FY 2015-2016
Third Year
Proposal

Application for Innovation Funds

LCCC

"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower."
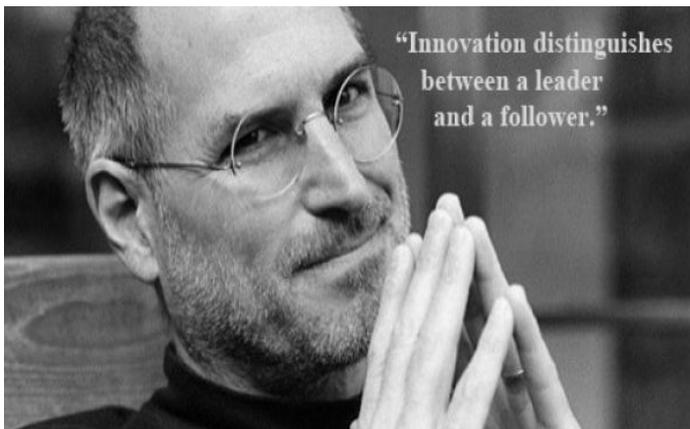
Center for Learning Technologies

Laramie County Community College

FY 2015-2016 Third Year Proposal

Title of Project – The Collaborative Model for Online Innovation – Third Year Proposal.
Submitted by Les Balsiger, Director, Center for Learning Technologies

1. Executive Summary

The Center for Learning Technologies (CLT) has identified a key goal to develop high quality online programs to reach a larger student population while increasing Laramie County Community College (LCCC) online student enrollment. At the conclusion of this project, LCCC online programs will have the highest level of consistency and quality in the region. The title of this project is "The Collaborative Model for Online Innovation." - Third Year Proposal.

In year one, the CLT established a process for systematically designing online courses by means of backwards course design and implemented an online course layout template. The purpose of the process and template was to provide LCCC students with consistency in presentation, course access, and facilitate ADA compliance for all online courses The CLT also redesigned the Psychology Degree, for a total of 13 courses, during the spring and summer semesters of 2014. In addition the three main courses of the Criminal Justice Degree were developed. Resulting in an increase of high quality online courses.

In year two, the CLT developed the balance of the Criminal Justice Degree (Pre-Law and Corrections track) a total of 8 courses and the Human Services Degree, during the fall semester of 2014 and the balance by the end of summer 2015. The CLT also redesigned the Education and the Early Childhood Education Degrees (16 courses). All courses within these programs were developed using a content system, which will allow the delivery of the courses in a variety of lengths (i.e. 8, 12 or 16 weeks).

For year three, we propose to take this project to the next step and explore what is needed to create an LCCC online campus. The LCCC Strategic Plan embraces four major goals, and by creating an online campus, this project is designed to align with goal one as outlined in the LCCC Strategic Plan, established for years 2013-2020. The specific goal reads; "Our overarching goal is that our accomplishments as a community college will distinguish LCCC from others in the nation, in turn benefiting our communities and bringing pride to the Great State of Wyoming." Creating an online campus at LCCC, clearly aligns with this goal.

Goal one also contains a "Completion Agenda for the 21st Century" which is to "Increase the number of students earning high-value credentials by reinventing the College's programs and services to be designed for the 21st century learners and aligned to drive the economic and social futures of Southeastern Wyoming." [i] Goal one embraces six strategies. Strategy A is to "increase participation at the college through wise enrollment growth". Subsection IV affirms that this will be done through the development of "an LCCC Online enterprise with sufficient autonomy to purposefully grow offerings and enrollment in distance education using cutting-edge course design and innovative instruction." [ii]

The funding needed for year three which combines both an innovative project and a planning project, which will include summer of 2016, is $15,000.

Project Description

The goal of "The Collaborative Model for Online Innovation" is to design/redesign online degrees at LCCC. This project would also establish and put into practice The Collaborative Model of course design, fostering consistency and high quality online programs to benefit students at LCCC.

The Collaborative Model starts with having the faculty act as subject matter experts (SME), providing their expertise and materials to an instructional designer to design courses that meet nationally recognized best practices and standards of course design and accessibility. The course is then peer reviewed and final adjustments are made by the instructional designer and faculty member. Once the course design is complete, it is handed over to a technical support specialist for development and implementation of multimedia materials, compliance with ADA policies, and other technology related aspects. Finally, this model would bring about a new method to strategically place entire programs online at LCCC, rather than individual courses.

In this last phase, a taskforce of LCCC employees from the faculty, administration, staff of CLT will be identified. This taskforce will be tasked with looking into developing an online campus and examine every aspect needed to put together an online campus at LCCC. They will evaluate elements such as, which services are needed to support students in an online campus, how best to identify online faculty/staff to develop and maintain the online courses, certify online instructors, and other forms of supports or services needed to obtain our goal.

We propose to do this by researching and visiting other successful community colleges that have adopted this model and examining the steps they took to reach their goal. The taskforce will also research the current literature on this model, and attend a higher education conference to explore practices behind starting an online campus. Finally they will record their findings in a formal report and deliver to be delivered to the President's Cabinet.

We believe this project should be pursued for several reasons. First, the recent HLC Quality Checkup Report, dated August 16, 2012 [iii] stated that LCCC "might consider adoption of some standard online class components that could help to reduce variation in the student experience and may also strengthen faculty training and support processes." Second, maintaining that "some of the students the team interviewed noted experiencing significant variation from one online class to another. In the students' view, some online classes are less complete than others; time is wasted figuring out what is expected." Finally, the HLC Quality Checkup Report raised concerns that individualized and asynchronous online course conversion may not coalesce with institutional planning, and might unintentionally undermine the overall online program "and the preparation processes that support it."

The Center for Learning Technologies' has also conducted research on best practices for consistent, high quality online course delivery which led to the formation of this project. Fabry [iv] indicated that traditional classroom courses tend to be revamped for use in online environments. However, the courses often lack quality, as the "linear-designed instructional framework" is not suited to online collaborative environments, (Fabry [v]) By moving to a collaborative method of instructional design, we can move LCCC toward consistency, which will allow all instructors to focus on teaching while maintaining quality instructional design Fabry, 2009[vi]. The instructional design team could design both online and on-ground courses to ensure comparability and consistency in meeting learning outcomes.

2. **Goals and Objectives**

The main goals of this project are:
- To improve the consistency and quality of online courses.
- Improve the quality of the online instructors at LCCC.
- Make LCCC a leader in online offerings both regionally and nationally.
- Increase the number of online students, and the FTE of the college.
- Increase the programs and degrees offered online.

The number of online students has plateaued at LCCC and only represents about 17% of the total students and course offerings. The national average is 31% and most colleges have grown their online programs by an average of 10% a year since 2002 as stated in the Sloan-C report ("Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States", 2011 Survey by I.E. Allen and J. Seaman) [vii]. LCCC's online programming has not grown comparatively.

Our objective in this last year of this project is to examine how best to implement an effective online campus for LCCC and create a report for the President's Cabinet outlining the necessary steps and essential services.

Project Budget

Travel to selected institutions	$6,000.00
Conference attendance and registration	$9,000.00
Total Budget	$15,000.00

Return on Investment: A recent report from Sloan-C[viii] stated that in 2002 around 10% of students were taking at least one online class and by 2010 that number had grown to 31%. They further reported that a 10% per year growth rate for online enrollments far exceeds the less than 1% overall growth rate in higher education enrollments. In addition, enrollment growth rates in fully online programs by discipline show that most are growing. Finally, 65% of higher education institutions in the US reported that online learning is a critical part of their long-term strategy.

Return on Investment (ROI) the first year, after the full implementation of the online campus, is projected to be $100,000. This figure is based on implementing new online degrees and completing the ones that have developed in phase one and two. The CLT has developed 5 new degrees online and has more in production. If WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange) or other out-of-state students matriculates into the program, the ROI would rise even higher.

5. Project Timeline

The proposed start date for this project is September 30, 2015, with completion by August 31, 2016.

6. Project Team

Project Leader: Les Balsiger, Director, Center for Learning Technologies

Kathy Hathaway, Dean of Math and Science

Trent Morrell, Geo Science Instructor

Dawn Puente, Health Information Technology and Management Instructor

Rebecca Reese, Senior Instructional Designer, Center for Learning Technologies

Bibliography

[i] LCCC Strategic Plan, retrieved August 31, 2015 https://lccc.wy.edu/Media/Website-Resources/documents/Presidents-Office/Strategic-Plan-2013-2020-Final.pdf

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] HLC Quality Checkup Report, dated August 16, 2012, P. 9-10

[iv] Dee L. Fabry, Designing Online and On-Ground Courses to Ensure Comparability and Consistency in Meeting Learning Outcomes, Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 2009.

[v] Dee L. Fabry, Designing Online and On-Ground Courses to Ensure Comparability and Consistency in Meeting Learning Outcomes, Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 2009, p. 253.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Elaine I. Allen, Jeff Seaman, Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011

[viii] Ibid.