The University of Hawai'i Community Colleges' Online Learning Strategic Plan

GOAL 1,2,3,4,5
DESCRIPTION
OUTCOMES
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DATA REPORTING
FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Overview

As an important subset of distance learning, online learning presents important challenges and opportunities for the educational institution, for teachers, and for students.

The University of Hawai'i Community Colleges' Online Learning Strategic Plan defines a common vision for online education within the UHCC system. The plan establishes comprehensive strategic goals and charts the steps to success for the coordinated implementation of online learning across the system.

The strategic plan positions the community colleges in Hawai'i to respond effectively and efficiently to the changing workforce needs of Hawai'i's people, to growth in demand for education, and to rapidly changing technological and pedagogical opportunities.

References

http://www.hawaii.edu/offices/cc/strategicplan.html

Vision

The University of Hawai'i Community College System will gain local and national recognition as a leader in providing open access college-level education by removing barriers that restrict access to online learning, by increasing the equality of educational opportunities for learners, including under-served populations in Hawaii and by responding to emerging technologies in proactive and innovative ways.

Mission

The University of Hawai'i Community College System (UHCC) is dedicated to providing open access to online learning that connects learner and community needs with educational resources, appropriate technology, and a variety of instructional pedagogies. The system will support online learning by providing leadership in the planning, promotion, support, and administration of online courses and programs, by establishing standards and encouraging shared goals wherever appropriate, and by using collective resources and organizing inter-campus cooperation wherever economies of scale apply.

Goals

1. Increase the number and diversity of online courses, programs, and degrees available.
2. Improve student engagement, especially for under-served and indigenous populations, by enhancing open access, student support, and educational achievement.
3. Provide professional development opportunities for faculty.
4. Encourage symmetry in policy, technology, pedagogy, and administration between campuses and with the Community College system and beyond.
5. Promote collaboration with outside groups to ensure that the UHCC system is responding to the career, technical and social needs of the communities it serves.

Goal #1 - Increase the number of online courses and programs to meet the needs and goals of students, the business community, and the state.

Description

The University of Hawai'i community college system is committed to expanding the educational opportunities of people in the state, the Pacific, and the world.

The UHCC shall facilitate the development of online programs by calling together stakeholders from around the system, by identifying and helping to secure resources, and by encouraging cooperation between colleges so that the community colleges in the system can support the programmatic goals of each college.

The review of programs and courses shall primarily be the responsibility of individual colleges. The UHCC would help with program assessment, encourage improvement, and facilitate connections between our programs and external entities such as accreditation bodies and professional associations.

The availability of opportunities shall be improved through print and digital publications. With the help of the community colleges, the UHCC shall ensure that there a list of online programs and courses available on the web. The list may be part of a larger list, such as one maintained by the University of Hawaii on the Distance Learning website.

As part of the development of courses and programs, the UHCC system shall encourage colleges in the system to create, deliver, and evaluate distance learning courses and student learning outcomes that corresponds to expectations of face-to-face courses.

The UHCC system shall help systematize, where possible, the collection of data on online courses and services, including faculty and student end-of-course surveys, electronic point of-contact surveys, and student focus groups.

The system ought to encourage sensible growth of programs connected to the needs of the state.

Outcomes for Goal #1

1. Create 5- year schedule for an online A.A. degree offered by UHCC campuses in the first year.
2. Create and deploy an online A.A. degree within the second year. Appropriate support services such as advising, registration, and library will be in place.
3. A.A. online course scheduling must be independent of specific faculty members teaching the course. (Currently, courses are sometimes designed, taught, and owned by individual faculty members and they can choose if they want to teach the course or not).
4. Determine the top 2-3 workforce development opportunities based on state data, needs assessment, and industry focus groups within the first year.
5. Deploy online workforce training (job training and retraining) in the identified areas (see 4).
6. Deploy coordinating oversight committee to create the 5-year schedule, determine courses and programs, assess data, propose policies (course scheduling and individual campus assignment of courses offered) and other changes.
7. The UHCC System will acquire external funding to create open online courses that can be used by all of the campuses.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

1. Create 5-year schedule

2. Create and deploy an online A.A. degree

5. Deploy online workforce training

4. Determine the top 2-3 workforce development opportunities

3. Course scheduling must be independent of specific faculty

6. Deploy coordinating oversight committee

7. Acquire external funding for open courses
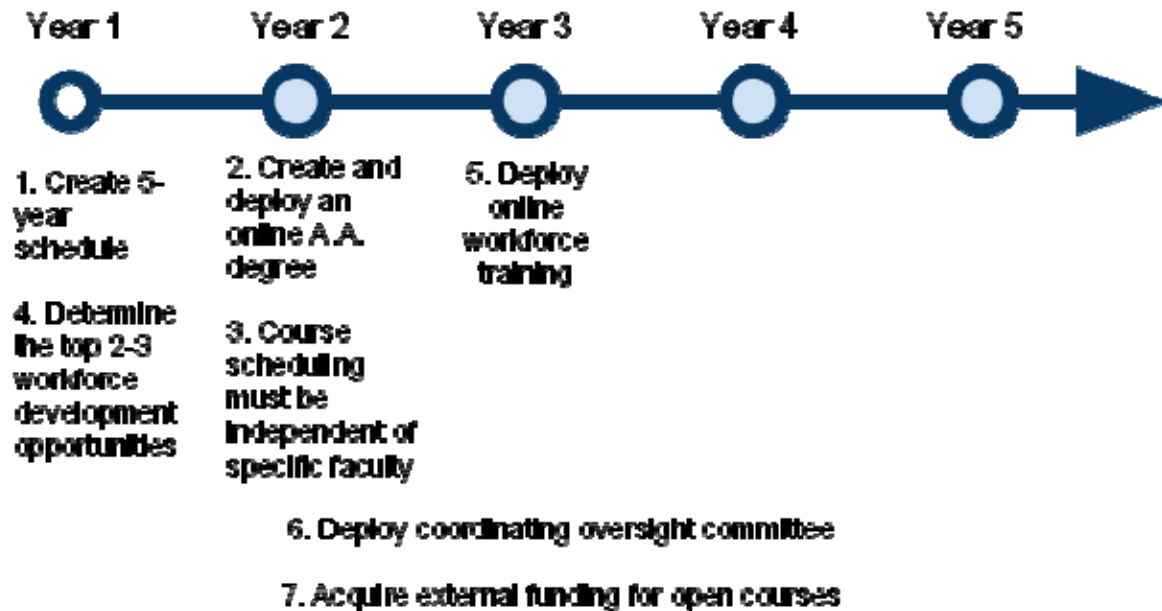
Strategic Considerations
Courses and Programs are the purview of specific colleges. There is a need for a system plan that commits each of the colleges to work together to develop online course and programs..

Assessment
The assessment of educational opportunities can be measured in terms of the following basic data points:
1. the number of online classes offered in each semester
2. the number of different courses available
3. the number of programs that are completely online
4. the relative portion of a program that can be completed with online courses
5. the enrollment in online courses in each semester
6. the number of students receiving a certificate or degree each year
Compare growth and enrollment of distance education courses with non-distance education courses
Similar data can be collected for hybrid courses.

Goal #2. Enhance open access and student support, especially for under-served and indigenous populations, and educational achievement.

The UHCC system office is committed to use online technology to provide access to general education as well as career and technology education programs to students throughout the

state and in particular students in under-served regions as identified in the strategic outcome 2.5.

Given that the system ought to support the seamless movement of students taking online courses from different colleges in the system, the UHCC system office shall help facilitate the coordination of student service, including counseling, financial aid, technical support, and library services. They system will also ensure appropriate services are available for students at a distance including advising, bookstore, career planning and placement, disability accommodations, early alert, financial aid, library, registration, technical support, and tutoring.

The UHCC shall support system-level training and certification for faculty teaching online courses by promoting and funding training opportunities and encouraging system-level committees to establish common skills and practices. The UHCC shall encourage coherent and quality course design through trainings, publications, promoting good practices, and making course materials available for college faculty.

Outcomes for Goal #2

1. Develop a UHCC system website for online learning by the end of the first year that supports online instruction and larger logistical concerns.
2. Develop a one-stop online student support site by the end of year 3. The UHCC System will coordinate and ensure delivery of online admissions and student services including: registration, counseling, financial aid, payment, technical support, tutoring, and library services. (Online students will no longer need to physically go to a campus for these services).
3. The UHCC System will acquire external funding to increase the number of under-served and indigenous populations by 25% over the next 5 years.
4. The UHCC System will acquire external funding by the end of the first year to develop a one-stop online student support site.
5. Provide alternate methods to allow open access to online classes by the end of the first year (i.e. you can try an online course without going through the admissions process)
6. Collect and compare data for students taking online vs non online courses and programs.

Goal #3. Provide faculty development opportunities aligned to research, theory, and recommended practices.

Research in online learning is constantly evolving as new technologies and strategies are developed, tested, and adapted to varied contexts. While faculty will often pursue independent development opportunities, a more effective approach overall is for the UHCC system to provide support and other resources to online teachers in the form of research information, training opportunities, and recommendations. This support can be either formal or informal, ongoing or sporadic.

Because learning takes place throughout the UH system, the colleges will ought to create symmetry regarding courses and delivery and policy by responding as a system to emerging technologies and by providing leadership in the planning, promotion, support, and administration of online courses and programs

In order to foster appropriate use of distance learning pedagogy's and technologies and encourage development of innovative approaches to distance teaching, opportunities must be provided for faculty to learn and make choices about a range of ways in which they can enhance their interaction with students.
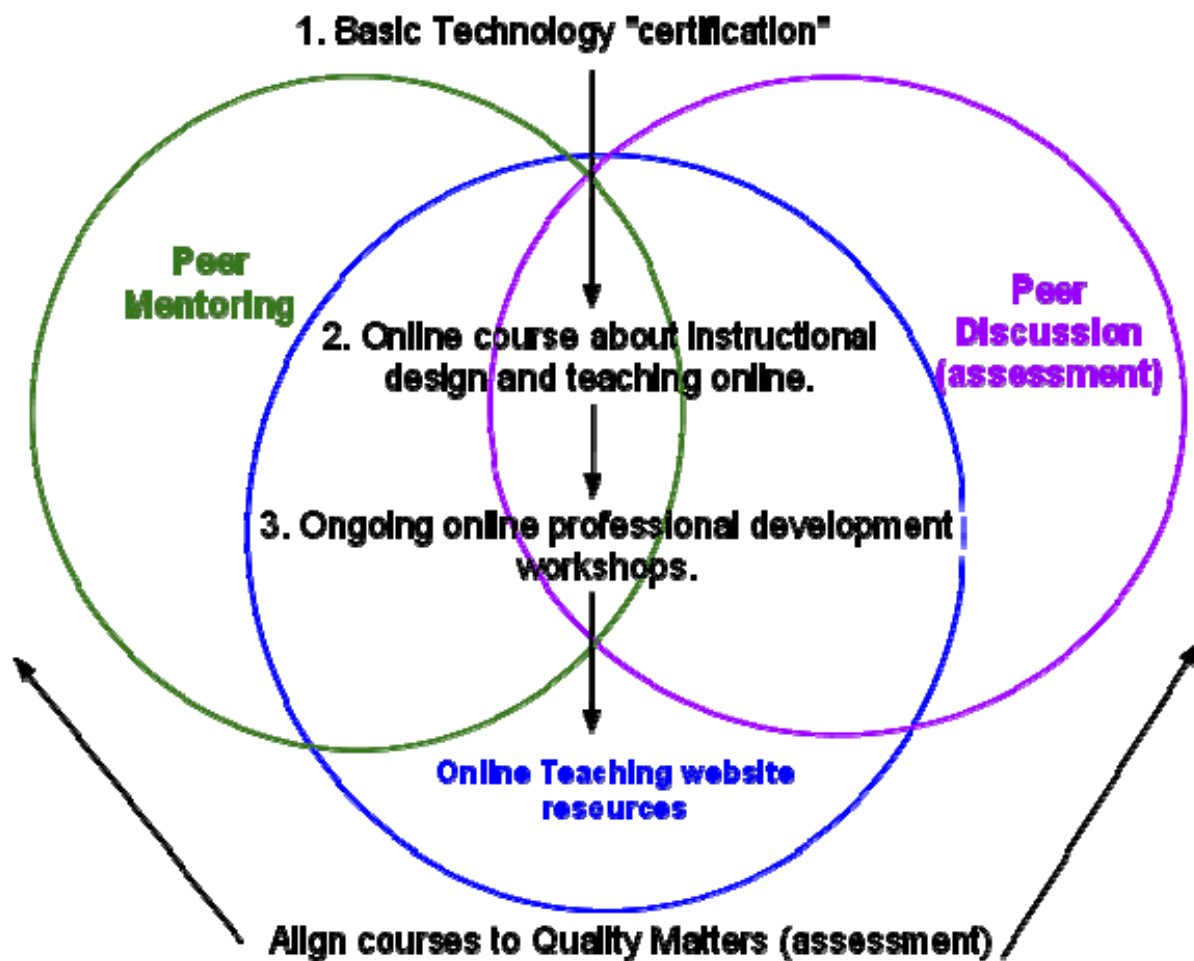
Outcomes for Goal #3

1. Acquire external funding to develop a comprehensive online faculty development program by the end of first year.
2. Establish baseline (minimum and desired levels?) technology skills required to teach online by the end of the first year.
3. Provide training and assessment of baseline minimum technology skills to certify faculty technology skills before they can begin the professional development process to teach online by the end of the first year.
4. Develop a mentoring process for online faculty by the end of the second year.
5. Develop a systemic online course design process that fosters appropriate interaction between instructor and students, and among students and content by the end of the second year.
6. Develop an online one stop Faculty Resource Center website by the end of the second year that includes a guide to best practices and documentation of procedures and policies.
7. Develop an online course for faculty introducing online instructional design and how to teach online by the end of the first year.
8. Develop regularly scheduled periodic training online workshops for faculty in the areas of pedagogy and the use of technology tools by the end of the third year.
9. Implement an informal peer discussion process for faculty exchange of methods, approaches, technologies, data, and ideas aimed at improving the effectiveness of online courses by the end of the second year.
10. Implement the Quality Matters (QM) framework for assessment to enhance consistency and quality by the end of the second year.

Assessment

- Survey online faculty about assessment and improvement of online courses.
- Course evaluations and student focus groups
- Distance faculty and course evaluations
- Percent of new online courses created and assessed using the QM framework
- Number of faculty completing professional development initiatives

Systematic Online Course Design and Delivery Process

1. Basic Technology "certification"

Peer Mentoring

2. Online course about instructional design and teaching online.

Peer Discussion (assessment)

3. Ongoing online professional development workshops.

Online Teaching website resources

Align courses to Quality Matters (assessment)

Goal #4.   Encourage symmetry in policy, technology, pedagogy, and administration between campuses and with the Community College system and beyond.

The UHCC system office shall develop a more co-ordinated approach to addressing learner needs, improving student success and better support for students to achieve their learning goals. The colleges shall work to improve collaboration and foster open dialogue, interpersonal networking and communications throughout the UHCC system.

The UHCC system shall monitor overall effectiveness of its distance education program/courses to assure alignment with institutional priorities, achievement of student educational objectives, and congruency with ACCJC expectations.

When developing and maintaining the technological infrastructure, the UHCC Office shall identify, create and maintain collective resources to enhance the effectiveness of online courses and programs at the community colleges. For instance, when viable, the system shall facilitate the acquisition and deployment of specialized equipment and software is used that would not be justifiable for a single college to purchase.

The UHCC Office may provide technical support for, and encourage the coordination between to support student learning and institutional effectiveness, including the identification and indexing of common resources such as shared library resources, tutorials, and learning guides.

Outcomes for Goal #4
1. Collect data to identify who online students are, where they are located, and the technology they use to access online courses over the 5-year period of the strategic plan.
2. Collect data to identify student success and retention in online courses over the 5-year period of the strategic plan.
3. Derive a common set of definitions for Banner, Institutional Research, etc. by the end of the first year
4. Publish data to the online website by the end of the first year.
5. Adopt common standards and terminology based on the Quality Matters rubric for online course delivery by the end of the first year.
6. Establish an online course review process based on the processes established in Goal #3 by the end of the first year.
7. Ensure that online courses meet requirements for accessibility.
8. Establish guidelines for Financial Aid, Admissions and Student Services by the end of the first year.
9. Establish a common set of definitions and reporting procedures to be used for Banner, Institutional Research, etc.by the end of the first year.
10. Establish a cycle of sustainable, continuous quality improvement through survey instruments, data collection, program review, and other institutional effectiveness practices by the end of the first year.
11. Ensure that proctoring and the administration of examinations is secure and consistent throughout the system.
12. Create a Coordinating Council for Online Learning that will help coordinate equivalent programs (to allow more than one college to have the same online programs)

Goal #5. Promote collaboration with outside groups to ensure that the UHCC system is responding to the career, technical and social needs of the communities it serves.

An effective online learning program must ultimately tie the teaching skills and resources of the colleges with the needs of the community, including workforce training. The UHCC system must prepare students for high-skill, high-wage professions by identifying what skills will be needed in the future and how those skills can be taught through online education. The colleges must ensure the curriculum aligns with industry standards and that, wherever appropriate, educators and employers collaborate to ensure that the best skills are taught in the best ways possible.

Outcomes for Goal #5
1. Conduct at least one survey in each of the under-served regions to identify training and re-training needs
2. Survey emerging fields worldwide that have high-skill, high-wage occupations and identify those that are viable in Hawaii.
3. Provide at least 2 complete online programs per year that are aligned to community and industry needs
4. Conduct an external assessment of effectiveness of all online programs to meet community and industry needs.
5. Collect and assess data for student success, transfer, and job placement
6. Foster vital alliances with business and industry to advance mutually beneficial educational goals for employment, which can be measured in terms of formal agreements with the colleges.

Data

number of courses; number of sections; in what discipline
attrition numbers
enrollments in hybrid (% relative to online to face to face and all enrollments)
enrollments in online (% relative to online to face to face and all enrollments)
success counts
how many students are taking courses from out of state
how many students are taking online courses in other states

campus origin numbers
ethnicity and gender participation
faculty involvement (how many faculty are teaching hy, online, other)
faculty profiles (FT, adjunct, etc) and % of faculty load
first time faculty teaching
student use of online sources (library materials etc)
student use of online counseling, financial aid, etc

Definitions

Distance Education

Online
Instruction delivered to students who are separated from the instructor; regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor exists
May be synchronous or asynchronous
May use Internet, one-way or two-way transmissions through open or closed circuit, cable, satellite, wireless devices, audio conferencing, video, DVDs or CD-ROMs, etc

Hybrid
where a balance of class meetings are delivered both online and face to face
an alternate schedule where some part of the 3 hour contact time

A course is considered hybrid (or blended) when it has the following basic characteristics:
- The course is a carefully designed integration of online and face-to-face experiences using the best aspects of both environments to meet the learning objectives.
- A significant portion of traditional face-to-face class time is replaced by online components.

A hybrid course is defined as one for which regularly scheduled classroom time is replaced consistently throughout the quarter by required activities completed at distance and managed online. The following parameters further define the hybrid course:
- The face-to face component must be between 40% and 60% of the total course hours. For example, a course may meet 50% face-to-face and 50% on-line. The rationale for this requirement is as follows:
  A standard ratio provides predictability for students and for the course scheduling process.

This ratio is in line with the community standard. Virtually all of the community colleges which offer hybrid courses define them as 49% on-line and 51% face-to-face, or visa versa.

There needs to be an upper and a lower limit set on the ratio so as to define a hybrid course separately from a web-enhanced course or an online course.

- The ratio of face-to-face versus on-line time for each course offering must be established beforehand and cannot be altered during the quarter. Further, both face-to-face and on-line times must be scheduled at regularly spaced intervals throughout the quarter. For example, it is not acceptable to meet for the first half of the quarter face-to-face and then finish the quarter on-line. Face-to-face meetings should occur at least every other week. A course schedule clearly outlining the meeting dates of the course shall be provided in the quarterly schedule. The course schedule should also note that the course is hybrid and that it is delivered partially online.
- The online portion of the class should utilize a course management system or equivalent technology.

To accommodate variations in course content and delivery modes, exceptions can be made to the above guidelines. However, to ensure predictability for students, these exceptions will require approval of the vice president for academic affairs. Requests should briefly state a rationale and should be copied to the division chair.

References

DE Strategic Plans