



**COLUMBIA GORGE**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## **Distance Education and Instructional Technology Plan**

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Innovation. Efficiency. Accountability.

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*“online learning is no longer a novelty. It is simply a regular part of their education. They are increasingly unconcerned with the distinctions between face-to-face and online learning, instead choosing individual courses that meet their particular needs at any given time, regardless of modality. This postmodality behavior, enabled by instructional technology, has become their normal routine. Going forward, meeting the needs of these students with institutional ecosystems that support, encourage, and enable them to succeed will become key components of college and university strategic plans.”*  
– Thomas Cavanaugh<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) primarily serves students in the region where the Columbia River has formed a deep gorge through the Cascade Mountains and serves as a border between the states of Washington and Oregon in the United States of America. The college is one of seventeen community colleges in Oregon and is supported financially by the state of Oregon as well as the taxpayers in Hood River and Wasco counties. It is the purpose of this document to report on the 2017-2018 school year and to describe how the CGCC will enhance distance learning and instructional technology in 2018-2019. It is the author’s hope that this plan lays the foundation for enrichment in the learning spaces, real and virtual, of all students at Columbia Gorge Community College.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Postmodality Era: How ‘Online Learning’ is Becoming ‘Learning,’ *Educause*, 2012

## 2017-2018 Overview and New Trends

### Overview

#### Quantity

According to the National eLearning Survey of Community Colleges, there was an 8% increase in online enrollment nationwide over the previous year. At CGCC the headcount of classes that are hybrid or online has increased 7% from the previous year. It remains the community college in Oregon with the highest percentage of hybrid and online courses in credit courses.

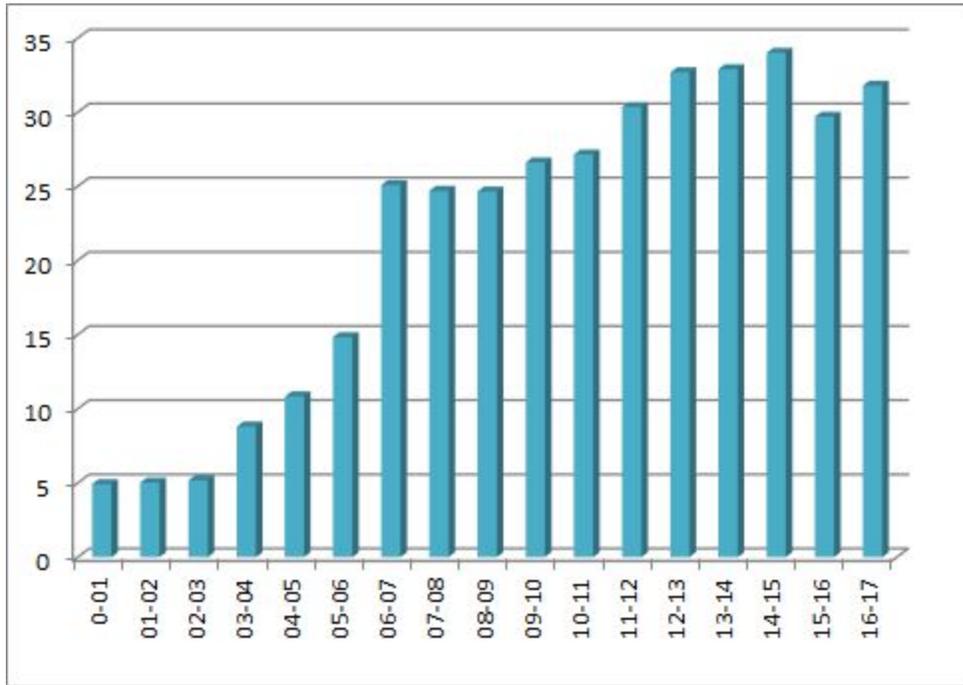
Oregon Community Colleges  
Percentage of all credit FTE taught as distance learning  
2016-17

College	%
Blue Mountain	26.5%
Central Oregon	14.8%
Chemeketa	26.5%
Clackamas	18.1%
Clatsop	10.6%
Columbia Gorge	31.8%
Klamath	29.0%
Lane	23.6%
Linn Benton	8.1%
Mt Hood	14.4%
Oregon Coast	24.2%
Portland	24.2%
Rogue	22.6%
Southwestern	22.4%
Tillamook Bay	28.6%
Treasure Valley	26.9%
Umpqua	24.8%
Total	21.4%

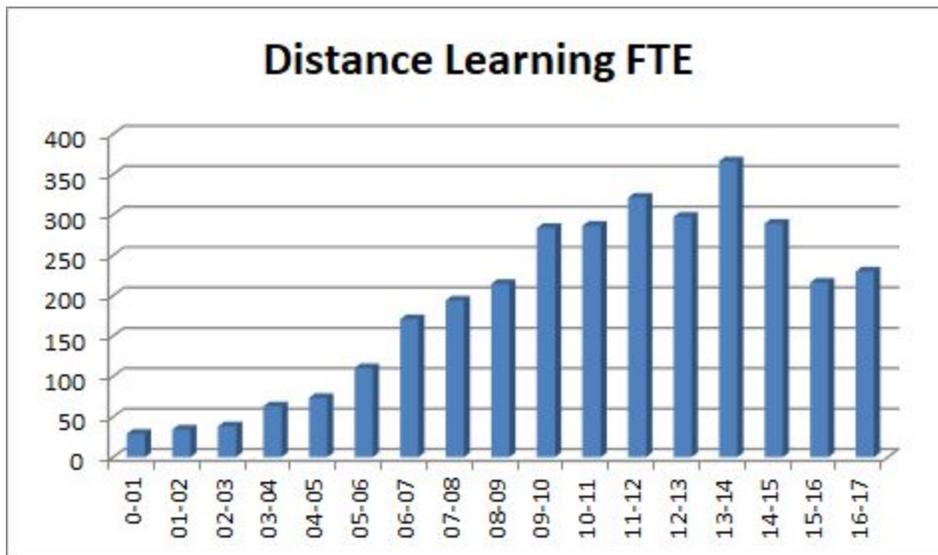
Note: Distance learning courses include: live interactive, online, telecourses, correspondence, and hybrid.

Source: HECC D4A  
30-Oct-17

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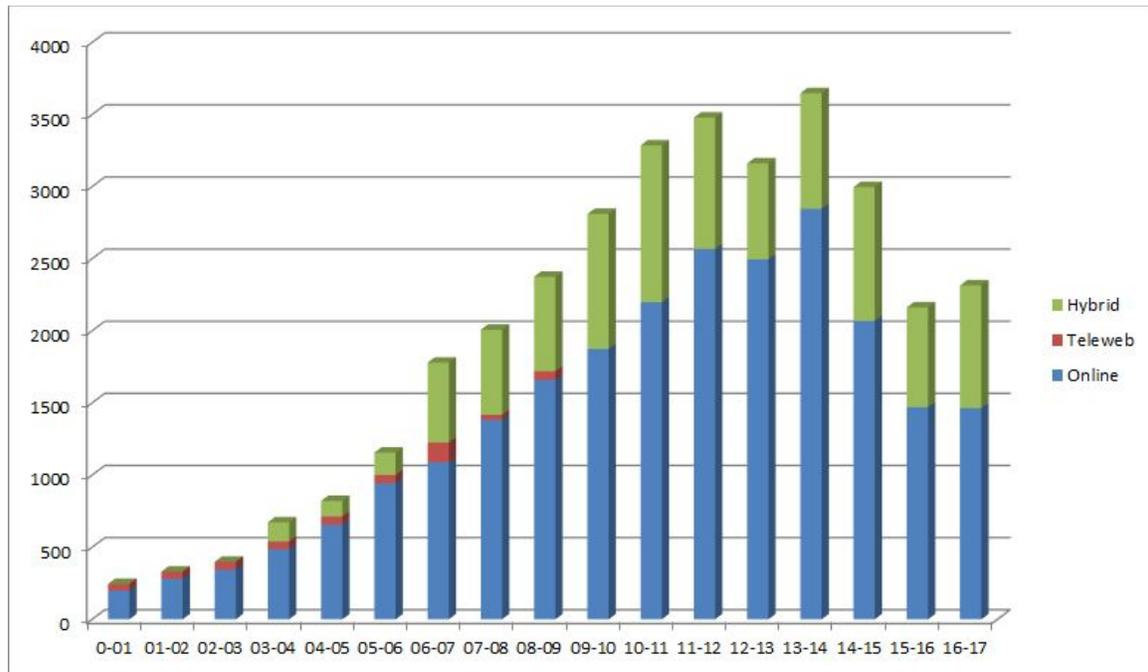


Percentage of distance learning (online and hybrid) FTE for credit classes



Distance Learning FTE at CGCC (includes hybrid and online courses)

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Duplicated Headcount by school year

### Quality

The quality of CGCC online and hybrid classes continues to improve through the implementation of Quality Matters and innovative uses of other technologies that enhance synchronous (such as Zoom) and asynchronous modalities (such as lecture capture videos on the college YouTube site). Thirty-one instructional videos were added to the college YouTube site in the 2017-2018 school year. About fifty-one hours of videos on the site were captioned by CaptionSync, through an Oregon Community College Distance Learning project at Chemeketa Community College.

Instructors participated in Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) and Improving Your Online Course training, which was offered online through the state consortium. The APPQMR training is the first part of certification as a peer reviewer. Eight courses were internally reviewed by a peer reviewer, three courses were formally reviewed by a three person panel (master reviewer, subject matter expert, and external reviewer), and four courses were recertified by external master reviewer subject matter expert.

## New Trends

### *Virtual Reality*



Roland Sárkány for The Chronicle

“The market for virtual reality applications is growing at a rapid pace, and is expected to double in the next five years (Bolkan, 2017). As the cost of equipment falls and schools have greater access to technology, there is great interest in virtual reality as an educational tool. A small but growing group of educators have started to integrate virtual reality in their classrooms, with promising results (Castaneda, Cechony & Bautista, 2017).”<sup>2</sup>

In the 2018-2019, CGCC plans to begin a virtual reality (VR) project for science field trips in conjunction with Portland Community College and the Emerging Technology Workgroup (ETWG) of the Oregon Community Colleges Distance Learning Association (OCCDLA). Funding for VR equipment, including HTC Vive headset, computer, and Google Cardboard glasses will come from a grant from the ETWG fund for innovation.

As opposed to augmented reality (AR), where users are still aware of the real world around them, VR immerses one in another world.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, VR requires more expensive headsets and computers with robust graphics cards. Use of VR in educational settings is in the early adopter stage. Because we plan to partner with another college and ETWG, this project will be a way for a small

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<sup>2</sup> Thompson, Meredith, [Making Virtual Reality a Reality in Today's Classrooms](#), January 11, 2018

<sup>3</sup> Evans, Adam, [Pros and Cons of Virtual Reality in the Classroom](#), April 8, 2018

rural college to experience cutting edge technology with the support of our colleagues from across the state.

### *AAOT Online*

To schedule classes more efficiently, and to increase enrollment, CGCC plans to investigate creating a completely online Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer Degree. It is possible for students to get this [degree already mostly online](#). The Office of Instructional Services has worked with the Office of Student Services to determine the classes best suited to completing a fully online degree.

### ***Types of Classes***

**Online classes** take place on the internet, using a learning management system called Moodle, which allows instructors to place course content in a password-protected site that only students who are registered for the class can access. Students can access these courses from any computer that has a connection to the internet at any time, day or night.

**Hybrid classes** combine live lecture classes with online components. Students and instructors interact in the classroom, as well online via Moodle. Some in-class time is replaced by online work.

### ***Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle***

According to Higher Ed, Moodle is the number one learning management system at small colleges in the United States. The analysis, published by the former Blackboard engineer George Kroner on his Edutechnica blog, shows familiar players such as Blackboard, Desire2Learn and Instructure are major forces in the market among institutions with 1,000 to 2,000 full-time students. Despite their strength, the open-source Moodle platform beats out all of them.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen hard numbers of exactly how strong Moodle was in that space,” Kroner, an enterprise solutions engineer at University of Maryland University College, said. “In particular, seeing it surpass Blackboard below the 2,500 FTE mark -- I was actually kind of shocked to see that.”<sup>4</sup>

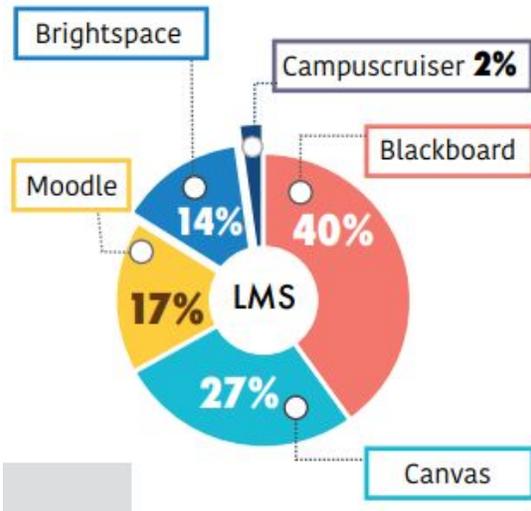
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<sup>4</sup> Straumsheim, Carl. “Moodle for the Masses” Inside Higher Ed. February 13, 2014

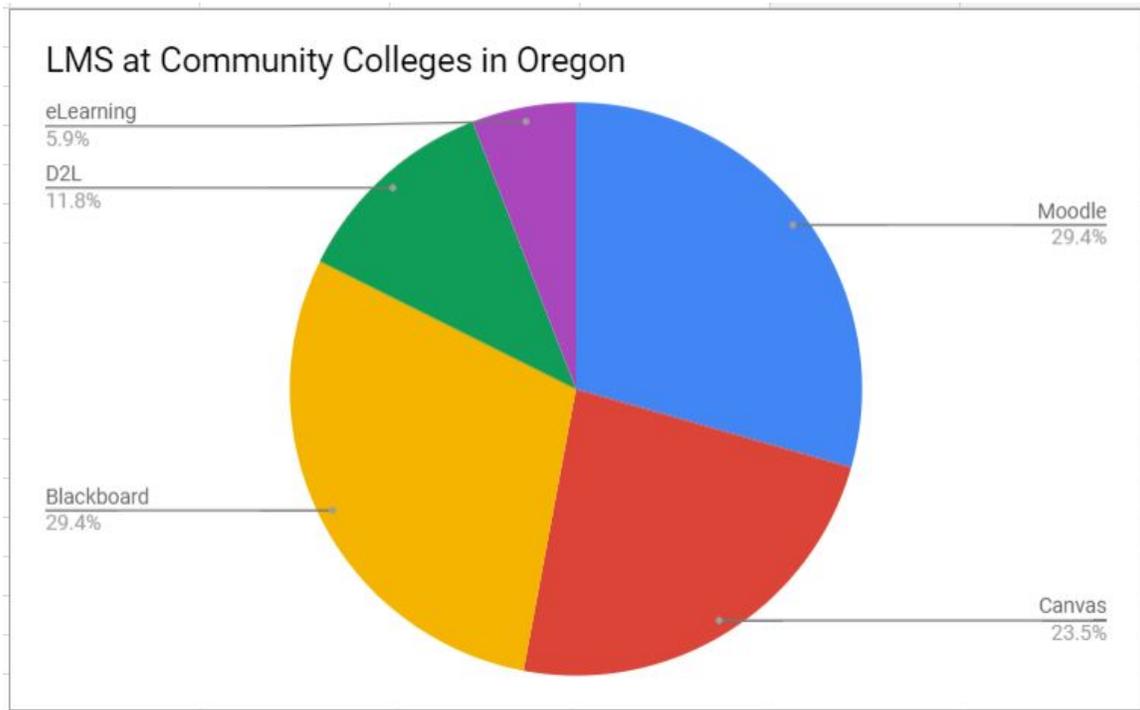
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Like many small colleges, Columbia Gorge Community College is a long time user of Moodle.

The following shows the latest results (2017) from the Instructional Technology Council's annual report on learning management systems across the country:



At community colleges in Oregon, Moodle has a larger market share:



## ***Faculty Training***

For the purposes of distance learning at CGCC, a facilitator is a person that teaches or directs students via a Moodle shell. This person could be faculty, staff or administrator working for CGCC. A Moodle shell is usually a course, but could be another tool, such as a shell used in advising.

Facilitator training for the utilization of Moodle has three parts:

- 1) online training
- 2) technical tutoring
- 3) Quality Matters reviews

The online training is designed to help the facilitator in using an existing shell or developing a new shell. The training is offered as a series of modules, covering both technical skills and andragogical issues. This course also gives facilitators a chance to be online students so they can better understand what their students will experience.

Rob Kovacich, Ron Watrus, and Paula Ascher tutor facilitators in Moodle technology. The training and tutorials provide instructors with the skills needed to develop classes that meet the Quality Matters standards. Paula Ascher reviews classes under development to assist the faculty developer. A final Quality Matters check is prepared before determining whether the facilitator has learned the requisite skills to meet the needs of the student users. The facilitator may also need to complete the Quality Matters check to complete the requirements of the development contract.

Regional conference: In the fall of 2018, faculty will attend the NWeLearn Conference for the sixth year in a row.

## ***Quality Matters***

Quality improvement in distance learning classes is focused on implementing the process outlined in the [CGCC Course Design Manual](#). Currently, the college has 7 master reviewers, and 14 peer reviewers. Many more faculty and staff have taken the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric course.

In the fall of 2018 faculty will attend the national Quality Matters conference in St. Louis, MO.

Peer reviewer training will be held in the 2018-2019 school year. Both informal and formal reviews will be conducted.

## **Multi-media Production**

More than 1000 short videos have been produced by the faculty to enhance their online, hybrid and on-ground classes. Videos are hosted in YouTube, which has automatic captioning for the hearing impaired. The college receives funding through the Oregon Distance Learning Association to support captioning of the videos through CaptionSync and is systematically captioning more videos every term. Multi-media training and production assistance is available by request to the distance learning and instructional technology coordinator.

## **Open Educational Resources**

“Online education is possible only because of the technology changes that have impacted all areas of contemporary life. High-speed networks, nearly ubiquitous computing availability, and software to support teaching and learning have combined to provide the foundation on which online learning has grown. This changing landscape also has opened to door for other changes in higher education. One such change element is the use of Open Education Resources (OER).”<sup>5</sup>

At CGCC, 2013-2014 an OER project was announced. A group of faculty and staff met in early fall for a presentation from Quill West, OER Manager at Tacoma Community College. Information about OERs was improved on the college website. For the 2018-2019 school year there will be a continued focus on faculty adoption of open textbooks, under the leadership of the library. Classes using Open Education Resources have saved 5810 students \$826,096 in textbook costs since June 2011.

## **Other Online Learning Environments**

### ***Gamification***

In the 2012-2013 school year, the DLITC and two instructors attended an online teacher camp for 3DGameLab. As a result, one instructor created a gamification pilot project, creating CAS 104 Internet Basics as a gamified class. Students took the course on the gamified 3D GameLab server or on Moodle in summer term 2013.

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<sup>5</sup> I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman, Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011 Babson Survey Research Group

To evaluate the 3D Gamelab version of the class, the DLITC created a gamification rubric: <http://bit.ly/gamerubric> . She also created a link to a short video exemplifying some of the rubric standards <http://bit.ly/18bixgW> and participated in an Educause Google Hangout focused on the rubric: <http://bit.ly/ajsyoutube> . Other gamification resources are available at <http://www.cgcc.edu/online/faculty-resources#Gamification> .

### **Second Life**

A site in Second Life was created to facilitate online student study groups, synchronous class discussions and connections to academic support staff by the Oregon Community College Distance Learning Association (OCCDLA). Starting in 2009 CGCC began offering PHL 201 Philosophical Problems as a hybrid class, with synchronous student interaction taking place in Second Life. The resources in Second Life for philosophy have been moved to Beaver Island (Oregon State University), since the island maintained by the OCCDLA project was discontinued.

### **Webconferencing**

In 2010 the college bought an institutional license for Elluminate, which is now called Blackboard Collaborate, as part of a state wide effort to adopt this technology. This provides the instructor the ability to synchronously broadcast a computer screen with audio and video. The Oregon Community College Workforce and Development Department started funding a statewide subscription for Collaborate, but by 2017, the Oregon Community College Distance Learning Association determined that the service should be phased out in favor of Zoom. Transition training and activities took place starting in the fall of 2017.

### **Distance Learning Students**

Online students at CGCC are overwhelmingly local and increasingly savvy at distance learning. Of the students who completed *Online Learning at Columbia Gorge Community College 2018* student survey, 100% lived in the Mid-Columbia area and 37% took an on-ground class at CGCC during the school year. A significant number, 37%, had taken three or more online or hybrid classes at the college. 25% of students had taken an online class from other colleges or universities, about the same as in 2004. 100% wanted the college to offer more online classes.

Historically students have completed online classes an average of 6% less successfully than on-ground classes and 2% more successfully in hybrid classes.

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A successful completion is defined as a grade of "A", "B", "C", or "P". Students who drop (that is, drop from a class in the first 4 weeks) are not counted at all as these courses do not appear on the student transcript. Students who withdraw (that is, drop from a class in week 5 - week 8) are counted as unsuccessful.

According to the *Online Learning at Columbia Gorge Community College 2018* survey, students most often get technological help for an online class from their instructor (57%), the CGCC Helpdesk (29%), and Student Services (14%). The CGCC Helpdesk has a phone number and schedule published on the college website.

## **Appendix**

### **Online and Hybrid Course Design Review**

Faculty contracts for developing online and hybrid classes are proposed by Department Chairs and signed by the Instructional Director, Distance Learning and Instructional Technology Coordinator (DLITC) and Chief Academic Officer.

Before the first term that an online or hybrid class is offered, it is evaluated by the DLITC using the Quality Matters (QM) rubric. The DLITC will inform the department chair if the course does not meet standards. Instructors are encouraged to take QM training.

Each course will be evaluated every three years by a QM peer reviewer. The instructor may ask for a formal evaluation by a team of three reviewers per QM procedures. A successful formal review results in QM recognition in the schedule of classes.

### **Requirements for Teaching Online and Hybrid Classes**

The instructor is expected to:

1. Evaluate and return graded assignments in a timely manner and provide feedback on assignment to facilitate student preparation of future assignments.
2. Give an explanation of the evaluation process.
3. Maintain a list of active resources and links to appropriate online resources within the course shell.
4. Keep a record of all graded activities in a secure, private, and accurate manner.
5. Respond in a timely manner to questions regarding the course or learning materials, within a 48-hour period on weekdays, daily during the first week of the term.
6. Provide and facilitate a forum for student questions.
7. Design learning activities that promote CGCC core learning outcomes.
8. Where appropriate, encourage student-student collaboration and interaction.
9. Faculty who teach online classes are required to have regular and substantive interaction (RSI) with students within the learning management system and to provide RSI documentation in the form of a hidden page within the course shell.