

Three Top Priorities For Developing and Altering Current Initiatives in Supporting Educational Technologies

I. Put resources into online education

Interest in online learning at the course level at SDSU and across the CSU is immense, and institutional program-level interest is expanding. For instance, from 2008 to 2011, SDSU student enrollment in Academic Affairs-supported fully online summer courses grew over 700%. This is in line with a trend highlighted in a 2011 report from the CSU Chancellor's Office¹ which stated, "in every student survey of the past decade, [students] consistently rated 'access to online courses' as their second most important priority for a college education (just behind workforce preparation)."

Institutional interest at SDSU in developing online courses and programs seems to be growing at a similar rate. For example, the College of Business Administration, the School of Nursing, the School of Public Affairs and the School of Hospitality & Tourism Management are all actively considering, creating or implementing their own online degree programs at the graduate level. Looking forward, online education demands just as much, if not more, of the combined academic technology resources of the university.

1. **Increase online efforts at the program level, as well as the course level.** Experiment with general fund degree programs; monitor CSU-wide online education initiatives; provide essential student support services online such as advising, financial aid, and tutoring. Reframe the Course Design Institute as the *Curriculum Design Institute* and evolve this popular faculty development initiative from a course-centric to a program-level focus.
2. **Modify processes and policies to support online and blended learning.** There are many logistical and process considerations that can support online learning at SDSU, such as rethinking course designations, considering an on-campus testing center for students to take proctored course exams, and building accessibility into the course approval and review process.
3. **Improve core technologies for delivery, interaction and engagement.** Leading practice suggests that universities update core technologies approximately every three years. For SDSU, that means meeting the demand for technology-rich physical learning spaces, as well as online / virtual learning spaces via web-conferencing, lecture recording / archiving, and streaming media.
4. **Embrace learning analytics.** As students arrive at SDSU with extreme differences in readiness, goals and needs, learning analytics can help faculty spot trends, and help faculty and students make informed choices. Learning analytics provides accountability and alerts about performance problems that can then trigger timely interventions and assistance. This data helps personalize learning via adaptive systems that change dynamically in response to student activities, tailoring recommendations based on performance criteria. We suggest conducting a pilot study to examine the impact of learning analytics on student success vis-à-vis student activity within the learning management system (LMS).

¹ Katz & Associates, 2011. *Distance and Online Education in the CSU: A Brief History*. Report prepared for the California State University Chancellor's Office.

II. Strengthen college partnerships with ITS

Extend formal collaborations between colleges and ITS to further a campus-wide approach to high quality design, development, support, and delivery of face-to-face as well as hybrid/online courses, certificates, programs, and degrees.

1. **Expand local instructional designer concept.** Strategic collaboration between ITS faculty consultants and college-based instructional designers (IDers) provide opportunities for faculty development that might not otherwise be available to individual faculty. The relationships between IDers and ITS are critical to disseminating instructional technology strategies to the colleges and then sharing best practices with ITS for wider dissemination across campus.
2. **Recruit faculty champions.** Faculty development is most effective when it is faculty-driven and discipline-specific. ITS hopes to recruit an instructor from each college to work closely with ITS and serve for one academic year as an example, resource, and mentor for their colleagues. Through this two-way channel, faculty can provide their college with information and expertise about instructional technology and pedagogy, and provide ITS staff with further insight into faculty and student needs.

III. Elevate the strategic role of ITS

Three demands continue to stretch the university: a push for more student and faculty research, the rising interest online learning, and the need for more state-of-the-art technology-rich physical learning spaces. As these activities increase, Instructional Technology Services plays an even more central, strategic role.

Now more than ever, SDSU needs academic technology leadership with specialized skills and competencies to provide integrated planning and delivery of a suite of academic technology products, services, and support to the campus as well as to set policy and standards, and to champion new approaches across the university. Therefore, we recommend expanding the institutional role of the ITS Director – the university’s senior instructional technology leader. In a more strategic role, the ITS Director would be better able to do the following:

- Create stronger ties and integrated planning with other areas of Academic Affairs, such as the colleges, Division of Undergraduate Studies, Enrollment Services and the Library.
- Extend partnerships with the Faculty Senate, Enterprise Technology Services, Center for Teaching & Learning, College of Extended Studies, and other campus areas as appropriate to work collaboratively toward institutional strategic goals that can be addressed by instructional technology and learning analytics.
- Provide leadership in operational and strategic planning and policy related to curriculum development, online education, and instructional technology initiatives that facilitate achievement of the university's strategic goals; ensure that academic technology issues and requirements are incorporated into the university's overall technology plan.
- Provide high-level leadership and direction for instructional technology support staff, ensuring efficient and effective utilization of human resources with an emphasis on high quality service.