2011-12
Program Review

Name of Program: Virtual College
Name of Unit: Library & Instructional Support
Name of Area: Academic Affairs
Date Completed: 9/9/2011

Program's Mission Statement

The mission of the Distance Education program at Rio Hondo College is to extend educational opportunities to a diverse population of students with alternative methods and delivery formats. These approaches to instruction outside the traditional classroom setting provides an array of credit and non-credit courses, programs, trainings, and associated services via technology. Distance Education courses are delivered in a timely, student-oriented, technology-enhanced and quality learning environment.

Program's Overarching Outcomes - SLOs / SAOs

Students will receive instructions on how to use the basic features/tools of Blackboard.

Faculty will receive instructional support in designing and using the features and tools of Blackboard.

Faculty will receive training in pertinent instructional technologies.

Program's Characteristics, Performance and Trends

1. Has the program been growing, shrinking, or remaining stable over the last five years?

Since 2005 the on-line and hybrid offerings at Rio Hondo College have experienced tremendous growth. Students taking Hybrid courses have increased by 306%, going from 215 students in 2005, to 276 students in 2006 and 657 students in 2008. Online course attendance has grown by

http://research880/planview.asp?id=756
121%. In 2006 there were 3102 online students. In 2007 there were 3285 students enrolled in online classes and 3759 students enrolled in online classes in 2008. The data from 2008 to 2010 illustrates that the number of online course offered is relatively consistent from term to term whereas hybrid courses offered are most prevalent during Spring semesters. The ration of hybrid sections to courses is almost 1:1 while online sections to courses are almost 2:1.

A. Number of Courses offered by Semester

The data illustrates that the number of online course offered is relatively consistent from term to term due to the overall College enrollment decreases.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>209</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

B. Number of Sections offered by Semester

The data illustrates that the number of online course offered is relatively consistent from term to term due to the overall College enrollment decreases.
These two tables show the number of courses and sections offered for hybrid and online classes. The data illustrates that the number of online course offered is relatively consistent from term to term whereas hybrid courses offered are most prevalent during Spring semesters and almost non-existent in the summer. The ratio of hybrid sections to courses is almost 1:1 while online sections to courses are almost 2:1.

C. Number of Faculty

While there has been some change in the number of faculty teaching online, the more apparent trend is the increase in faculty opting to teach hybrid courses.

D. Number of FTE
The table demonstrates the changes in the number of faculty opting to teach online and the number of FTE's used for electronic instruction in each term. While there has been some change in the number of faculty teaching online, the more apparent trend is the increase in faculty opting to teach hybrid courses. A comparison of fall to fall, spring to spring, and summer to summer, shows that each year, more faculty are deciding to teach in this mode.

E. Student Headcounts
The table demonstrates the changes in the number of students taking online classes. This table shows apparent trend of the increase in students taking online classes each year.

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>47.74</td>
<td>140.01</td>
<td>138.97</td>
<td>37.59</td>
<td>122.79</td>
<td>131.39</td>
<td>35.68</td>
<td>116.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>18.04</td>
<td>17.36</td>
<td>15.11</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Percentage of Students From Within RHC Boundaries by Mode of Transmission
One of the questions that often come up when discussions about distance education occur is who is being served. Are the students enrolled in distance education different that the students who enroll in traditional campus based courses? First of all, it helps to know that approximately 65% of the students who enroll in an online course in any semester also enroll in traditional courses. If we include hybrid courses, 95% of the distance learners also enroll in traditional courses. We include hybrid courses, 95% of the distance learners also enroll in traditional courses.
G. Comparison of Each Mode of Transmission by Percentage of Hispanics

Similar to the residence location of online, hybrid and traditional students, Hispanics make up the largest population of students. Over 70% of the hybrid students over the last three years were Hispanic. This was greater than the percentage of Hispanics utilizing any other mode of instructions. There was a greater percentage of Hispanics in traditional courses than in online courses, but the percentage of online students who are Hispanic was still greater than 60%.
The majority of the students at Rio Hondo College reside in areas outside the district boundaries. The above figure shows that students enrolled in hybrid courses are more likely to come from within the district boundaries than those who take purely online or traditional courses. During the summer sessions, traditional students are more likely to be from within the district boundaries than online students but there is little difference in percentages for spring and fall semesters. This indicates that there is no real difference in location for the major terms although there is some difference in the non-standard summer term as students hop for available classes or come from 4-year colleges to enroll at Rio Hondo.

2. How does the program address diversity issues in the staffing, students, etc?
Staffing and student enrollment in online and hybrid courses reflects the diversity of the Rio Hondo District. The online format enables many non-traditional students who would otherwise be unable to continue higher education to pursue educational opportunities. Single mothers and working adults have benefited in particular.

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3. Have there been any changes that may affect the performance of the program?

The Virtual College Committee was reactivated by selecting department representatives in October, 2009. Several meetings were held and it was decided that we should move to the newer 9.0 version of Blackboard. We upgraded the system to 9.0 in June 2010.

We had hoped that the move in the summer would help us identify any problems and that they would be corrected in time for the Fall 2010 semester. There were numerous problems with the new version and Blackboard was notified. Blackboard Officials were made aware of the problems largely due to the VC Coordinator’s attendance at the Blackboard conference and her persistence in finding solutions. As a result, Blackboard Officials have been meeting with key personnel on a monthly basis to address concerns/problems. As part of our effort to get faculty input regarding 9.1, while we are developing the procedures, eight instructors were selected to test Blackboard 9.1 on the test server. To collect their insight, a survey was distributed to the testers. The results will be reported to other faculty and the Academic
Senate.

Another area that affects the efficiency of the program is software and hardware. In order for the technicians to do an efficient job, their hardware and software must keep up with emerging technologies. The same holds true for the training lab where faculty are assisted in developing their course materials. In addition, training of support staff is critical to keep abreast of new technologies and the new features of the Blackboard Learning System.

The following items are needed to bring better services to faculty and students.

A. Hardware:
   1. Scanner
   2. 16 PCs
      
      CPU: Intel Core I7
      Hard Drive: 2 TB
      RAM: 4 GB
      Speed: 3.20 GHZ
   3. 3 new MACs
   4. 16 Web Cameras

B. Software:
   1. Expression 3
   2. Web Accessible Wizard for all computers in lab (9)
   3. MS Office 2010 & Windows 7
   4. Camtasia Studio 7
   5. AccRepair and AccVerify for accessibility

C. Training
   1. BbWorld 2011
   2. OTC11.org Conference
   3. Technology conferences Coordinators and support Staff.

Program's Strengths and Weaknesses

1. What are the program's strengths?

   a. Rio Hondo College was one of the first California Virtual Campus

   Rio Hondo College has made a commitment to online education through Virtual College. Originally funded by a grant, Rio Hondo College served as one of four regional centers for the California Virtual Campus. As part of this responsibility, the College worked with 25 other colleges in the Los Angeles area, providing training, technical assistance, special events, and collaborative effort.

   b. The Virtual College provides online courses in all subjects.
c. The Virtual College provides faculty workshops for faculty interested in developing and teaching online courses.

2. What are the program's weaknesses?

a. Lower retention and success rate compared to traditional classes

Online classes usually have higher enrollment rate but they also have lower retention rates. The Data of California Community College Chancellor's office indicates that the students success rate in online classes is 8.4% lower than the student in traditional classes. The Research Center of Rio Hondo College shows that students success rate in online Information Technology courses is about 15% lower than traditional on-ground Information Technology courses.

### Student Success Rate in online, hybrid and traditional modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Rate</th>
<th>Summer 2007</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
<th>Spring 2008</th>
<th>Summer 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Summer 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>76.60%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
<td>68.40%</td>
<td>77.30%</td>
<td>65.90%</td>
<td>71.40%</td>
<td>74.10%</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>61.40%</td>
<td>44.40%</td>
<td>56.70%</td>
<td>60.20%</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
<td>51.80%</td>
<td>37.70%</td>
<td>37.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>62.40%</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
<td>52.80%</td>
<td>61.30%</td>
<td>51.90%</td>
<td>43.70%</td>
<td>62.60%</td>
<td>50.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Success Rates for Courses Taught in online and Traditional Modes
The table above shows the success rates for courses that are taught both online and in traditional on campus modes. The success rate in online sections is consistently 15 to 20 points lower than the success rates for traditional sections. We may have to review online teaching methods or even the types of courses offered through this mode in order to equalize the results.

b. High cost with Blackboard Course Management System
The Virtual College budget is fixed yet the numbers of students enrolled in online classes continues to grow. This places a strain on network resources and decreases system throughput because more students are using the same resources with upgrades. Additionally, the Blackboard Course Management System continues to increase in cost as the size of the classes increase. The problem is getting worse as the State budget continues to plunge.

c. The Blackboard Course Management System Contains Known Issues
The Blackboard 9.0 version was not an ideal program, which contains many known issues (bugs) that frustrated instructors often. The Distance Education Coordinator had developed a website to post blackboard known issues and work-around methods.

d. The College did not provide the trainings for the Faculty Coordinator and the Support Staff. The faculty coordinator, the support staff and the online instructor had to update the changes of the software without training support.
3. What changes are necessary to improve the program, or is it "good enough as-is"?

The name "Virtual College" was developed as part of the initial grant. The name is now a misnomer as distance education has been institutionalized within the district. Changing the department's name to better reflect the services provided would help to inform the community of the district's resources. The name change will be pursued in the near future. The updating and maintenance of the computer systems and software is necessary to keep up with demands. The following items are necessary:

a. To increase budget for hardware/software upgrades and increases in Blackboard hosting costs
b. To provide training for faculty coordinator, support staff and instructors.
c. To update Virtual College Computer lab to improve the training quality.
d. To create "good teaching practices” to ensure the quality on online teaching.

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Program's Opportunities and Threats

1. Has the nature of what the program deals with changed over the last five years? For example, automation, changes in regulatory laws, and/or new developments in the subject matter of the program.

The recent economic recess helps promote distance education. With benefits like flexibility and convenience, online learning has more students logging on to get a degree.

Online classes have gained in popularity recently. Currently, online learning is one of the most popular forms of learning. According to U.S. Department of Education, at least 2.3 million people took some form of online course in 2004, and two-thirds of colleges offer online courses in addition to traditional classes. According to California Community College Chancellor's office, the enrollment of the online courses grew about 300% from year 2000 to year 2006. The current student population for community colleges is older and more diverse than the student population of the past. These new students prefer flexible schedules over that of traditional educational setting. The fast changes in technology also promote online learning for students and internet technology (IT) employees.

2. What recommendations have been made to the program by other programs or outside agencies? For example, did the last Accreditation report make any comments about the program? Were there any recommendations for the program from an advisory committee?

As the State of California recovers from economic decline, the current capital and human resources may not be sufficient to support the expected demand for technology-based services and information. Therefore, this increased cost must be balanced by an even greater efficiency and alternative delivery of services to a greater number of students. While the present District income and budget mechanism has not improved, the District must make some commitment
to providing and developing a process to support the ongoing investment in the campus network and information infrastructure required to provide these services and to meet the anticipated demand. Therefore, the College will need to implement the new SunGard/Banner MIS System to support the infrastructure as soon as possible.

3. Are there any new Accreditation Standards that the program will need to address? If so, what are they and what opportunities or challenges will the standards provide the program?

Program's Accomplishments and Recommendations for Improvement

Accomplishments:

1. Provided on-going faculty blackboard training classes.
2. Successfully updated to version 9.0.
3. Established a “Known Issues” site for problems and solutions with Blackboard.
4. Provide student Orientations and technical support.
5. Provide faculty technical support.
6. Provide updated information for Blackboard Issues.
Blackboard v.9 Known Issues and Updates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Known Issues/Updates</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/30/2010</td>
<td>BB Known Issues 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>09/08/2010</td>
<td>BB Known Issues 2</td>
<td></td>
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Blackboard v.9 Known Issues

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Issues with Internet Explorer 8 and Blackboard</td>
<td>Using Internet Explorer 8 with Blackboard will cause problems for students attempting to submit tests or use the file upload feature. To avoid these issues it is suggested to use Mozilla Firefox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Copied</td>
<td>When in the Contact area, the breadcrumb trail shows the &quot;Resources&quot; and &quot;Assessment Tools Workshop Presentation&quot;</td>
<td>No known workaround - pending Blackboard solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Provide online, hybrid, and web-enhanced classes.
8. Provide Blackboard 8.0 test accounts for all faculty.
9. A Virtual College Advisory Committee was formed and a newsletter was issued regularly.
10. Faculty training for Blackboard 8.0 was provided by the coordinator of the Virtual College - Shin Liu.

11. Substantive Change Proposal was submitted to Accrediting Commission for Community College, Western Association of Schools and Colleges on February 19, 2009.

12. The Virtual College staff Gabby Olmos, and Zulma Calderon, coordinator Shin Liu, and supervisor Dr. Kats Gustafson received an Innovation & Collaboration award on August 19, 2010. We were nominated for helping faculty work through the numerous issues we have had with the new version of Blackboard.
The Virtual College was developed as a result of a grant from the State Chancellor's Office. Since the ending of the grant, the District has "institutionalize" the Virtual College by providing general funds for support. In addition, the Academic Senate formed a Virtual College Committee which carried forward after the expiration of the grant. In the Spring 2010, a proposal was presented to the Academic Senate to dissolve the Virtual College Committee in order to form a broader-based one that made recommendations for all instructional technologies. In Fall 2010, the Instructional Technology Council was approved by the Senate. This Council will pick up where the Virtual College Committee left off and will focus discussions largely around the quality of online instruction and technology training. The next academic year will be one of planning and re-organizing for the Virtual College as the ITC begins the task of developing processes and recommendations for distance education and instructional technologies.

2. Will demand for the program's services increase, remain stable, or decline in the future?

While the number of courses and the number of students has been growing, the variety of courses appears to have reached a peak and leveled off.

While there are faculty who have expressed an interest in developing new courses, resources are not available for the Virtual College to actively recruit and assist new online faculty in course development.
The Virtual College has continued to grow and thrive, serving more students every year. More and more faculty are venturing onto the web and offering web-enhanced courses.

4. Will the skills required of the individuals working in the program change over time? If so, what will the program need to do to address those changes?

The course management system and the technology used in creating online courses change frequently. The Coordinator and the staff of the Virtual College need to receive trainings to provide updated information to instructors and students.

Program's Staff Development

Program Review - Additional Comments

Program Review - Executive Summary

PROGRAM REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program: Virtual College  Date: November 2, 2010

Committee Members Present: Marie Eckstrom (Chair); Howard Kummerman (Research); Ada Brown (Faculty); Pat Luna (Faculty); Suzanne Frederickson (Classified); Matt Koutroulis (SLO Committee)

Program Members Present: Shin Liu (Faculty Coordinator) and Kats Gustafson (Dean)

Commendations
• Commendations on the steady increase in Virtual College course offerings and number of students served.
• Commendations on working with Blackboard to address technical issues.

Program-Level Recommendations
• Create a Service Area Outcome that can be assessed.
• Describe Virtual College roles and responsibilities more fully in the Program Review; revise program goals and objectives; revise text/data in program review document.
• Investigate, assess, and address ways to improve success rates of online/hybrid courses.
Institutional-Level Recommendations

- Continue to work on ways to address 508 compliance each semester for all online courses and sections.
- Work closely with the newly-formed Instructional Technology Committee to address online, hybrid, web-enhanced and on-ground technology concerns and issues, including best teaching practices.
- Expand in-service technology training for all instructors.
- Increase financial commitment to Virtual College in order to maintain, augment, and upgrade hardware, software, and technical personnel.

Program Review - Response to the Executive Summary

Goal #1  Short term (1 year)  Status:  complete

Description of Goal

Provide consulting and training on technologies that support learning.

Evaluation of Goal

Staff evaluation

Objective #1.1  Status:  complete

Provide at least one staff training workshop each month.

Impact of Objective on Other Programs, Units, and/or Areas

Impact on the Library & Instructional Support Program: Virtual College

Increase instructor training workshops
Existing Resources

The coordinator of the Virtual College provides trainings.

Resources from Other Sources

**Resources from General Fund**

**Required for How Long:** Ongoing

**Requested:** $3,000.00

**Received:** $0.00

**Reason for the difference between the amounts:**

Purchase hardware, software and maintain the server

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**Goal #2** Short term (1 year)  
Status: in progress

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**Description of Goal**

Update the Hardware and Software for the Virtual College Computer lab

**Evaluation of Goal**

Faculty and Staff Evaluation

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**Objective #2.1**  
Status: in progress

A. Hardware:

1. Scanner
2. 16 PCs
3. 3 new MACs
4. 16 Web cameras

B. Software:

1. Expression 3
2. Web Accessible Wizard for all computers in lab (9)
3. MS Office 2010 & Windows 7
4. Camtasia Studio 7
Resources Needed: Additional Budget

Requested Item:
Requested for How Long: 1 time
Requested Amount: $40,000.00
Description:

The hardware and software update are required in one year.

Supporting Rationale

Upgrading the teaching lab is necessary for staff training. In addition, up to date hardware and software is necessary for support staff in order to assist faculty and students.

Goal #3  Long term (2-5 years)  Status: in progress

Description of Goal

The Virtual College Coordinator and support staff require on-going training to keep abreast of new learning technologies.

Evaluation of Goal

Faculty and Staff Evaluation

Objective #3.1  Status: in progress

The following training and conferences are required:

1. BbWorld 2011
2. OTC11.org Conference
3. Technology conferences Coordinators and support staff.

Resources Needed: Additional Budget

Requested Item:
Requested for How Long: Ongoing
Requested Amount: $5,000.00
Description:
The coordinator and the support staff need to receive trainings to provide better services

**Supporting Rationale**

The online course management systems change frequently. The coordinator and the support staff need to update our skills to serve instructors and students.
## Individuals Who Participated in Developing this Plan

The following people acknowledge that they participated in the development of or reviewed this plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liu, Shin</td>
<td>Review Manager</td>
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