

Distance Learning Innovation Team

Project Charter

DRAFT 01/21/2021

Purpose

Explore and work to utilize unified technologies, software, distance pedagogical practices, and professional development so that faculty are empowered to effectively deliver quality instructional content across multiple distance platforms: online asynchronous, online synchronous, hybrid/hyflex, and beyond.

Opportunity/Problem Statement

NHED consists of five independently accredited colleges with six campuses. While each college provides IT support and technological services for delivering online and distance instruction, the approach to physically outfitting the campus community with hardware, supporting instructional design, procuring software licenses, and working within the LMS all vary. With a one-college model, the opportunity exists to standardize technologies, enhance the student experience, increase offerings in modalities that can be delivered to all NHED students, and explore the best practices in pedagogy and instructional design for distance delivery.

Business Case/Impact

The current distance learning model that each campus is operating under varies. This will lead to student confusion and frustration if platforms, technologies, and approaches are not standardized as the NHED colleges become one institution. This could lead to damage to the organization's mission, eventually precipitating a decrease in enrollment. Additionally, alignment and expansion of tools for instruction will support faculty as they may teach to increasingly broad audiences. A significant benefit of standardized processes and approaches is increased student success, resulting in improved academic and financial outcomes. We may also see increased faculty satisfaction in the distance sphere, due to increased access to broad course delivery content, innovative technologies, useful tools, and continued trainings.

Team Members

- Derek Fox- Faculty ICC
- Meg Heiman- Faculty VCC
- Kristen Zbikowski- Faculty HCC
- Timothy Loney- Faculty VCC
- Katherine Ulseth- Faculty ICC
- Melissa Wilson- Faculty/SSS VCC
- Emily Werschay- Faculty MRC
- Lynette How- Faculty ICC
- Joe Chlebeczek- Faculty RRCC
- Scott Hansen- NEAT
- Shelly McCauley Jugovich- VP Institutional Effectiveness and Advancement
- Jessalyn Sabin – Interim Dean of Academics

Stakeholders

- Students
- Faculty

- IT Staff
- NEAT/Learning Network
- Student Services Staff
- Minnesota State System
- VisionNE Innovation Teams
- Equity and Inclusion
- Accessibility Services
- Writing/Tutoring Center
- K12 Partners
- Vendors
- Business/Industry Partners
- Internship/Co-op Partners

Goals/Targets

- *Assess current technologies*- Identify hardware and software that is utilized at each campus; seek feedback from faculty about gaps or needs in technologies for distance learning.
- *Recommend additional technologies needed for distance learning*- Identify best practices that exist in the distance learning and instructional design sphere.
 - *Software licenses*- consolidation, expansion
 - *Hardware capabilities*- classroom technologies, remote work capability
- *Explore distance learning pedagogy*- Unify the student experience by offering common tools and technologies (with respect to academic freedom) best pedagogical practices and professional development opportunities. This will encompass accessibility and equity and inclusion best practices.
- *Create repository of distance learning help tools*- Collect information for student navigation of distance platforms.
- *Increase student and faculty satisfaction with distance learning experience.*

Project Performance Indicators

- Increased faculty access to technology (IT inventory)
- Increase in student experience (New Student Survey data, CCSSE data)
- Increase in enrollment (term and year) (OIR data)
- Increased retention rates (fall-spring, fall-fall) (OIR data)
- Increased degree completion (OIR data)
- Employee satisfaction (OIR data)
- Technology survey

Project Boundary and Scope

The scope of this team centers on the exploration, application, and utilization of technology through the student and faculty experience perspective. Reciprocal collaboration with the IT Innovation team to identify efficiencies and current satisfaction are sought with data collection through tools such as a district-wide faculty survey of current technology access. Expansion and modification of practices and technologies that are in place on each campus will follow. The scope of the work will be complete when there is a suite of tools recommended for a common learning experience, and each campus is outfitted with these tools and professional development to utilize them. This work can continue into the new college as this committee becomes part of the continual improvement process of the new college.

Risks/Assumptions/Roadblocks

A streamlined and collective approach to the student and faculty experience with technology is needed. However, if campuses have outlier technologies utilized due to the nature of their programming, we will consider the unique value to the discipline in addition to impacts of distance learning technologies on those programs. We are also assuming that technology and distance learning pedagogical alignment will increase retention, faculty satisfaction, and financial stability. Individual and collective histories may initially present constraints to alignment. Fear of a subsequent strong move to distance learning after these tools are in place may also present concern for faculty.