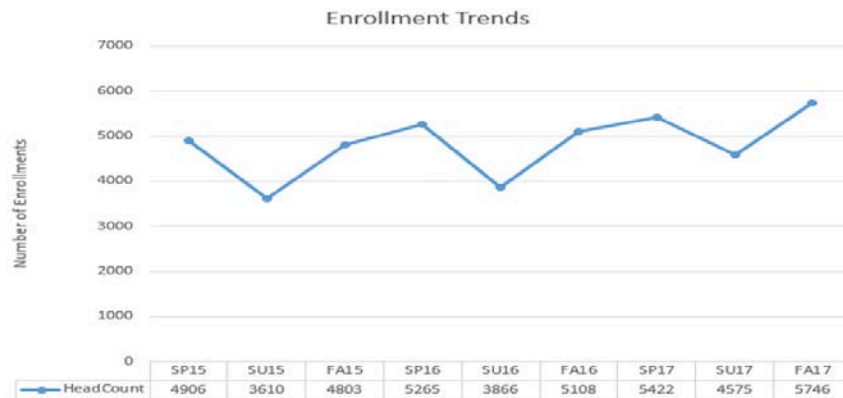
This is a new discussion taking place and at this time we do not have the solution to the problem. I recently reached out to Canvas to find out more specific data to reflect the problem, but they did not readily have what we needed. Our Research department is providing assistance in trying to find the common thread to what is happening. At this point, we cannot make any assumptions, but developing more of an outreach program for our students might be part of the solution. Our students are not currently required to go through a course on preparing them how to learn online, although many do enroll in the Skill Development 10: How to be a Successful Online Student course and seem to do substantially better than those that do not complete it.

As relevant, please address any impact of R4S developments on program planning and assessment.

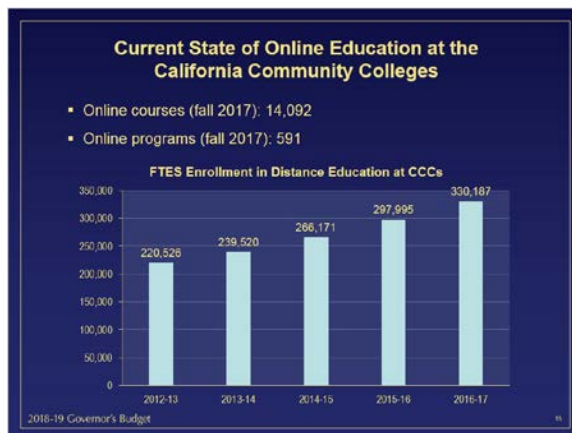
3b) Usage Trends - Identify and analyze the usage trends relevant to your program for the last three years. Address separately the data for on ground and on-line services, as well as usage at the various centers when applicable. Analyze these trends as well as any challenges experienced by the program. Please include any analysis related to Student Success or Equity. If you determine that you need to improve the program's performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

As relevant, please address any impact of R4S developments on program planning and assessment.

Enrollment trends, in the graph below, clearly shows the increased interest in online courses. In fact, the more sections of a course that we offer, the more students we enroll. It is common to have many online sections fill within days of registration.



Our campus represents an accurate picture of students throughout the state that are looking for alternative methods instruction to achieve their academic goals. Looking at the slide below, we clearly see that while Sierra College's offered 313 online courses there were 14,092 online courses offered throughout giving over 330,000 students the opportunity to achieve their academic goals.



3c) Productivity –Analyze the significance of the trends as well as the challenges experienced within the program. If you determine that you need to improve the program’s performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

The trend of online learning, on both a local and national level, is that it will continue to increase with students demanding access to their education at anytime from anyplace. The new Online College in California will be devoted to meeting the needs of these very students. This can ultimately be a concern for our campus as the Online College may draw from some of our own students. A large population of our students take both online and on ground classes, so while we anticipate many students will remain loyal to our online offerings, having an entire college accessible online, complete with Student Support Services, may persuade some of our current students to move solely to the new Online College.

Discussion is now beginning at DLIT on how we will address the potential challenge of this additional college. One of the solutions we think may help students remain committed to Sierra College is if we offer degrees that are fully online. We are currently taking the steps toward making this goal a reality which includes offering the necessary Communication Studies courses in the online format.

As relevant, please address any impact of R4S developments on program planning and assessment.

3d) Referring to your ePAR Report of Goals, Strategies, Actions, and outcomes assessment cycle and relevant assessments/evaluations, please describe your program’s plans to maintain or increase its effectiveness and evaluate your efforts to achieve these goals. Please include an analysis of the impact of R4S and related developments on program planning and assessment.

Following is a list of recent PAR Department Goals.

Goal 1: Hire an Instructional Designer. – Goal complete and should have a positive impact the program through an increase in student success and retention with increased professional development for faculty.

Goal 2: Renovate TV studio (LRC 124). – To be complete March 2018 and should also result in a positive benefit for the program by providing space for faculty to learn how to best utilize technology to enhance their courses through workshops and tutorials; adding video to course content; and/or providing guest speakers into lectures through the utilization of the video streaming services.

Goal 3: Obtain a three-year license for 433 copies of Camtasia and Snagit, software that allows video recording and editing, development of presentations and tutorials of content for online and on ground courses. – Ranked in the top three items from Student Services in January 2018, and like the other two goals should contribute to student success as faculty are able to produce quality videos to engage their students.

3e) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

4) Resources: This category assesses the adequacy of current resources available to the program and describes and justifies the resources required to achieve planning goals by relating program needs to the assessments above.

4a) Please describe the future direction and goals of your program for the next three years in terms of sustaining or improving program effectiveness, relevance, and currency. Please include any analysis of relevant performance assessments in your explanation and of any impacts on program planning and development related to R4S, student equity, and student success.

Given that recent growth for the college has been primarily from online enrollments, it is a goal of the program to continue with this pattern of increasing course offerings while still maintaining the integrity and quality of the program. Our concern is to ensure that student success does not suffer at the expense of increasing enrollments and finding the balance between the two will be a task of DLIT.

Preparing our faculty to develop engaging online courses is key to the success of the online student. Two primary elements are required to ensure that this can take place. The first is to provide continued and additional professional development for our faculty and the second is to staff the department to meet the needs of a growing faculty and student population.

Another task of DLIT is to close the success and equity gap amongst underrepresented and underserved student populations. Professional development will be a critical component of how we achieve this goal.

With the responsibility of campus video production services now in the Distance Learning department, we are cautiously optimistic that we will receive the resources necessary to carry out the functions of this new role.

As of yet, the Distance Learning program has not been included in the conversation related to R4S and its role in regards to Interest Areas. It is a goal of the program to be included in such discussions so that we can collectively determine and understand the role of the Distance Learning program.

4b) Equipment and Technology: Comment on the adequacy of the program's equipment and technology funding level for the District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of equipment and technology needs for the next three years as well as a justification for needs. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

Ironically, technology is the core that drives distance learning, yet the program receives minimal funding for technology. As we have transitioned from the TV Studio to the Technology Studio we have spent considerable dollars out of the Distance Learning and LRC budgets for equipment, software and hardware. Costs for the studio renovation were funded through a PAR request.

What we have found to be of great concern is the lack of funding to support Instructional Technology especially in terms of software. There are many tools available for faculty to use in the online environment to keep the students engaged and returning to the course. It is critical that the department's budget be increased to accommodate these software needs and that IIT and Distance Learning work together to strategically look at obtaining district-wide site licenses for software.

4c) Staffing: Comment on the adequacy of your program's faculty, classified, and student help staffing levels for the overall District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of staffing needs for the next three years and justification for any increases. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

The recent hiring of the Instructional Designer in spring 2017 was the first permanent position in the department in nearly fifteen years. The department now has 1 faculty member and 3.5 classified employees. To meet the demands of the program it would be necessary to increase our current staffing levels. This would include hiring an Administrative Assistant, increase the number of hours for the classified Distance Learning position from half time to full-time and reclassify it to a Distance Learning Support Specialist, increase the current 17 hour a week part-time faculty position (supports Student Support Services) to full-time.

4d) Facilities: Comment on the program's fill rate and the adequacy of the facilities for the District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of facility needs for the next three years as well as a justification for any increases. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

A benefit of an online program is that the traditional brick and mortar classroom is not necessary to accommodate the students thus reducing the need for physical facilities on the campus. Continuing to provide students with an Internet connection in the LRC or other labs at any of the campus sites is strongly encouraged in any future planning or redevelopment of the centers.

4e) Please check the appropriate boxes in the chart below indicating the general reasons for the resource requests described above (please check all that apply):

Function/Role	Maintenance	Development	Growth	Safety	Outcomes	Other success measures	No Requests
X		X	X				

5) Summary/Closing

5a) Briefly summarize the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/future directions, challenges.

The primary strength of the Distance Learning program is simply to allow students access to education from anyplace at anytime. Student success has steadily grown in recent years and can be attributed, in part, to the successful endeavors of DLIT and the Distance Learning to strengthen the integrity of the program.

Another strength of the Distance Learning program is the high level of professionalism displayed on a regular basis by the very limited Distance Learning staff. For many people technology can be a cause for fear, and whether working with faculty or students the department staff provides an upbeat and positive environment.

While the increased enrollments are a benefit for the campus in general and these numbers indicate a strength, they also highlight the reality in that there are many students who flounder in the online classroom. Not understanding the rigor and commitment required of the online classroom is one of the reasons that students do not do well, and we need to ensure that our students understand the challenge of the online classroom before enrolling.

The future of Distance Learning has both opportunities and challenges ahead, not unlike those we have experienced in the past. Following is a list of items (in no particular order) that we need to consider while we determine the direction of the program.

We know that there will be a continued increase in online enrollments and we will take steps to ensure we strategically add courses while maintaining the quality and integrity of the program.

We have considerable work to do in providing access to our underserved and underrepresented student populations, by decreasing the gap in both enrollments and student success.

We must assume our responsibility to clearly set student expectations and adequately prepare them to be successful in the online environment.

We will ensure all course content is accessible for the online, hybrid and on ground courses; and any online campus presence (website, forms, etc) is equally accessible and compliant.

We must ensure that our online Student Support Services are equitable and mirror those that the on ground students receive.

We need to provide ongoing professional development and ensure that the software and tools associated with this content is available for faculty.

We need to determine ways to retain students in the online classroom after their initial exposure to a course.

We need to be actively involved in determining the role that the Distance Learning program can contribute to R4S, R4S 2.0 and Interest Areas.

We need to provide our students with the opportunity to complete their education in the online modality by offering packaged online degrees.

We need to ensure ongoing support for the new video production responsibilities within the Distance Learning department.

5b) How has the author of this report integrated the views and perspectives of stakeholders in the program?

As the author of this document, I have consulted with members from DLIT, the Distance Learning support staff, online Student Service support and the dean of the LRC.