

2024 Non-Instructional Program Review

Reviewing 2022/23 Academic Year



Program/Department: Distance Education

Completed by Rachael Sweeten

1. Please provide your position and department:

Director of Online Learning (DOL)

2. Please identify the non-instructional program you are reviewing.

LTCC Office of Online Learning/Distance Education

3. Describe how your department supports the vision, mission, and beliefs of Lake Tahoe Community College.

The department supports the vision, mission, and beliefs of LTCC by maximizing course delivery tools, quality assurance, and human effort in support of student success, at a local and regional level. Global-level contributions are aspirational, achieved in part by modeling best practices for online course design & delivery to empower students and educators, as well as through contributing Best Practices articles to the Canvas User Community. Recognizing that excellence in the technological aspects of education is an ongoing process and a direction of growth rather than a set destination, the DOL stays current with trends and best practices that continually add to LTCC's Vision with a focus on access and consistency to showcase our innovations.

4. Do you have a **supervisor approved** alternative for this Annual Program Review? If so, please be prepared to upload the approved alternative, as a PDF, in the next prompt.

No.

5. What are the major strengths of your department?

DOL firmly believes that having polished and reliable course materials reduces faculty stress levels, freeing their creativity for direct engagement with students (in a good mood!) To that end, DOL collaborates with IT, the Instruction Office, and key committees to locate and address pain points that detract from the ideal experience for faculty and students.

The major strengths of the Office of Online Learning are willingness to assist, experience with higher ed technology, extensive instructional design training, and compassion for the challenges and workloads of faculty, staff and students. User Experience (UX) testing experience with Canvas focuses DOL efforts on consistency and accessibility for student benefit. At the administrative level, DOL participates in key committees to review policies, terminology and documentation that align our efforts with CCC/DOE quality standards, requirements, and best practices. Faculty receive direct individual support and group training on how to organize and deliver their curriculum in Canvas LMS in support of student-centered access, clarity, and flexibility. DOL fulfills support requests for Canvas LMS, Cranium, and related software systems in collaboration with IT, the Instruction Office, Academic Counselors, etc., with a goal of continual improvement.

6. In what ways could your department improve to better meet the needs of the College and support student success?

To better meet the needs of the college and support student success, DOL is committed to ongoing improvement, refining the functionality and flow of online courses, including the online portion of all courses. The department could assist with organizing locations and processes for centralized record-keeping, documentation (knowledge base), and support information that assist faculty and student success. By investigating and reviewing areas of "overlap" in

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departments and systems, I can contribute key improvements.

As with all administrators, DOL is striving to find a balance between attending meetings to find out what is happening or needs to happen, and then guarding time to actually implement the discussed changes. As tasks increase, I can improve in tracking projects and formalizing them in project management software for shareability. I can do more to learn college processes and norms, asking for assistance, getting expert input, and prioritizing in alignment with the vision of leadership.

7. What are the biggest challenges your department may face in making these improvements?

Prioritizing needs is an ongoing challenge, as the flow of service requests rightly interrupts other duties.

Locating existing documents and policies for review and updating is a necessary, yet cumbersome process. As with all college departments, the Office of Online Learning will be better able to meet needs and scale solutions with additional man hours in the form of budget (to outsource tasks, purchase equipment, etc.) or additional staff to implement improvements directly, in addition to teaching faculty how to do the same tasks. For example: an instructional designer can generate a steady stream of reviewed and accessible courses for online delivery in addition to, or in place of consuming significant faculty time for training, Canvas course review, and implementing solutions. While it will remain important to train faculty and ensure they are responsible for their own course quality, a dedicated technologist could bring the collected LTCC curriculum into compliance more quickly and reliably, allowing greater reliance on faculty training for ongoing maintenance.

On a personal note, the DOL faces challenges of acquiring institutional history and norms, in order to determine where key improvements will deliver the greatest benefit. For example, given the volume of email I receive, it will be helpful to separate faculty need & service requests from administrative information. A customer service ticketing system for IT and Canvas would be useful. If a new system is not on the horizon, I would like to revisit adding me to SchoolDude and directing faculty to send service requests to that neutral "bucket" rather than my school email, as a best practice. Such an adjustment helps ensure quicker turnaround on support requests with less disruption from vacations, sick days, etc.

8. If there is additional information you wish to provide that wasn't addressed in this survey, please do so here.