Proposed Distance Education Cost Center

and 2011-12 proposed budget

Rationale:

This proposal addresses the need to establish a separate distance education cost center at Monterey Peninsula College.   The impetus is not only in response to the recent ACCJC recommendation on Distance Education, but also the recognition of the growing need to support distance education learners and instructors. As noted by our former Academic Vice President, John Gonzalez, MPC has backed into distance education allowing it to evolve without a concrete plan and very little support for online faculty and students. As course offerings and online student populations have grown, it has become apparent that this laissez faire approach can no longer succeed in meeting the mission of our College to provide ". . .excellence in instructional programs, facilities, and services to support the goals of students [*all students*] pursuing transfer, career, basic skills, and life-long learning opportunities." A separate cost center with the responsibility and focused priority of providing support and oversight for online instruction is critically needed to assure quality, pedagogical effectiveness, and successful student outcomes.   In addition, a separate distance education cost center, would:

- Establish a framework through which priorities can be communicated to the administration through the shared governance system;
- Identify specific resource needs and be assured that those resources are assigned appropriately;
- Establish a systematic method of accountability where resources, priorities, and controls can be documented; and
- Provide a structure to focus resources on a long-term vision, rather than short-term, ad-hoc solutions.

Need:

Growth. As reported to the Governing Board on December 2010 and shown below, FTES generated from distance education has experienced an increasing growth rate in the last 10 years and now represents over 6% of the College's overall FTES. This growth has happened despite administrative barriers to limit online offerings (e.g., There is currently a moratorium on approving new online courses pending the submission and approval of the substantive change proposal.), limited support to online instructors and students, and a limited focus on instructional design, production, and pedagogy.   It is apparent that an increasing population exists that demands learning via online. It is our responsibility and obligation to make sure these online learning experiences are relevant, sound, and effective in supporting student success.

MPC Distance Education FTES Growth

Year	Total FTES/MPC	FTES/MPC Online	FTES/MPC Living Room	Total FTES Distance Learning	%FTES/MPC/DL
2005-06	6713.25	103.48	177.89	281.37	4.20%
2006-07	7651.58	184.69	159.19	343.89	4.50%
2007-08	8096.78	222.88	148.71	371.59	4.60%
2008-09	7915.16	255.89	144.06	399.95	5.05%
2009-10	7438.68	337.00	115.00	452.00	6.08%

Structure: The ACCJC recommendation noted that,

"The team suggests the College ensure that the effective delivery of classes as well as technology support be administered as two separate and complementary components administered by the appropriate college entities."

Although we have had individuals assigned to distance education in the past, this has been one of many responsibilities given. As a result, most recent efforts on behalf of distance education have focused on technology. More work needs to be done to improve quality assurance, pedagogical, design, and production needs for effective online courses. The proposed Distance Education Cost Center's primary focus would be to support and oversee this second critical component to online teaching and learning.

Institutional Goals. Finally, instituting a separate Distance Education Center would help the College in meeting its established institutional goal and objectives as stated:

> *Goal 1: Promote academic excellence and critical thinking across all areas and disciplines.*
> > *Objectives:*
> > a. *Support faculty and staff development for effective teaching, learning, and service delivery.*
> > b. *Expand distance education by providing leadership, technical assistance, services, and training opportunities, and by exploring partnerships, and designing quality control mechanisms.*

Current Status:

In the past 6 months, progress has been made to address the recommendations made by ACCJC. A faculty coordinator (40% load assignment), with the assistance of the VP of Academic Affairs and now the Dean of Instruction, has been assigned to take the lead in addressing these recommendations. An institutional committee on distance education has developed a proposal which has been vetted through the shared governance process and has incorporated recommendations from these groups (i.e. AAAG, ASAG, SSAG, Academic Senate, and College Council). The proposal (Appendix A) outlines recommendations and needs

following best practices that the Distance Education Center would be responsible to carry forward.

In addition to the development of the Response to ACCJC Accreditation Recommendation, some very concrete outcomes already have been attained. We have developed a procedure to deliver online evaluations directly to online students which is currently being implemented, updated the iLearn portal, submitted a proposal for additional funding to the MPC foundation, continued working with CAC to devise an approval process for online courses, provided a series of workshops for faculty development and begun developing recommendations on negotiable items for online instruction.   This is a start, but this alone could not have been accomplished without a direct focus.   It is obvious, however, that there is much more yet to address if we truly are to support the academic leg of our online offerings.

Proposed Cost Center:

The proposed MPC Distance Education Center would serve as a hub for online academic excellence offering one-on-one faculty support, faculty development opportunities, design and production support, and student technical support. In conjunction with the Institutional Committee on Distance Education, it would also work closely with the entire campus community in coordinating on-campus and online offerings and services.   Recognizing the current financial constraints facing the College, this proposal is the absolute minimum of what is required for a viable Distance Education Center at this time.   In the future, as the online programs that require more services and support grow, funding levels will need to increase.

Funding Categories:

Staffing:

Faculty Coordinator
> Prepare all internal campus reports regarding online instruction
> Coordinate faculty development opportunities
> Support online faculty with design and development of online courses
> Develop and administer budget
> Investigate outside funding resources
> Present reports to campus committees
> Chair the Institutional Committee on Distance Education
> Collaborate with the Information Technology Division
> Supervise Technology Resource Specialist
> Assist faculty with online curriculum proposals
> Work with CAC in administering the online course approval process
> Coordinate the update of the MPC Distance Education website
> Update the Online Faculty Handbook
> Collect data to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of DE offerings
> Advise on the development of the Substantive Change Proposal

Administrative Assistant
> Prepare minutes and documents for meetings

Schedule meetings
Prepare announcements
Coordinate times for workshops
Assist in the preparation of reports

Technology Resource Specialist
Work one-on-one with faculty in technical and production efforts
Serve on help desk for students and faculty
Assist online students one-on-one with technical issues
Assist and support all online orientations
Supervise student assistants
Recommend technology updates for distance education offerings
Support technical aspects of faculty workshops
Collaborate with DE Faculty Coordinator on DE issues and tasks
Identify and recommend faculty and staff development offerings
Maintain proficiency with Moodle course management system
Get iLearn classes ready each semester
Add students to database and maintain database to keep current
Train and schedule student assistants
Upload test banks to iLearn database
Provide new online course "shells" for faculty requesting them
Meet with hosts from CSUMB periodically to discuss aspects of Moodle administration
Work with the IT branch in solving technical server and database issues
Assist with instructor online evaluations using class climate program
Other duties as assigned

Student Assistants
Work with the Technology Resource Specialist to support faculty and student
technical help desk
Assist with online orientations as needed
Assist Technology Resource Specialist as needed

Supplies & Equipment:
General Office Supplies
Software Updates
Technology updates for online course production

Faculty Development:
To support workshops, conferences, guest speakers that enable online faculty to keep
current with technology and best practices in online instruction.

Server:
Server operations to support the course management system hosted in partnership with
CSUMB

Proposed Budget:

No new funds are requested. The proposed budget is based on the original $13,000 allocation to distance education which represented the startup costs in 2006 when Monterey Peninsula College moved from using WebCT to the Moodle course management system. At that time the College entered into a formal agreement with California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and Gavilan College. CSUMB hosts the online course management server and Gavilan and MPC agreed to contribute $10,870/College each subsequent year to cover the cost, including technical support and training sessions for faculty and technical staff. The cost of the server has been reduced in recent years and currently stands at $6,500.   However, to maintain a viable Distance Education Center that covers essential operational costs (including faculty training/ development and supplies and equipment), it is proposed that the original $13,000 allocation be reinstated for this purpose.

    Staffing:

        Faculty Coordinator (40% Load) $12,000
                (*Since the faculty coordinator is a full-time faculty*
                member, this position is currently funded within the
                assigned division. This amount reflects the cost
                of adjunct faculty to backfill two classes each
                term for two terms.)

        Administrative Assistant   ---
                (*Can use the services of the AA for the VP of Academic*
                Affairs if the reporting line remains as proposed.)

        Technology Resource Specialist (50% Load)   46,328
                (*Salary plus benefits currently funded under Information*
                Technology.)

        Student Assistants   ---
                (*Supported through work study or unpaid*
                Cooperative education/CSUMB internships.)

Supplies & Equipment: 3,000

Faculty Development: 3,500

Server: 6,500
                (*Currently budgeted in Information Technology*)

                      Total   ***$71,328***