



For release: Nov. 12, 2013

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FOOTHILL-DE ANZA TO LEAD \$16.9M STATEWIDE ONLINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE ***Statewide effort aims to increase degree attainment and university transfers***

The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges today awarded a \$16.9 million competitive grant to a partnership of the Foothill-De Anza and Butte-Glenn community college districts to launch Gov. Jerry Brown's groundbreaking Online Education Initiative for the state of California.

Building on the existing California Virtual Campus, a launch team is ready to begin work to develop a robust, one-stop statewide online education portal where California community college students can apply, register, and take online courses from participating colleges throughout the state.

The goal of the initiative is to increase the number of California students who obtain associate degrees and transfer to four-year universities by dramatically increasing the number of online classes available to community college students and providing those students with comprehensive support services to help them succeed.

Rather than independently creating its own courses and degrees, the Online Education Initiative will provide the funding, support and best practices for all California community colleges to offer high quality courses and programs through a statewide portal and common course management system, backed with an array of student support services. An Online Education Initiative Advisory Committee representing all community college constituency groups will provide oversight for developing the initiative, with the faculty playing a primary leadership role.

"This is a cutting-edge vision for California," said Foothill-De Anza Chancellor Linda M. Thor, a nationally recognized leader in distance education. "I believe it will transform online learning for millions of community college students. It represents a unique moment and opportunity in California history to make good on the Master Plan's promise of universal access to public higher education while also improving student success."

Participation in the consortium of colleges delivering courses through the statewide portal will be voluntary, said Joseph Moreau, Foothill-De Anza's vice chancellor of technology, a veteran technologist who will serve as the launch team's executive dean.

"California community colleges have always led the state in online education," Moreau said. "By bringing together the talent and expertise within our own system and building on the technological innovation in Silicon Valley, we believe we can create an online education environment that will exceed anything any of us can accomplish alone."

“Our aim is to give students in every corner of California seamless access to high quality courses at all 112 community colleges by building a world-class statewide online education ecosystem that supports student success.” A statewide system also has the potential to decrease operational costs by reducing overlap and taking advantage of economies of scale, he said.

The grant partners have recruited a launch team of community college veterans who will begin work on the project Dec. 1 while Foothill-De Anza and Butte-Glen hire a permanent staff. Moreau said he is meeting with technology companies in Silicon Valley and beyond to inform them about the project and exchange thoughts and ideas. In addition, Foothill-De Anza has been working with the Stanford Graduate School of Education to examine issues related to student retention and success online and intends to expand that partnership as part of initiative.

The state Legislature approved funding for the initiative earlier this year in response to Gov. Brown’s January 2013 proposal to allocate \$16.9 million to increase online education in the community colleges. The California Community Colleges’ Chancellor’s Office developed the grant requirements and issued a competitive request in August for applications to develop and manage the project.

Demand for online courses is on the rise in California community colleges. In 2011-12, some 27 percent of all California community college students were enrolled in distance education courses, a 14.5 percent increase over the previous six years. In 2011-12, more than 50 percent of California community colleges offered at least one degree or certificate through distance education.

The grant begins Dec. 1. Governance committees and the permanent management team are expected to be in place by April. Planning for various operational functions of the initiative will occur throughout 2014. Colleges can sign up to offer classes through statewide portal at the end of 2014 and the portal will be operating by June 2015.

Funding of \$16.9 million is authorized for the first seven months of the project, through June 30, 2014, with potential funding of \$10 million annually for the next four years, starting in 2014-15.

Foothill-De Anza is a longtime leader in distance education and was the first in California to offer courses online. In recent years it has rapidly expanded its catalog of quality online courses to meet student demand, and currently offers 20 fully online degrees. Additionally, the district is experienced in online course development and open source learning management systems. The Online Education Initiative grant is the largest in Foothill-De Anza’s history.

Butte-Glenn is a leader in statewide education systems architecture and manages the California Virtual Campus for the California Community Colleges. The California Community Colleges Technology Center at Butte has built a technical infrastructure and already delivers such critical elements as the college application, electronic transcript and electronic portfolio to millions of community college students each year. Additionally, Butte has 15 years leading and supporting the governance of statewide technology efforts and a successful process for recruiting districts into voluntary statewide technology partnerships.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office press release on grant award:

http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/DocDownloads/PressReleases/NOV2013/PR_ESS_RELEASE_BOGrants_111213_FINAL.pdf.