Technology Concept Paper

Our values represent the core commitments and beliefs that will guide our actions and our efforts to realize the vision of the Strategic Plan.

V a l u e s   *EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION*

Excellence—We promote the highest level of quality in all programs and services.

Innovation—The colleges and service centers support creative approaches to meet the changing demographic, economic and educational needs of our communities.

Financial Health—We effectively manage resources.

Adopted as part of the district strategic plan by the Peralta Community College Board of Trustees

Evaluation of Data

Purpose and Need

The rapid growth and convergence of sound, graphics and digital computers into integrated technologies has revolutionized the means available for human communication and the ways in which information resources are created, stored, shared, and accessed. Consequently, this has affected a transformation in regard to how academic programs are structured and delivered, how information resources get managed and accessed, how information is accessed, and how information is provided in support of the instructional, administrative and student support functions of the district. This transformation has affected changes in enrollment and curriculum administration; online course management, and the interaction between instructors, students, staff and administration.

The past five years have seen an explosion in the number of computer-mediated courses offered within the district. As technology continues to advance, so will its impact on teaching and learning; and even online education, once thought to serve a small niche of students, has moved into the mainstream of higher education. As our students, many of whom have full-time jobs and family responsibilities, enroll in online courses because of the ease of scheduling and remote access, PCCD must not only establish standards for online courses; but provide faculty, staff and students technology-enhanced support services, acquire state-of-the-art technology to maintain educational currency, and develop a coordinated, district-wide effort to support the colleges implement their articulated strategic plans.

This paper focuses on key technology areas integral to ongoing operations within the district. It is felt that these areas must be addressed in order for the colleges

to move forward in a uniform manner to stay abreast of changing technology and to insure sustained growth, fiscal stability and competitive advantage; thereby positioning themselves as institutions of choice for students.

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COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Collaboration—The colleges and service centers use a consultative decision-making process based on trust, communication and critical thinking.
Trust—We support one another's integrity, strength and ability.
Employee Development—We promote the development of all employees.
Communication—We seek first to understand, then be understood.
Respect—We treat one another with care and respect.

Description of Current Efforts

This concept paper serves to inform the strategic plan in defining the role and scope for the use of information and communication technologies within the Peralta Community College District. As such, the following encompasses the areas of:

- Online/distance education. Efforts at the district level include modest marketing, limited technology support, and some professional development opportunities. There is considerable student enthusiasm for online education. This, coupled with the efforts of some faculty, has resulted in initial successes for online courses. Average enrollment, persistence and retention is higher in distance education/online courses. Over 700 FTES have been generated by online courses alone in the past two years. And, this is an identified area of grown and expansion (McIntyre Environmental Scan, 2007).

- Teacher Certification. Informal efforts have been initiated at the colleges to require instructors who teach online courses to receive training in at least one course management system. However, the District Academic Senate has proposed guidelines on the *"Assignment of Instructors' to Online Courses"* (Attachment 1); and the Peralta Federation of Teachers has a tentative agreement regarding Distance Education in Article 33 (available at: http://www.pft1603.org/page11.html)

- Learning Management Systems (LMS). The Vice Chancellor of Educational Services made a recommendation to the PCCD Board of

Trustees, May 22, 2007 to adopt *Etudes-NG* as an interim solution to the online course management system (now called Learning Management System). This recommendation was approved and is included as Attachment 2. Due to several external factors, the evaluation of various LMS systems has been delayed. In an effort to jump-start the process the following criteria have been proposed.

- Evaluation Criteria (not weighted, listed in alphabetical order).
    1) <u>Assessment</u>. Is student assessment built into the system? Faculty Assessment? Questionnaires/Survey instruments built-in?
    2) <u>Conversion Expense</u>. If applicable, what is the cost to move existing online/hybrid courses from the current platform to another? Is this cost including upfront costs? Are these costs borne by the district?; etc.
    3) <u>Cost</u>. What is the initial start-up and ongoing maintenance costs?
    4) <u>Ease of Use/Learning Curb</u>. Is the use of the software intuitive? User-friendly? How steep is the learning curb?; etc.
    5) Stability of the online platform. Is this a stable operating system? Is the architecture sound?
    6) <u>Functionality</u>. How does the system work, both as a stand-alone product and with the *Passport* Student Administration System (*PeopleSoft*)?
    7) <u>Hosting</u>. Does the system allow for hosting versus an open learning support center maintained by the vendor?
    8) <u>Pedagogical Adequacy</u>. Are components built into the LMS that allow for threaded conversations, webmail, chat rooms, collaborative learning, etc
    9) <u>Portability</u>. Does the LMS allow for integration of student rosters and/or grades into *Passport*, the Student Administration System?
    10) <u>Online Support Center</u>. Is it a 24/7 operation? Does the LMS allow for sharing of resources to minimize cost?
    11) <u>Resource Tools</u>. Does the LMS have test bank accessibility? Does it interface with major publishing companies?
    12) <u>Technical Staff and/or Faculty Training</u>. Is there a requirement to train technical staff on ongoing maintenance prior to implementation and migration from the current LMS? What about training faculty, how much training is provided/required?
    13) <u>Technical Support</u>. Is there technical support to the district/colleges? To students? And, are there any associated costs for these services?
    14) <u>Version Updates</u>. What is required? Is there a flat or incremental cost associated with updates?
    15) <u>Well-known/widely adopted</u>. Who has adopted this software? Is it being used by other community colleges (e.g. Bay Area Top 10, feeder colleges and universities, etc.)?

- Incubator Projects. It is recommended that incubation projects be continuous in order to make recommendations on the future adoption of educational technology within the district.

- Curriculum Management Software (CMS) A recommendation has gone forward from CIPD to the Senior Management Team to adopt *CurricuNet®* as the district-wide software solution. It is anticipated that action on this proposal will take place prior to the adoption of the District Draft Strategic Plan in December 2007.

- *Peralta* portal. Recommendation from the Technology Strategic Planning Task Force is to establish a common portal that allows students access to all the district's online resources.

- Instructional Technology in the Classrooms. A core belief of the Peralta colleges is that students should have high quality education, with access to all who can benefit from instruction. While this traditional "open door" policy provides access to all, at the same time it creates disparate classrooms comprised of students of various abilities, preparedness, and aptitudes. While recognizing that these factors exist, the use of technology and other classroom instructional methods should take advantage of research on multiple learning styles, cognitive development and instructional pedagogies. Acquisition of classroom technology should be driven by research which shows that instructors desire technology that provides active learning solutions, one in which pedagogy drives technology.

- Administrative Systems. Pending – this topic will be addressed during the first quarter of 2008 working with the Business Readiness Teams (BRTs) and RWD Consultants.

Internal/External Data

Data from the State Chancellor's Office and anecdotal evidence suggests Peralta's average student enrollment in distance education courses is consistent with state data. Peralta lags behind other California Community Colleges in funding and must provide adequate support staff, student services, technology acquisition, and professional development opportunities to ensure successful online education efforts.

Best Practices

PCCD's online courses are built upon the best practices model suggested by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (www.ihep.org). Best practices areas include institutional support, course development, course structure, student services support, faculty support, evaluation, and assessment. These best practices align themselves with our values and commitment to students; recognizing that student success in an increasingly competitive job market requires training and that students transferring to four-year institutions require computer competency skills.

Standards

Academic excellence for online education efforts is the standard for PCCD faculty. Through the District Staff Development Officer, CIPD, DAS and local curriculum committees, the District will assist the Colleges in assuring that any and all accessibility and usability standards supporting ADA guidelines will be followed. District efforts should be aimed at providing sufficient funding to successfully develop a premier distance education program in California. .Standards must also include methods of assessment and evaluation.

Strategy and Goals

Educational Principles

The PCCD Online Education Program will be developed in accordance with state and national distance education best practices. As part of these efforts, PCCD service centers will need to facilitate collaboration among the colleges, identify and implement training opportunities, insure students receive proper counseling, tutoring and other online support services, as well as develop internal support networks for faculty, administration, staff, and students.

Colleges are encouraged to identify and develop their own role in online education according to their individual strengths and educational plans. The district's role is to assist the campuses in applying their course/student learning assessments and outcomes to distance education courses.

Quantitative and Qualitative Goals

Qualitative:
- Comply with accessibility and usability guidelines and requirements
- Make use of state-of-the-art online technology.
- Integrate Student Services with online programs
- Train high-quality educators in the use of technology.
- Develop academically rigorous online courses.
- Develop online courses that fit the strategic plans of individual campuses.
- Post schedule of online and hybrid classes on a centralized web portal *Peralta Online*.
- Engage students to participate through a variety of modes; including technology that promotes active learning that allows for real-time responses from students, such as CCCConfer, webcasting, *Camtasia*®, *Captivate*®, etc.
- Personalize communication with students by using communication tools that add personality to classrooms and online courses, for example, avatars.
- Enhance instructor efficacy by automating routine tasks such as grade books, test generators, and other administrative tasks.
- Seek out collaborative/cooperative learning technologies that support team/group work.
- Insure all technology enhanced classrooms should have proper infrastructure/hardware and software tools that meet or exceed accessibility standards.

Quantitative Goals
- Increase FTES without affecting the physical plant structure
- Increase District enrollment by at least 2% per academic year.
- Hire at least one full-time online education technical support person at each campus.
- Provide funding for .5 FTE for institutional support for distance education on each campus.
- Increase community access to education
- Increase the number of qualified online instructors
- Increase inter-campus collaboration
- Increase marketing efforts to effectively reach target populations by including online course possibilities in all PCCD marketing material (target populations include students with scheduling difficulties, students within district who can't come to campus, students out of district, etc.).

- Create active instructional technology groups and/or committees on each campus to:
  - o Be an active force in the discussion and generation of ideas related to instructional technology and its strategic use.
  - o Share/collaborate across the District on instructional technology to reach more people and to improve teaching and learning.
  - o Be actively engaged in activities that support effective use of instructional technology. Example Ocotillo group: http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/forum/fall02/ocotillo.html

- Increase funding through Measure A bond funds and other sources for purchasing new technology relevant to the goals of each campus and the role of the District as a support agent.
- Create permanent budget line items to support professional development opportunities, marketing, and other related activities to enhance educational technology
- Increase comprehension and retention through technologies that allow for *instant* assessment of student comprehension and create an interactive environment.
- Students with Disabilities. Classroom technology should provide opportunities for increased participation and accessibility options for students with disabilities.

Strategies

- Individual campuses must take the lead in aggressively developing online education plans.
- The District will facilitate and support collaboration between campus distance education committees.
- All technology purchases should be guided by district and college goals:
  - Provide high quality education
  - Ensure relevance to student and community needs
  - Emphasize revitalizing programs through staff development, community outreach, use of best practices, and innovative scheduling and delivery; and
  - Respect for all contract provisions as they relate to technology and technology delivery systems.

Performance Standards and Evaluation Approach

Qualitative and quantitative goals above include evaluation criteria; however quantitative measures that are consistent between each college need to be identified and baseline standards established.

Timeline (depends on adequate funding)

- Campuses complete initial articulation of individual technology/ plans as part of the Strategic Plan by December 2007.

- LMS demonstration and evaluation – Spring and Fall 2008. A timeline for completing the recommendations should be prior to June 2008, with migration to the new system (if applicable) being initiated in summer 2008. Complete migration should take place no later than Spring 2009.

- Reconvene committee formed in Spring 2007 to report on Course Management System findings, in conjunction with incubation project reports and campus DE plans – Spring 2008.

- Integration of student support services--*PeopleSoft* software application 2007-2009

- Infrastructure development – campus-wide 2007-08, district-wide 2008-09

- Additional staffing – 200-2009

- Course delivery system(s) established, supported and fully functioning – 2008-2009

- Faculty training – ongoing, begins Fall 2007.

- Evaluation, assessment, and outcome development – ongoing, began Spring 2007

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