



# ARC Distance Education Plan 2019-2025

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	1
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. INTRODUCTION	4
2.1 THE CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS – ONLINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE (CVC-OEI)	4
2.2 EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	5
2.3 LOS RIOS ONLINE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM CONCEPT PROPOSAL & ARC ONLINE 2.0	8
3. TEAM 1: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING –VIRTUAL EDUCATION CENTER	9
3.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING	9
3.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING	10
3.3 CURRENT STATE: REVIEW OF ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING	10
3.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE OF ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING	10
3.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING	11
4. TEAM 2: ONLINE PATHWAYS FOR EXISTING CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES	12
4.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS	12
4.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS	13
4.3 CURRENT STATE: REVIEW OF ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS	13
4.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS	14
4.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS – EXISTING PROGRAMS	15
5. TEAM 3: NEW ONLINE PATHWAYS TO ALIGN WITH LABOR MARKET & STUDENT DEMAND WITH FLEXIBLE LEARNING OPTIONS	18
5.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE PATHWAYS – NEW PROGRAMS	18
5.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: NEW ONLINE COURSES AND PROGRAMS	18
5.3 CURRENT STATE: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	19
5.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	19
5.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	22
6. TEAM 4: COMPREHENSIVE, EQUITY-BASED ONLINE ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	24

6.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE SERVICES	24
6.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE SERVICES	25
6.3 CURRENT STATE: REVIEW OF ONLINE SERVICES	25
6.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE OF ONLINE SERVICES	28
6.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS: ONLINE SERVICES	29
7. CONCLUSION	33
APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	34
AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE	34
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES	34
CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS-ONLINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE (CVC-OEI)	34
LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT	34
STATE OF CALIFORNIA	34
OTHER	35
APPENDIX B: PROJECT MEMBERSHIP	36
APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS	37
APPENDIX D: DE ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING GOALS IN 2019-2022 STUDENT EQUITY & ACHIEVEMENT PLAN	39
APPENDIX E: DE SUCCESS RATE BY ETHNICITY 2005 - 2016 CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES	40

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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American River College's redesign efforts, which are succinctly expressed in the [2017-2021 Strategic Plan](#) set the stage for also reimagining how we can better improve the student experience in the online learning environment. The college's [2019-2022 Student Equity and Achievement Plan](#) (SEAP) has set aspirational goals to increase access, retention, completion, and transfer rates, and to reduce and ultimately eliminate disproportionate impact overall. It is anticipated that the metrics identified in the SEAP will also determine if we are increasing online student success, including for student populations that are disproportionately impacted.

The ARC Distance Education (DE) Plan 2019-2025 is a component of [ARC's integrated planning process](#). It is designed to work in tandem with college planning efforts including Clarify Programs Paths and others. The project team, ARC ONLINE 2.0, was charged with developing this new plan and is sponsored by the Student Success Council. As one of the six focused institutional plans for 2018, this project team's work began in September 2018 and will conclude after a formal review and adoption of its deliverables through the governance processes in May 2019. This plan is synced to the 7-year accreditation cycle; as such, it will be redeveloped in 2026.

ARC Online 2.0 created four teams to cover targeted areas: online course scheduling for the Virtual Education Center; online pathways for existing certificates and degrees, new online pathways to align with labor market and student demand with flexible learning options; and comprehensive, equity-based online academic and student support services. Each of these four teams identified specific priorities for action and needed resources in order to create a framework on which ARC can build a robust, fully operational, virtual education center. This center will provide myriad opportunities for students to complete programs fully online so that they can achieve their educational goals and/or economic stability.

Traditionally, students in online courses do not do as well as their peers in face-to-face courses. While notable progress has been made in reducing that gap, the success rates of student populations that are disproportionately impacted, particularly African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American, are significantly lower than other populations. In order to strengthen equity and to advance social justice in the online environment, the ARC Distance Education Plan complements and aligns with the SEA. Distance Education activities that support equity goals include:

- Ensuring Information is easy to find, relevant, and understandable for all students. Streamlined course selection process to make program and course selection easier to navigate.
- Integrating equity-conscious teaching practices in training for online faculty.
- Comprehensive, equity-based, online academic and student support services for all students.
- Providing more DE course offerings for transfer programs with high enrollment of targeted populations such as Business Administration AST, Accounting AA, General Business AA, and History AAT.
- Improved DE course offerings for transfer level math/English. Development of a DE-focused cyclical mechanism for improvement that includes analysis of success rates across demographics.
- Improved online course scheduling, increased DE course offerings and fully online programs, accelerated learning options to provide timely completion, built-in program improvement cycles.

Once implemented, the ARC Distance Education Plan 2019-2025 will support the goals identified in each of the five essential metrics of the SEAP (See [APPENDIX D: DE ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING GOALS IN 2019-2022 STUDENT EQUITY & ACHIEVEMENT PLAN](#)) and provide students with a personalized, high quality online learning environment that supports their success.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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A robust Distance Education (DE) program expands access and extends opportunities to many students, enabling them to complete degrees so that they can achieve their educational goals or economic stability while managing life's complexities and responsibilities. Thus, providing access to DE degrees and courses is a fundamental component of a student-focused community college.

The community college landscape has shifted significantly over the last decade with regards to distance education. In response to increasing demand for DE, American River College (ARC) has greatly expanded its DE offerings. However, there has yet to be a truly centralized and collaborative process for managing that growth to increase student success. ARC has a rich history of providing first-in-class DE opportunities for its students. We are a regional champion of DE, yet the future rests on our ability to continue to innovate and evolve with student success as our focus. A strategic, collaborative plan is required to ensure continued excellence.

Distance education is defined as “instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology” (title 5, section 55200). That communication technology is supported by a virtual, internet-based ecosystem of tools which allow for anytime/anywhere learning. At American River College, DE is neither correspondence nor self-paced education, but rather an online, interactive, learning experience that promotes student success while meeting the same regulatory and accreditation requirements for all curriculum irrespective of modality.

The previous [ARC Distance Education Plan](#) was approved in 2015. Many of the recommendations from that plan have been implemented and include the following:

- establishment of the college's Virtual Education Center (VEC) where ARC has housed its online education efforts with the branding of [ARC ONLINE](#)
- hiring of a Universal Design for Learning specialist and a DE dean
- development of processes to ensure DE courses adhere to high standards of quality as demonstrated by the integration of the Online Education Initiative ([OEI Course Design Rubric](#)) into faculty training and support.

### 2.1 THE CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS – ONLINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE (CVC-OEI)

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Collaboration is key to the success of DE at American River College. In April 2018, American River College was selected along with 32 other colleges, including our sister colleges, to participate in the [Online Education Initiative](#) (currently referred to as California Virtual Campus - Online Education Initiative or CVC-OEI) 2018 Equity Cohort. Along with the original 23 pilot colleges, the CVC-OEI now includes nearly half of the California Community Colleges with the goal of all 114 colleges participating by 2022. As the CVC-OEI states, the goal is “leveraging the collective size and expertise of the system to reduce costs, align to common platforms, and create a sustainable model that yields better results for students and institutions.”

The CVC-OEI has provided American River College with the resources and support necessary to help ensure a robust online learning environment and it will continue this effort by adding new resources. The following is a summary of the CVC-OEI's impact on DE at our college:

1. **Technology Platform & Interoperability:** Los Rios adopted the CVC-OEI's Common Course Management System (CCMS), Canvas, and kicked off its initial offering of courses within Canvas in Spring 2017. Currently, approximately 85% of American River College instructors use Canvas in some capacity for their classes.
2. **Access & Online Support for Students:** American River College has implemented several CVC-OEI supported tools - [NetTutor](#) for online tutoring, [NameCoach](#) for student-recorded name pronunciation, [Proctorio](#) for online exam proctoring, and [Quest & Smarter Measure](#) for online readiness. Other tools which have not yet been implemented include Notebowl for online engagement and Cranium Cafe for online student services.
3. **Faculty Support & Professional Development:** The [Online Network of Educators \(@ONE\)](#), which is the professional development arm of the CVC-OEI, provides training to support effective use of digital tools and platforms including the alignment of courses to the [OEI Course Design Rubric](#). The Rubric has been integrated into American River College's professional development offerings and endorsed by American River College's Academic Senate. @ONE has supported American River College's development of our local Peer Online Course Review (POCR) process which is now American River College's [FastTrack OEI Rubric Academy](#).
4. **Institutional Collaboration at Scale:** The resources noted above, which are provided by the OEI-CVC at no cost to the consortium colleges, are being utilized by many of the 114 colleges, not just the 56 within the CVC-OEI Consortium. Collaboration is occurring in many spaces including through @ONE, CVC-OEI meetings, conferences, and social media, with American River College actively participating in the collaboration.

A significant aspect of our contract with the CVC-OEI that is critical to DE planning, is our obligation to "commit to achieving, within two (2) academic years, an initial target of aligning at least 20% of the College's existing annual online section inventory to the OEI Course Design Rubric using the CVC-OEI Peer Online Course Review process." Online course quality is integral to American River College's DE success. Rubric-aligned courses are, according to the [Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges](#), performing at 4.9% points above the statewide average for online success. As we work towards honoring our commitment to the CVC-OEI, we are increasing the quality of our online courses.

Another CVC-OEI project that will impact online course enrollment at Los Rios is its cross-enrollment effort. Once fully implemented, the [CVC-OEI Exchange Cross Enrollment Link \(ExCEL\)](#) will give students increased access to online courses by allowing them to register in online classes at another California community college without filling out a separate application. Currently, through the [Finish Faster Online portal](#), students can view online GE courses at all 114 California community college. In ExCEL, registration will be seamless and students will be able to register in two ExCEL courses per semester. Los Rios anticipates that students from other colleges will be attracted to its offerings and that some local students may also enroll in courses outside the district via ExCEL.

## 2.2 EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ARC's commitment to social justice and equity continues through the work undertaken by this project team and its vision for the future of DE at ARC. Online education inherently meets students where they are, which can

alleviate some of the challenges students may otherwise face with on-campus classes; these include work schedules, a need to care for others at home, differences in abilities, transportation, and proximity to a campus. Application of equity-minded practices such as inclusion of course content, activities, and instructor statements which demonstrate that diversity is valued further strengthen the inclusive environment that ARC has committed to providing for students.

As noted above, ARC is one of the 33 colleges in the [consortium expansion of CVC-OEI](#) that has a foundational focus on student equity. In order to strengthen equity and to advance social justice in the online environment, the CVC-OEI has provided the colleges with tools like [NameCoach](#) for name and gender identification, [training in culturally responsive teaching](#), course development using Open Education Resources (OER) materials in Canvas, a robust online platform for the delivery of online student services through Cranium Cafe as well as the training needed to effectively provide those services, and support for the development of a local, peer-faculty course review process to support equity and student success in online courses. Additionally, the colleges now have the [Peralta Community College Equity Rubric](#) which can be used in conjunction with the [OEI Course Design Rubric](#) to assist online teachers in creating more equitable courses for students.

The CVC-OEI’s equity focus aligns with the goals of this new DE plan in helping to realize ARC’s strategic goals and its commitment to social justice and equity. Beyond what has been provided through our partnership with the CVC-OEI, Los Rios Community College District is piloting [Blackboard Ally](#), a tool which generates alternative formats for course files within Canvas to ensure that all students have equal access to that content. Additionally students can indicate an affirmed name within eServices which will transfer to class rosters, the Online Grading System (OGS) and Canvas. It will be important for online instructors to become more equity-conscious in using the above tools and resources as well as alerting students to the tools which are available to them directly.

The resources and support provided by the CVC-OEI have assisted California Community Colleges in closing the success rate gap between online versus face-to-face classes. ARC is also closing that gap with local efforts, such as the Online Teaching Institute and OEI Rubric Academy. Current data shows ARC’s overall online success gap is slightly better at -2% than the California Community Colleges’ average of -4%. For ARC, that is a +2% increase since Spring 2017.

	Online	Face-to-Face	Success ▲
Overall	65%	67%	-2

*Table 1.* Comparison of Student Success Rates - Online vs. Face-to-Face  
 Note: the data above compares performance of online and onground students in courses for which at least four online and four face-to-face sections have been offered over the three years (Fall 2015 - Spring 2018)

Like most community colleges, this gap varies depending on the course taught. For example, in ARC’s highest enrolled online course, Nutrition 300, students are +3% more successful online than students enrolled in face-to-face sections.

Statewide data shows that, while success rates in online courses are improving overall, the disproportionate impact that historically underserved students experience persists as noted in the [2017 Distance Education Report - California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#). See Figure 1 below. You can access the complete data table in [APPENDIX E: DE SUCCESS RATE BY ETHNICITY 2005 - 2016 CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES](#).

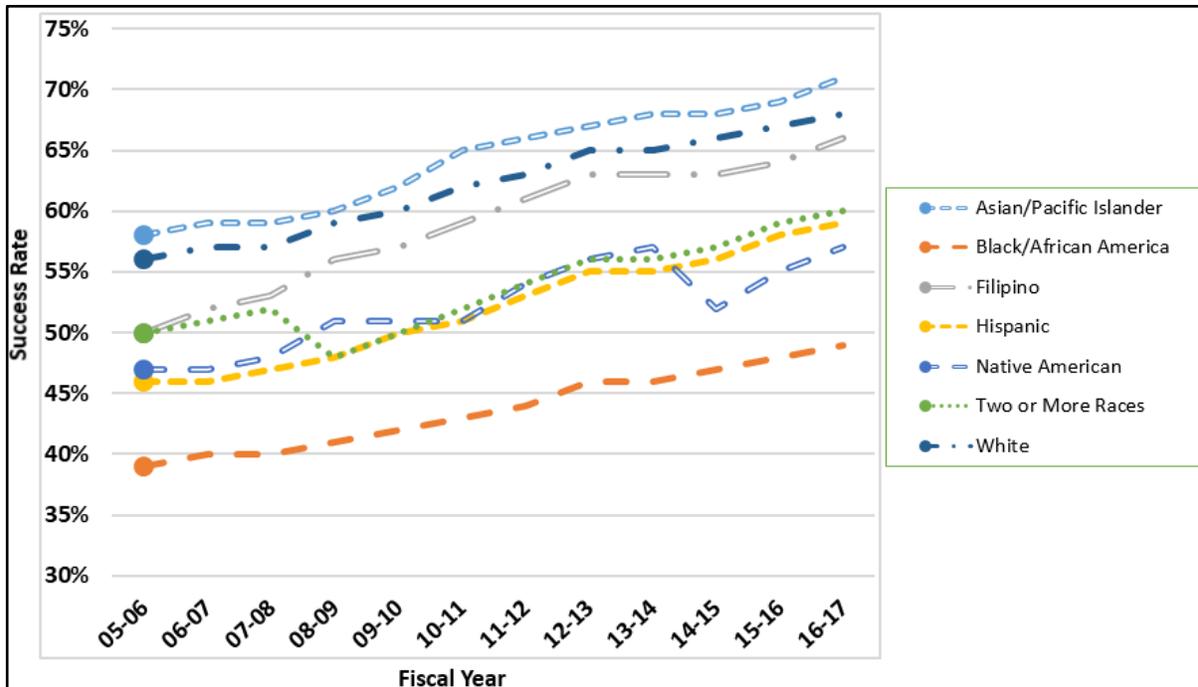


Figure 1. Distance Education Success Rate by Ethnicity 2005 - 2016; CCCCO 2017 DE Report

At ARC, the disproportionate impact online students experience mirrors that of the face-to-face student experience with data showing that our African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American students are our most disproportionately impacted students. The disproportionate impact African American students experience online is particularly striking at 23 percentage points below White and Asian students, and 5 percentage points greater than the gap in face-to-face courses:

Group	Online	F2F	Success ▲
African American	47%	55%	-7
Asian	70%	73%	-2
Hispanic/Latinx	60%	62%	-2
Native American	58%	60%	-2
White	70%	72%	-2

Table 2. Comparison of Student Success Rate - Online vs. Face-to-Face Disaggregated by Race.

Note: the data above compares performance of ARC online and onground students in courses for which at least four online and four face-to-face sections have been offered over the three years (Fall 2015 - Spring 2018)

Through continued training at ARC on equity, cultural inclusivity, and effective practices for online education, we are seeing the overall success rates for online students improve year-over-year. Additional strategies to improve the disproportionate impact among groups should be identified and put into practice through collaborative efforts with the CVC-OEI as well as ARC’s IEP and SEAP implementation teams.

There is some indication that, while there is still much work to be done to, current efforts are beginning to improve the success rate gap between online and in-person for most racial groups.

Group	Success ▲ F14-S17	Success ▲ F15-S18
African American	-7	-7
Asian	-5	-2
Filipino	-11	-8
Hispanic/Latinx	-4	-2
Multi-race	-7	-5
Native American	-5	-2
Other non-White	-8	-4
Pacific Islander	0	0
Unknown	-7	-6
White	-3	-2

*Table 3. Comparison of Student Success Rate Gap - Online vs. Face-to-Face Disaggregated by Race*  
 Note: the data above compares the success rate gaps of ARC online and onground students between two overlapping time periods; Fall 2014 - Spring 2017 and Fall 2015 - Spring 2018.

As of March 17, 2019, § 55208 of the Distance Education Regulations within Title 5 stipulate, “Instructors of distance education shall be prepared to teach in a distance education delivery method consistent with local district policies and negotiated agreements.” Any mandated training that results from a district policy in response to this update should include equitable teaching practices.

With the adoption of new tools (mentioned above); inclusion of equity-minded content in instructional technology workshops, academies, and institutes; college-wide efforts, such as the Equity Action Institute and Diversity in the Classroom Institute; and the application of recommendations forthcoming from other project teams, such as the Institutional Equity Plan (IEP) team, we anticipate reduction in the disproportionate impact for African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American online students, both between online and face-to-face as well as among racial groups. The college and the Virtual Education Center will continue to explore and integrate additional tools and practices in order to ensure its commitment to social justice and equity.

### 2.3 LOS RIOS ONLINE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM CONCEPT PROPOSAL & ARC ONLINE 2.0

In Fall 2018, [Los Rios Online Education Consortium Concept Proposal](#) and its accompanying [informational video](#) was developed at ARC as a result of ongoing discussions about the future of online education and the system-wide changes taking place such as the CVC-OEI’s cross enrollment efforts. We began asking how we might give students exactly what they needed to complete fully online programs within Los Rios. The potential for creating

a consortium similar to the CVC-OEI's with our sister colleges is an innovative and exciting concept. Imagine leveraging the breadth of online course offering across the district to help ensure timely completion for our students. We anticipate having continued discussions about this proposal with stakeholders at all four colleges. These discussions and the proposed collaboration further underscore how American River College's efforts to build the next phase of the Virtual Education Center must be visionary, adaptable, and synergistic.

To that end, the [American River College Online 2.0 Project Team](#) endeavored to develop a new, student-centered Distance Education (DE) Plan to create a robust online center within American River College with representatives from administration, faculty, and classified groups. The project team was charged with five objectives intended to strengthen and enhance online education at American River College which include the following:

1. Develop a process for how courses and programs are scheduled for American River College Online in the Virtual Education Center.
2. Develop a process for creating online pathways for existing certificates and degrees.
3. Develop a process for designing new, fully online programs that align with labor market and student demand, and that provide flexible learning options.
4. Identify online program pathways which provide the best opportunities for students.
5. Create a plan to ensure comprehensive, equity-based, online academic and student support services.

Team members were divided into four teams and tasked with researching these four areas of key interest: online course scheduling, existing programs, new programs, and support services, and then with developing the processes and plans that would provide the framework for American River College's Virtual Education Center.

### 3. TEAM 1: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING –VIRTUAL EDUCATION CENTER

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING

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Team one was charged with reviewing how courses and programs are scheduled for the overall college, as well as the Natomas Center. This review then informed development of a process and vision for how the Virtual Education Center can proceed with course and program scheduling. The Natomas Center has been viewed as a brick and mortar equivalent of a Virtual Education Center and so its processes served as a launch point. A critical component of this collaborative DE plan is the allocation of FTE (Full-time equivalent faculty). An FTE allocation enables the DE administrative team to ensure specific course sequences are available online, that instructors are DE qualified, and that their courses have met the highest level of design standards, all of which should result in increased student success as well as increased degree and certificate completion rates. This is a model similar to the Natomas Center and will require ongoing collaboration between the DE administrative team and instructional deans regarding course and instructor selection.

This section of the plan provides a brief review of how courses are scheduled at the college and the Natomas Center, shares a vision for the future of online pathways for existing certificates and degrees, and articulates the recommendations of the team.

This team articulated three important principles that guided its thinking related to this work. Whenever possible, the team hopes to achieve an environment in which online courses and fully online programs of study:

- lead to employment with a living wage or transfer to a four-year institution.

- provide clear and well-structured pathways to timely completion.
- are high-quality and taught by DE-trained instructors.

### **3.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING**

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Highlighted below are the major priorities that should be addressed in order to develop a process for how courses and programs are scheduled for ARC ONLINE in the Virtual Education Center in order to fulfill the three essential principles:

- Priority 1: Utilize [the top five online program pathways for year one as identified by Team 2](#) to develop the foundation for the initial online offerings of the Virtual Education Center
- Priority 2: Provide an initial assignment of FTE specifically to the Virtual Education Center for the purposes of developing and offering the courses for the top five programs
- Priority 3: Use data (e.g., AdAstra and education plans) to determine if additional FTE allocation should be considered
- Priority 4: Create a three-year project timeline for Virtual Education Center programs to include both existing programs and those to be developed
- Priority 5: Investigate and integrate accelerated learning options to provide timely completion

The development of each of these priorities will be described in more detail including action steps, timelines, and resource needs.

### **3.3 CURRENT STATE: REVIEW OF ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING**

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Historically, FTE allocation has been an administrative function within the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) and American River College (ARC). Allocation takes place in 3 phases: (1) LRCCD allocates FTE to four colleges, (2) American River College allocates FTE to divisions and off-campus centers, and (3) divisions and centers select specific courses to assign FTE and to schedule. This results in similar offerings from semester to semester with some collaboration and sharing of FTE among the divisions. There have been incremental changes--many departments have increased their online offerings over time as online courses noticeably fill at higher rates than other modalities. However, assignments often duplicate previous offerings and are aligned to instructor-preference. This has resulted in a confederated and ad-hoc method of FTE assignment to DE courses.

### **3.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE OF ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING**

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To better serve our students, we propose an increase in DE course offerings and a consistency in those offerings for specific degree paths. A robust and successful DE program requires dedicated FTE to ensure students **can** complete all program requirements.

While we propose an initial FTE allocation for DE, going forward, data is likely to dictate FTE allocation. With the implementation of Ad Astra, the Enterprise Level Scheduling Solution (ELSS), we expect an increase in actionable data to help guide FTE decisions. It is important to remember actionable data is just data. It requires leadership, buy-in, and follow-through to be useful. It is essential that we begin the work to develop a clear and collaborative methodology for technology-assisted FTE determinations to include regular review and clear documentation. A collaborative approach to data interpretation and usage will result in better-informed FTE allocation decision-making.

### 3.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS: ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULING

	<b>Priority 1: Utilize the top five online program pathways for year one as identified by Team 2 to develop the foundation for the initial online offerings of the Virtual Education Center (VEC)</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify the top five programs are viable as fully online pathways</li> <li>Identify any gaps to fully online pathways</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Spring 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VEC staff time to determine viability</li> <li>Department map maker time to work with Virtual Education Center staff</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 2: Allocate initial assignment of FTE specifically to the Virtual Education Center which is administered by the Dean of Distance Education for the purposes of developing and offering the courses for the top five programs</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify courses to be offered for each program for each semester to determine needed FTE</li> <li>Determine needed number of sections</li> <li>Provide initial FTE-projection to Vice President of Instruction</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Summer 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VEC staff time to verify courses and determine sections in conjunction with departments</li> <li>Data (American River College Research Office, AdAstra, and Crystal Reports)</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 3: Use data to determine allocation of additional FTE</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a data-based model for projecting online FTE that includes multiple factors (e.g., CCCApply interest in online courses, online course enrollments and waitlists, and productivity data.</li> <li>Determine critical online course needs beyond initial allocation and program pathway courses</li> <li>Determine number of sections</li> <li>Provide additional FTE-projection to Vice President of Instruction</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Summer 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VEC staff time to review potential needs and to analyze data</li> <li>Data (American River College Research Office, AdAstra, and Crystal Reports)</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 4: Create three-year project timeline for Virtual Education Center programs to include both existing programs and those to be developed to better anticipate FTE requirements</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop processes recommended by Team 2-- <a href="#">3.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS</a> and processes recommended by Team 3-- <a href="#">4.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: NEW ONLINE COURSES AND PROGRAMS</a> to plan for existing and new programs to be launched in the VEC</li> <li>Map these programs with fully online courses for timely completion in collaboration with the program’s department</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VEC staff time to review potential needs and to analyze data</li> <li>Data (American River College Research Office, AdAstra, and Crystal Reports)</li> <li>Map these programs for timely completion in collaboration with the program’s department</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 5: Investigate and integrate accelerated learning options to provide timely completion</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore innovative online models (e.g., short-term: 4-, 5-, and 6- week classes)</li> <li>Explore the operational challenges, workload issues, and creative solutions related to these options</li> <li>Determine which models could be employed at or adapted for American River College</li> <li>Make recommendations to appropriate Council and stakeholders</li> <li>Implement new models for selected courses</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time to explore and recommend models</li> <li>Budget for faculty training in how to effectively teach and redesign course for selected model</li> <li>Instructional Design support in course design of selected model</li> <li>Additional resources TBD to implement an adopted model</li> </ul>

## 4. TEAM 2: ONLINE PATHWAYS FOR EXISTING CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS

Team 2 was charged with two objectives that are key to developing a robust online educational experience for our students at American River College. The first objective focused on the development of a “process for creating online pathways for existing certificates and degrees.” The team was also asked to “identify online program pathways which provide the best opportunities for students - The top five online program pathways for year one.” This team’s work intersects with existing program pathways and the most popular degrees and certificates awarded at the College, as well as the work of the Clarify Program Paths project team that was already deeply involved in creating program maps.

This section of the plan provides a brief review of existing online pathways, shares a vision for the future of online pathways for existing certificates and degrees, and articulates the recommendations of the team.

Several important principles guide this work. Whenever possible, the team hopes to achieve an environment in which:

- Information about online courses and programs is easy to find, relevant, and understandable for online students. Students are able to easily view, print, share, and enroll in a fully online program of study.
- Students have access to clearly articulated online pathways for timely completion as either a part-time or full-time student.
- Students choosing a fully online program of study would be identified in order to provide them with just-in-time support and guidance as needed.
- American River College's sister colleges' online courses could be used to fill any gaps in offerings for a particular degree or certificate.
- CVC-OEI courses could be used to fill any gaps in offerings not offered online by any of the colleges within the Los Rios Community College District.
- The Virtual Education Center is proactively engaged with instructional deans and faculty, and provides professional development opportunities including instructional and accessible design support, quality online course development, online teaching expertise, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CRTL) pedagogy, and assistance in developing fully online courses and programs that meet the needs of our students.

#### **4.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS**

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Highlighted below are the major priorities that should be addressed in order to develop a process for creating online pathways for existing degrees and certificates at American River College.

- Priority 1: Identify programs by percentage of courses offered online to establish a threshold percentage for fully online offering potential.
- Priority 2: Identify online GE courses
- Priority 3: Utilize existing department-approved, modality-neutral program maps to identify which courses are offered online and which are not currently being offered online—including GE
- Priority 4: Create fully online program maps which are approved, shared, and advertised
- Priority 5: Create an ongoing process to regularly develop and review online program pathways
- Priority 6: Recommend that the Program Pathways Committee includes American River College online faculty members

Each of these priorities will be described in more detail, including action steps, timelines, and resource needs.

#### **4.3 CURRENT STATE: REVIEW OF ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS**

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American River College has been offering online courses for over 20 years and has been training faculty to teach online since 2001. Having a dedicated training facility and staff to support online development efforts has been critical in the ongoing growth of online courses and programs. Moreover, while the online development of courses has not been a strategic college-wide effort, individual departments have worked diligently to bring courses online and to offer fully online programs.

Currently, American River College offers 16 online certificates, as well as seven AAs and two ADTs in which the core program requirements can be completed online. You can view these fully online programs on the [ARC ONLINE website](#). In addition, American River College offers online courses in all the CSU GE areas except for A1, oral communication. Students can view all the online GE courses (CSU-GE, IGETC, or AA/AS GE) for the current semester at [Finish Faster @ ARC ONLINE](#). There are approximately 52 other programs at American River College in which more than 75% of the required courses for that program are available online. In an academic year, approximately 16,000 American River College students enroll in at least one online class and 6,000 enroll exclusively in online courses. These numbers are steadily increasing each year. In order to navigate through an online program, students rely on guidance from counselors, faculty, or their own know-how as there are no advertised, clearly defined online pathways.

American River College is committed to providing students with clear curricular pathways to employment and further education. In fact, American River College's strategic goal number two states: "The College provides easily recognizable pathways to, through, and beyond American River College." To that end, American River College's Clarify Program Paths project team began its work in creating clear and coherent academic and career program paths in the form of program roadmaps in the 2017-18 academic year. To date, significant progress had been made with almost half of the programs being mapped. These modality-neutral maps will be made available to students in the upcoming semesters. Due to American River College's online course inventory, many of the courses within the maps are available online. While the work of Clarify Program Paths project is not focused on online courses and degrees, collaborative efforts between it and this project team have resulted in the development of [Atlas](#), a program-mapping tool that will be a key tool in the creation of fully online program maps.

#### **4.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE: ONLINE PATHWAYS – EXISTING PROGRAMS**

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The vision for the future of online pathways is encompassed in the second goal of American River College's strategic plan:

*The College provides easily recognizable pathways to, through, and beyond American River College. Offering well defined and supported pathways provides a foundation for success as students enter the College, make timely progress toward achieving their informed educational goals, and seamlessly transfer to other colleges and universities or find employment in their chosen career."*

Key to the future of online pathways is that they are well defined and include progress milestones and program learning outcomes. As the [California Guided Pathways Project](#) states, "These plans enable colleges to provide predictable schedules, frequent feedback, and embedded, discipline-specific support to help students stay on track and complete their programs more efficiently." This team's work is specific to developing a process for creating online pathways for existing certificates and degrees, but its work cannot be separated from the larger, college-wide undertaking. In fact, once this process is developed, it will be linked to the ongoing, iterative work of the program map developers and the Program Pathways Committee, which should include faculty with DE expertise.

Towards the creation of online pathways for existing certificates and degrees, the team identified five programs to begin with in year one. This selection provides the Virtual Education Center with a framework for creating a robust online center in which students can avail to a strategically developed online course schedule that aligns with program pathways and maximizes opportunities for timely completion.

The methodology for selecting these programs was based on a concise set of criteria:

- Programs where the core courses were already available fully online were a clear starting point. The historical work done by ARC’s Business and Computer Science area to carefully develop and build existing online offerings quickly became evident, as most of the programs meeting this criterion fell into that area.
- The next criterion was number of degrees or certificates awarded, which spoke to an interest in selecting programs that were both doable and marketable.
- The team further decided to include at least one pathway which was close but not yet fully online; this would provide an opportunity to begin the formation of a process for working with departments to establish fully online programs.
- Finally, a criterion was added to include at least one certificate, the selection of which would follow from the first two criteria.

This work resulted in the following list of top five online program pathways for year one:

1. Business Administration AST
2. Accounting AA
3. General Business AA
4. History AAT
5. Accounting Certificate

Moving forward, the team determined that a more holistic process should be established to regularly develop and review online program pathways, as delineated in Priority 5: Create an ongoing process to regularly develop and review online program pathways.

#### 4.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS – EXISTING PROGRAMS

	<b>Priority 1: Identify programs by percentage of core courses offered online to establish a threshold percentage for fully online offering potential</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a comprehensive list of all existing ARC programs to establish current percentage of core courses within each program that have been offered online within the last academic year</li> <li>• Create a comprehensive list of all existing programs at our sister colleges to establish current percentage that core courses within each program have been offered online within the last academic year</li> <li>• Prioritize programs based on current online offerings; determine threshold percentage above which development of fully online program maps will be focused</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Spring 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ARC ONLINE – 100% Online Programs</a> for percentages</li> <li>• VEC staff time to review potential needs and to analyze data</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 2: Identify online GE courses</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a comprehensive list of all online GE offerings (IGETC, CSU GE, AA/AS) at American River College</li> <li>▪ Create a comprehensive list of all online GE offerings (IGETC, CSU GE, AA/AS) at our sister colleges</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the list works in conjunction with the Clarify Programs Paths (CPP) project team’s <u>process to select default GE courses for degree maps</u> and its <u>American River College GE Course Information website</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify online GE courses with themes including "Diversity and Multicultural Issues," "Gender and Sexuality," "Global Studies -- People and Cultures Outside the U.S.," and "Race and Ethnicity."</li> <li>○ Show sections offered over an academic year</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Identify gaps and suggest solutions (e.g., increase online sections offered, create new online GE courses, etc.)</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Spring 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VEC programming efforts to update American River College ONLINE Finish Faster to include sister colleges’ GE courses and integration with GE course information from CPP for program map makers</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 3: Utilize existing department-approved modality-neutral program maps, identify courses offered online and those which are not currently being offered online—including GE</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare sample of fully online program map for discussion purposes for programs that meet determined threshold from Priority 1</li> <li>▪ Establish liaisons with departments chairs/instructional deans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss and suggest options including alternative online GE offerings; ensuring that social justice and equity are addressed, and considering Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) options</li> <li>○ Determine plans for offering courses online which currently are not</li> <li>○ Understand challenges to offering particular courses online</li> <li>○ Discuss immediate and long-term solutions (e.g. courses from sister colleges, CVC-OEI courses, training, mentorship, incentives etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed and approved modality-neutral program maps</li> <li>▪ Atlas map making tool version 2.0 --access to online courses from our sister colleges</li> <li>▪ VEC staff time to create sample online maps</li> <li>▪ VEC DE faculty representative as liaison with departments</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 4: Create fully online program maps which are approved, shared, and advertised</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps created through processes in Priority 3 will be reviewed and approved in the same manner as developed through Clarify Program Paths including processes develop by the Program Paths Committee</li> <li>• Online maps will be shared in Atlas for staff access</li> <li>• Maps will be advertised alongside other maps on the college website and also on American River College ONLINE</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC staff time to create Atlas student-facing interface</li> <li>• ARC Web Team staff team to implement maps on the website</li> <li>• Promote maps and online education opportunities</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 5: Create an ongoing process to regularly develop and review online program pathways</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the process in Priority 1 to determine eligible candidates</li> <li>• Create a rubric to assist in determining top status: consider popularity, certificates or degrees awarded, potential growth, areas of interest (working toward broad and balanced representation from the nine ARC areas of interest), and/or labor market demand</li> <li>• Establish liaisons with departments of eligible programs for more information</li> <li>• Choose top online program pathways for focused efforts</li> <li>• Prioritize online program mapping for these programs</li> <li>• Once approved, showcase through a targeted (e.g., potential students and employers) advertising campaign to include video, social media, and print media</li> <li>• Create a regular, ongoing review to ensure currency of top programs</li> <li>• Assess success rates by racial groups and in comparison to face-to-face success</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC DE faculty time to create rubric through review of potential programs, analysis of data—including labor market demand and advisory committee information, and with department input</li> <li>• ARC Web Team to implement maps on the website</li> <li>• VEC DE faculty representative as liaison with departments for online program map creation</li> <li>• Promote maps and online education opportunities</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 6: Recommend that the Program Pathways Committee includes American River College online faculty members</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The American River College ONLINE 2.0 project team acknowledges the complexity of creating, maintaining, and updating fully online pathways and recommends that membership include representation from faculty with DE expertise</li> <li>Ongoing communication with DE faculty appointees and the Virtual Education Center is recommended due to the rapid changes in DE including the college’s participation in the CVC-OEI Consortium</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	(Fall 2019) Program Pathways Committee implementation
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>none anticipated</li> </ul>

## 5. TEAM 3: NEW ONLINE PATHWAYS TO ALIGN WITH LABOR MARKET & STUDENT DEMAND WITH FLEXIBLE LEARNING OPTIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE PATHWAYS – NEW PROGRAMS

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Team 3 was charged with developing a process for designing new, fully online programs that align with labor market and student demand, and that provide flexible learning options. It acknowledged that our success as an educational institution is tied to our ability to respond quickly to student needs and to proactively anticipate changes in our local and regional community to meet student demand as well as business/industry needs, when possible. Additionally, they reviewed other online programs to glean an overall understanding of best and current practices being utilized with Distance Education. Subsequently, this team provided analysis for the creation of new program and course offerings to serve both market growth areas and emerging student career objectives. Team 3 also identified methods to facilitate rapid course development.

This section of the plan provides the principles that guided the team’s thinking related to their work, a summary of recommendations, a brief review of the current state of new program development, a vision for the future of online pathways for new certificates and degrees, and a detailed list of priorities for action and resources needs.

This team articulated several important principles that guided their thinking related to this work. Whenever possible, the team hopes to achieve a structural and operational environment in which:

- Labor market (LM) and student demand data informs decision making for new program creation.
- The college can offer new, high quality courses and programs quickly and efficiently. Rapid course development methods should be identified and institutionalized for future agile course offerings.
- Continuous program improvement is institutionalized. Program delivery and user experience (i.e faculty and student interfaces) should be monitored and analyzed for better continuous program improvement and/or enhancement.

### 5.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: NEW ONLINE COURSES AND PROGRAMS

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Highlighted below are the major priorities that should be addressed in order to develop a process for how courses and programs are developed, scheduled, and evaluated for American River College ONLINE in the Virtual Education Center at American River College

- Priority 1: Develop a DE focused cyclical mechanism for addressing course and program planning to include improvement, modification, elimination, and additions that align with student and market demand
- Priority 2: Develop and offer blueprint templates to aid in the creation of “plug and go” DE course offerings to encourage rapid development
- Priority 3: Investigate and apply Online Competency-Based Education (CBE)
- Priority 4: Identify and secure FTE for new course offerings
- Priority 5: Monitor and analyze the user experience to inform program improvement

### **5.3 CURRENT STATE: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

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One common obstacle for higher education intuitions is a lack of flexibility accompanied by a slow and reactive approach to changing course offerings. This is partially a systemic issue, but it’s important to note the time commitment involved in such work often rests on the shoulders of one or two full-time faculty members, who are often already overburdened. While adjunct faculty are critical to advancing student success at the college, they often do not participate in governance activities such as curriculum development and market research. Because this plan is limited to DE, it is an ideal environment to leverage best practice models, apply those models within a local context, and then infuse lessons learned back into future DE offerings at American River College. This approach will add value to the college and our students.

### **5.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

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An essential element to this plan is a DE-focused, cyclical mechanism for addressing course and program planning to include improvement, modification, elimination, and additions that align with student and market demand. A group of key program stakeholders with decision-making authority must periodically review data for student and labor market demand. The primary benefit of such a group would be to interpret and review actionable data for the planning process and the facilitation of flexible implementation of DE programs and courses. Knowing which courses, programs, certificates, and degrees should be offered is essential, but actionable data without decision-making authority significantly limits the campus’ ability to disrupt the current online educational paradigm. A DE specific FTE pool will be required to rapidly offer new programs.

Data analysis should include:

- Local, Regional, and Statewide demand data
- Career pathways, occupations within pathways, current and future labor market supply and demand, potential wage earnings, education/experiential entry requirements, etc.
- Investigate LM prior/parallel to student demand data
- Resource to inform/educate as students narrow interest area foci
- Resource for student support network stakeholders (Counselors, Mentors, [ etc.])
- Identification of data set intersections to inform decision making:
  - Which American River College programs are poised/ready for online modality?
    - Capacity concerns?
    - Resource limitations/needs?
  - What is needed to execute this efficiently?
    - Flexible start and flexible length course options

- Content experts & instructional designers
- Faculty vetting & program review process considerations
  - Optimal course trajectory
  - Advisory committees (as needed)
- Curriculum Approval
  - Full program (Phase I)
  - Additional/new courses (Phase II)
- Client-Relations Management (CRM) tools
  - Monitoring/tracking student program progress
  - Early & active student-faculty-employer engagement
  - Cross-system integration (PeopleSoft, ELSS, Financial Aid, SARS, Canvas, etc.)
  - Overall ecosystem connectedness

Second, American River College should develop and offer a blueprint template to aid in the creation of “plug and go” course offerings to encourage rapid development and ease for students to determine which courses fit their educational pathways. This idea of “plug and go” can aid both course creation for faculty, and program completion for students.

For faculty: Blueprint courses can be created for the development of courses in an expedient manner. Specifically, a blueprint course is a special type of course within the Course Management System (Canvas) which serves as a template for other courses. Content and settings can be pushed out to courses associated with that template. For instance, if a department has a number of classes that require a certain number of hours in the field, lecture hours, and competencies that must be attained, a blueprint course could allow for the structure of the course to already be established, allowing faculty to plug in relevant and course-related content into the course blueprint shell.

For students: The “plug and go” idea would allow for students to utilize the pathway map for their program, and locate which classes offered at the college fit into their pathway. For example, if a student wants to complete a certificate or degree, he can review the current offerings as well as the pathway map to plan his program completion, and determine which he prefers to take online and which he would take on campus, allowing maximum flexibility to meet his scheduling needs. The HighPoint PeopleSoft product, which was recently acquired by LRCCD, promises to offer this type of functionality.

For Faculty and Students: Additionally, this idea of “plug and go” can help with the rapid creation of new programs. The development of a Degree Shell could help with this process and be informed and modified based on stakeholders within the field. Specifically, a Degree Shell would serve as a modified pathway map (eliminating the need to create a new map each time a new program is created), but for the DE environment with options that allow the student to tailor their program for their need. For example, within a specific discipline, perhaps a certain number of introductory classes are required, as well as GE courses, upper division courses, fieldwork hours, and mentorship hours. The Degree Shell would provide options (you can take the following introductory classes) which allows the student to mold their program based on their needs.

Faculty can vet all of the courses selected for specific programs, to ensure the classes being selected are appropriate and offering best choices for students. For example, faculty would provide guidance for which introductory classes should be offered for each new program, etc.

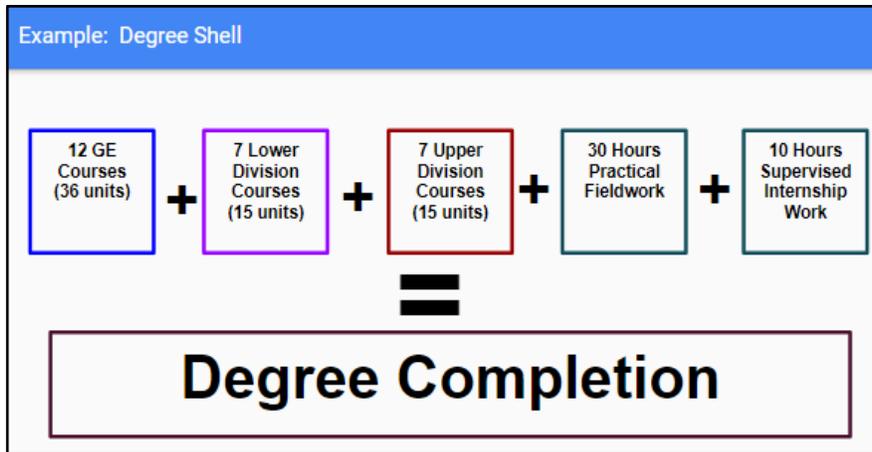


Figure 2. Example degree completion shell

Figure 2 is an example of a degree completion shell. For example, say one department conducted market research as well as research related to student need/interest, and concluded that three new programs were needed within their department. From there, they determined that for each program 12 GE courses, 7 lower division, and 7 upper division would provide students with enough breadth and depth related to their knowledge base. Then, determine the number of unsupervised and supervised courses needed to complete the program. The degree shell would outline this, serving as a DE pathway map.

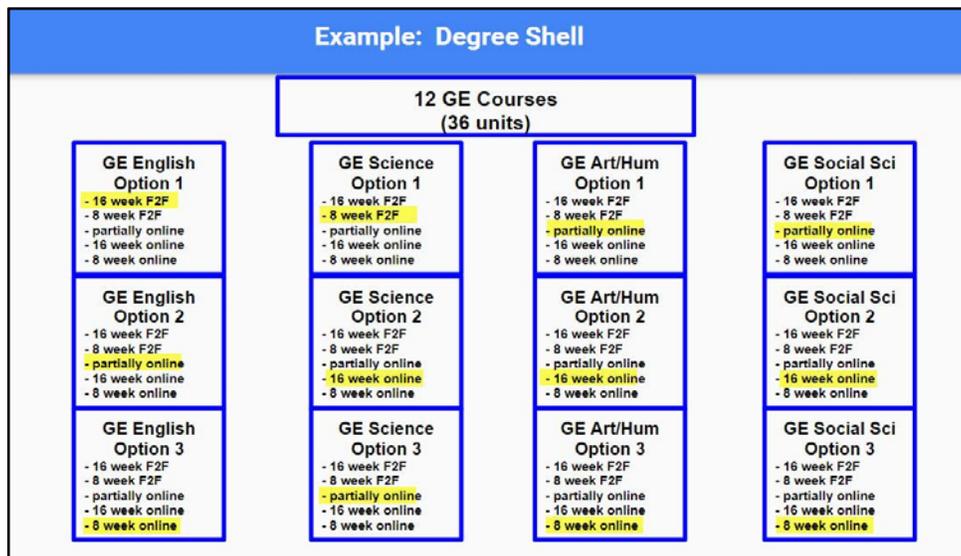


Figure 3. GE course selection degree shell

Building off Figure 2, Figure 3 focuses in on the “12 GE Courses” section. Here, students will be able to see which English courses (predetermined by faculty who helped develop this new program) they can pick from to plug into their course completion roadmap, and see the differing options that exist related to whether they are 16 week face-to-face or online classes, 8 week face-to-face or online, etc. From there, students can create their educational plan for completion, selecting courses from the Degree Shell that fits their schedules (the highlighted sections are illustrating a mock student’s choices).

Third, program delivery and user experience should be monitored and analyzed for better program improvement. Simplicity and ease of access is key. A full, clear menu of resources (and this will benefit all students!) should be developed and include:

- Clear links to existing course offerings
- Newly designed courses
- Connectedness to and integration with American River College website and DE tools
- Flexible learning options
  - short-term vs long term (i.e., 4, 6, 8, 16)
  - competency-based

We propose the development of expectation management and continuous program improvement capacities within the DE team. By ongoing surveying of the DE student experience, there are opportunities for improving and increasing the actionable data we have available. Initial ideas include:

- Survey to sample user experience (students, faculty, etc.)
  - Before, during, and after the program - What would this look like?
- Determine the characteristics of a “successful” online student
- Schedule online appointments with program path mentor

## 5.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

	<b>Priority 1: Develop a DE focused cyclical mechanism for addressing course and program planning to include improvement, modification, elimination, and additions that align with student and market demand</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Form advisory team with representation from Workforce and DE               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analyze labor market demand</li> <li>○ outreach and meet with industry representatives</li> <li>○ analyze student demand</li> <li>○ make recommendations for development of new courses and programs</li> <li>○ explore Open Education Resources and Zero Textbook Cost (OER/ZTC) options</li> <li>○ ensure faculty vetting &amp; program review processes are in place</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Initiate curriculum approval for programs and courses</li> <li>▪ Offer program with continuous evaluation mechanisms in place</li> <li>▪ Employ Client-Relations Management (CRM) tools</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Spring 2020
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funds to acquire any new technologies (amount TBD)</li> <li>▪ Staff time to participate in implementation</li> <li>▪ Additional resources TBD</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 2: Develop and offer blueprint templates to aid in the creation of “plug and go” course offerings to encourage rapid development</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an in-house knowledge base of blueprint courses</li> <li>• Develop a process for how blueprint templates are requested, developed, maintained, and evaluated</li> <li>• Develop Degree Shells to streamline pathways to completion for students which include courses and other industry demands (internship hours, etc.)</li> <li>• Pilot a blueprint template implementation with existing department or program</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Spring 2020
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC staff time to develop knowledge base and processes in collaboration with stakeholders</li> <li>• Instructional Design support to develop and maintain templates</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 3: Investigate and apply Online Competency-Based Education (CBE)</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore innovative online models which include CBE philosophy, policy, and practice</li> <li>• Explore existing face-to-face course delivery models and current practices (i.e. modular courses in apprenticeship programs; Hours-, Competency-, and Hybrid-based Career Education programs) that may be adapted for use in an online environment</li> <li>• Explore the operational challenges, workload issues, curriculum implications, and creative solutions related to these options</li> <li>• Determine which model(s) could be employed at or adapted for American River College</li> <li>• Share findings with departments launching new programs</li> <li>• Make recommendations to appropriate Council and stakeholders</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to explore and recommend a model</li> <li>• Instructional Design support in course design for CBE</li> <li>• Funding for faculty training in how to effectively teach and redesign course for selected model</li> <li>• Instructional Design support in course design of selected model</li> <li>• Additional resources TBD to implement an adopted model</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 4: Identify and secure FTE for new course offerings</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Team 1: Priority 2</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide initial FTE-projection to Vice President of Instruction</li> <li>• VEC staff time to verify courses and determine sections in conjunction with departments</li> <li>• Data (American River College Research Office, AdAstra, and Crystal Reports)</li> <li>• Advertising budget for new courses and programs</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 5: Monitor and analyze the user experience to inform program improvement</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop user surveys</li> <li>• Survey to sample user experience (students, faculty, etc.) before, during, and after program completion</li> <li>• Collect, analyze and report aggregate data about which pages are visited -- and in what order (Clickstream Analytics)</li> <li>• Analyze data for characteristics of a successful online student</li> <li>• Assess success rates by racial groups and in comparison to face-to-face success</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Fall 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VEC staff time to develop surveys and analyze data</li> <li>• Data (website, American River College Research Office, AdAstra, and Crystal Reports)</li> <li>• Additional resources TBD</li> </ul>

## 6. TEAM 4: COMPREHENSIVE, EQUITY-BASED ONLINE ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION: ONLINE SERVICES

Team four focused on online services and was charged with creating a plan to ensure comprehensive, equity-based, online academic and student support services for our students. An essential component of this plan is the strengthening of our online student services framework to eliminate gaps in services. All students, online and face-to-face, benefit from online student services. According to the 2017 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Distance Education Report, "With the increasing number of distance education students and the development and expansion of courses and programs, colleges face new challenges to provide student services and other support in the online learning environment. This challenge is not limited to distance education students. Traditional students on campus also need the option to access student services without having to come to campus." A comprehensive approach to support services should also serve to reduce equity gaps in student retention and success.

The team articulated several important principles that guided their thinking related to this work. Whenever possible, the team hopes to achieve an environment in which:

- All services offered on-campus are available and accessible to online students.
- Students receive just-in-time communications to guide and nudge them towards next steps.
- Information is easy to find, relevant, and understandable for online students.
- Duplication of employee effort and confusion arising from parallel processing are minimized by developing processes that equitably serve on-campus and online students within the same workflows.
- Employees are provided with the tools, training, data, and technology to facilitate effective support and interaction with online students.

Additionally, any improvements to online services must align cohesively with other college efforts including the American River College Redesign and participation in the CVC-OEI equity cohort. In fact, as one of the consortium colleges in the CVC-OEI, the college now has free access to high quality and innovative tools to

effectively serve students in an online environment as well as robust training for student services personnel using those tools.

## **6.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ONLINE SERVICES**

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Highlighted below are the major priorities that should be addressed in order to create comprehensive, equity-based, online academic and student support services at American River College.

- Priority 1: Redesign paper-based processes to be inclusive of electronic processes
- Priority 2: Improve online communication and access to timely information
- Priority 3: Address technological limitations that inhibit student support
- Priority 4: Bring initial online counseling efforts to scale & across most student services
- Priority 5: Offer an alternative virtual option in any American River College business practice that currently requires the student to attend an in-person meeting
- Priority 6: Explore how Los Rios/American River College might extend more support to online students outside of normal business hours
- Priority 7: Explore how technology might be utilized to create connection and engage online students outside the classroom
- Priority 8: Develop a student support team model for exclusively online students
- Priority 9: Explore how programs which support disproportionately impacted students can effectively engage online students

Each of these priorities will be described in more detail including action steps, timelines, and resource needs.

## **6.3 CURRENT STATE: REVIEW OF ONLINE SERVICES**

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High quality and readily available academic and student support services are essential to student success and retention. Today, students expect to access those services online. From enrollment, to financial aid, to ordering books, the expectations continue to branch out to all services. Tutorial services, career and academic counseling, and even assessment and testing are being done online at many colleges and universities. Both face-to-face and online students want access to online services, but the benefits go beyond meeting student expectations. Best-in-class colleges and universities report that minimizing offline services results in a dual benefit of student success and cost savings.

We are on the precipice of landmark funding modifications for the California Community College system. We are uniquely positioned to create new systems that both help students and support the financial health of our district. New technologies make it possible to automate and integrate services, reducing routine tasks and freeing staff up to provide the more valuable “high touch” services that increase student success.

Nearly all services should have an online presence, beginning with a baseline at the informational level through a real-time, live-person, personalized level. Redesigning a seamlessly integrated collection of services is a monumental task. Supporting those services with the required infrastructure and staff for successful implementation is of utmost importance.

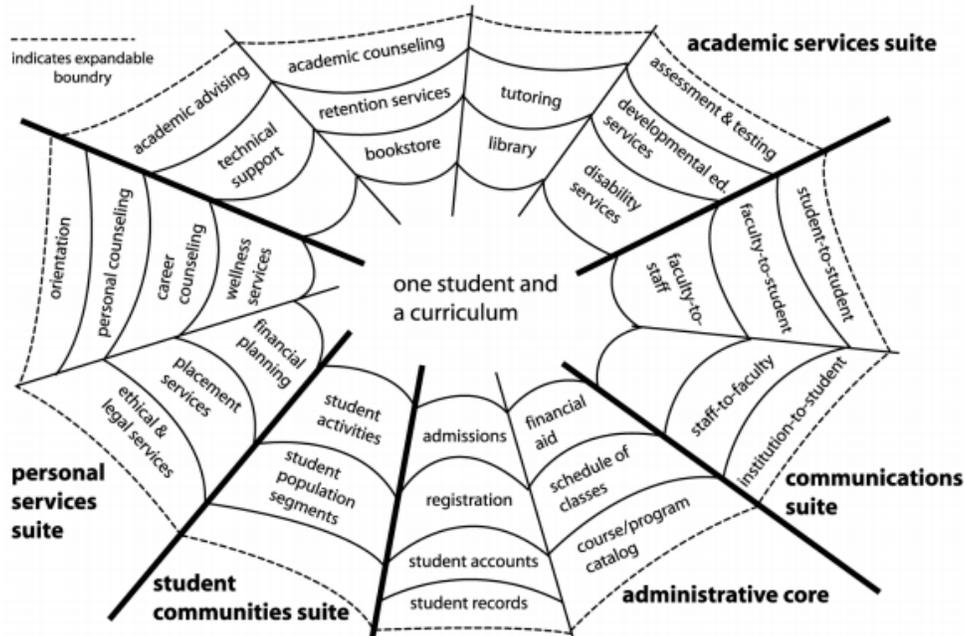


Figure 4. Student services for online students, From [WCET LAAP Project Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners](#)

The demand for online services is increasing as the number of students enrolled in online classes continues to grow at American River College and across California. Cognizant that existing online services are not meeting the needs of online students, a full assessment was conducted through research of student-facing processes, interviews with key employees, available data, and other mechanisms. The following key college-wide insights were gleaned from the assessment.

- Online students expect that all business processes and support can be supplied in a virtual environment without needing to physically visit the campus. This expectation is not currently being met.
- While there have been valiant efforts to implement online services in various departments, American River College lacks an intentional, cohesive way to ensure online services are available across the entire student experience.
- Local processes that require “wet signatures” from counselors, instructors, and other American River College personnel are a significant barrier for many online students who are unable to physically visit the campus during normal business hours due to various life circumstances.
- Many services and transactional activities require in-person meetings or other interaction on campus. This lack of options can present a roadblock for some students.
- Information on the college website is often written with on-campus students in mind and can be difficult for online students to navigate.
- Online students who access courses in the evenings and on weekends are offered a 24-7 help line provided by Instructure (Canvas), but minimal access to American River College services outside of normal business hours.
- Employees who assist online students are often hampered by a lack of cohesive modern technologies in terms of available equipment (desktop hardware) and functionality (e.g., text messaging capability).

While not intended to be an exhaustive list, the status of several identified services/processes is as follows:

STATUS	SERVICES
<b>Fully Available Online Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Admission application (CCCApply)</li> <li>▪ 24/7 Canvas Support (Instructure)</li> <li>▪ Financial aid applications (Promise Grant/FAFSA)</li> <li>▪ Financial aid distribution of funds (BankMobile)</li> <li>▪ Payment of student fees (eServices)</li> <li>▪ Registration (eServices)</li> <li>▪ Student online readiness assessment (OEI-sponsored QuestReadiness)</li> <li>▪ Textbook information and online ordering (American River College Bookstore)</li> <li>▪ Test proctoring (OEI-sponsored Proctorio)</li> <li>▪ Tutoring (OEI-sponsored NetTutor)</li> <li>▪ Transcript Ordering (Credentials Inc.)</li> <li>▪ Library: 24/7 online access to library databases including magazines, journals, and newspaper, the vast majority of which are available full-text; online renewal of books</li> </ul>
<b>Partial/In Progress Online Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Counseling (currently available via Google Hangouts with plans to implement SARS Zoom by June 2019 to expand online counseling and advising)</li> <li>▪ Various Financial Aid processes</li> </ul>
<b>Anticipated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career assessment/exploration via Career Coach (available through CCC MyPath)</li> <li>▪ Degree planning (available via HighPoint)</li> <li>▪ Class schedule building (available via HighPoint)</li> <li>▪ Appointment scheduling (available via Hobsons Starfish and eSARS)</li> <li>▪ Access to a case management support team (available via Hobsons Starfish)</li> <li>▪ Petition for graduation (anticipated launch summer 2019)</li> </ul>
<b>Not Available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AB 540 exemption request</li> <li>▪ Residency processes</li> <li>▪ Student Petitions and Forms</li> <li>▪ Veterans certification (requires appointment with certifying official)</li> </ul>

Additionally, several technology and communication gaps were identified that represent missed opportunities:

Area	OBSERVATIONS
<b>CCCApply</b>	New students can indicate an interest in “Online Classes” through the CCCApply admission application. American River College is not currently using this data in onboarding or communication. It is also not used to directing incoming students to information tailored to their needs on the <a href="#">ARC ONLINE</a> site. Further, this valuable data is “hidden” from counselors and others who work with students because it is not easily visible within the student record.
<b>Chat</b>	The college does not currently have online chat functionality available through its services. While this type of communication tool is of interest, staffing constraints were identified as a barrier.
<b>College Website</b>	Much of the student services content on the existing American River College web site was originally written with local, on-campus students in mind. The pages have also become complex and multi-layered over time which can make it difficult to find information, particularly for online students. The coming transition to a new web site presents a unique chance to simplify content while also ensuring that it is clear and relevant to all audiences.
<b>Computers and Equipment</b>	There is no established standard for office technology specific to individuals who are providing services to online learners. Relying on older computers without appropriate peripherals (e.g., webcam) limits the ability of staff to quickly and effectively provide services that meet expectations.
<b>Electronic Forms</b>	While the college does have a document imaging system (OnBase), it lacks a system that can manage online form workflows by securely collecting, routing, prompting multi-step approval, notifying of status, and archiving forms.
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Most events and activities offered to invite student engagement are only available on campus. While social media (e.g., Facebook) is used to increase awareness of these activities, there has been limited exploration of how technology might be used to create connection and engage online students.
<b>Student Preferences</b>	Minimal data is currently collected on student preferences for communications and similar aspects. If this data was available, interactions with the college could be tailored to student preferences.
<b>Text Messaging</b>	American River College currently has very limited text-messaging capability through Lacai. This technology is only used for Achieve@ARC (approximately 1200 students).

## 6.4 VISION OF THE FUTURE OF ONLINE SERVICES

The vision for the future of online services is encompassed in the first goal of American River College’s strategic plan:

*Students First: The College engages and connects students early and often to people, programs, and services as an integrated educational experience. By providing personalized, proactive support, the College fosters relationships that ensure all students, particularly the historically underserved and marginalized, persist, learn, and succeed.*

The difficult question is how to translate that vision into a virtual ecosystem that simultaneously supports online students and enables the employees who are assisting them. One overarching theme is for American River College to create a more synchronous, technology-enabled experience for all involved. The priorities suggested in the following section are recommended as the most essential areas to address in working towards a “Students First” vision for online academic and learning support services.

**6.5 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND RESOURCE NEEDS: ONLINE SERVICES**

<b>Priority 1: Redesign paper-based processes to be inclusive of electronic processes</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify, assess, and select a technology tool that can manage online form workflows by securely collecting, routing, prompting multi-step approval, notifying of status, and forms</li> <li>▪ Identify and prioritize all paper-based processes to be converted</li> <li>▪ Implement the technology and document how the new method works</li> <li>▪ Change website content, office signage, and other materials as needed to guide students to the new process</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Begin Summer 2019
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funds to acquire the new technology (amount TBD)*</li> <li>▪ Staff time to participate in implementation</li> </ul> <p>*Reduction in future form printing and mailing costs may offset a portion of the technology cost</p>

	<b>Priority 2: Improve online communication and access to timely information</b>
Action Steps	<p><b><u>2a: College Website</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify web site content across the academic and learning support services to provide information that is easier to understand and navigate, for both on-campus and online learners</li> <li>• Develop content that answers students’ questions about becoming an online student such as an FAQ for potential online students</li> </ul> <p><b><u>2b: Success Team (Case Management)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with American River College Redesign efforts, determine how to assign exclusively online students to a success team</li> <li>• Make it easy for online students to contact their success team without visiting campus (possibly through Hobsons Starfish) and for their success team to recognize them as online students</li> <li>• Ensure that every success team includes an American River College Online technology support contact for students with login issues or other needs specific to online learning</li> </ul> <p><b><u>2c: Text messaging</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess text messaging options including any functionality available within Hobsons Starfish</li> <li>• Implement a robust text messaging platform</li> </ul> <p><b><u>2d: Online Chat</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas of the college (e.g., communication center) in which chat might be beneficial and could be supported at existing staffing levels</li> <li>• Regardless of staffing levels, identify any other areas in which chat would be highly beneficial</li> <li>• Assess options and select an online chat technology that could support all of the identified areas (see priority 4: chat technology is included in some virtual meeting platforms such as ConexEd’s Cranium Cafe or Zoom)</li> <li>• Implement online chat in a phased approach that considers staffing levels</li> </ul> <p><b><u>2e: CCCApply Data</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize existing CCCApply data to discern a student’s interest in online classes and tailor communication/information to their needs</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	<p>2a: Begin Spring 2019  2b: TBD based on Hobsons implementation schedule and other factors  2c, 2d:  2e: in progress</p>
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee time to review and rewrite content as needed</li> <li>• Expertise from the Public Information Officer and/or others</li> <li>• Funds to acquire and maintain technology solutions (amount TBD)</li> <li>• Staff time to participate in implementation and utilize the tools</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 3: Address technological limitations that inhibit student support</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a standard for the desktop technology configuration of student services personnel who work with online students (e.g., computer that is no older than five years that is optimized for video/audio streaming; webcam; microphone/speakers or headset; desktop scanner; suite of agreed-upon installed software or desktop shortcuts to hosted applications)</li> <li>Identify which workstations are used to support online learners</li> <li>Allocate sufficient resources to upgrade all identified workstations within one fiscal year</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Establish standard and determine needs in 2019-20; allocate resources and implement in 2020-21
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds to acquire the new technology (amount TBD)</li> <li>Staff time for acquisition and installation, training, and ongoing maintenance</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 4: Bring initial online counseling efforts to scale &amp; across all student services</b>	
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas within Student Services (e.g., Admissions, Counseling, Call Center, DSPS, Financial Aid, and Wellness Center) in which a virtual meeting platform would be beneficial and could be supported at existing staffing levels</li> <li>Regardless of staffing levels, identify any other areas in a virtual meeting platform would be highly beneficial</li> <li>Assess options (e.g. ConexEd Cranium Cafe, SARS Zoom, ConferZoom, Google Hangouts) for scalability, security, privacy, accessibility, ease of use, and potential for Districtwide implementation, and select a technology that could support all of the identified areas. Establish liaisons with other colleges who have implemented the tool to assist in assessment</li> <li>Train users on effective use of the technology</li> <li>Implement virtual meeting technology in a phased approach that considers staffing level. Consider piloting the tool with a small group of users</li> <li>Evaluate for ongoing improvement</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Establish standard and determine needs in 2019-20; allocate resources and implement in 2020-21
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds to acquire the new technology (amount TBD)</li> <li>Staff time for acquisition and installation, training, and ongoing maintenance</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 5: Offer an alternative virtual option in any American River College business practice that currently requires the student to attend an in-person meeting</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify business practices in which virtual platforms would be beneficial and could be supported at existing staffing levels</li> <li>Regardless of staffing levels, identify any other areas in which virtual platforms would be highly beneficial</li> <li>Assess options for scalability, security, privacy, accessibility, ease of use, and potential for Districtwide implementation, and select a technology that could support all of the identified areas</li> <li>Train users on effective use of the technology</li> <li>Evaluate for ongoing improvement</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Establish standard and determine needs in 2019-20; allocate resources and implement in 2020-21
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds to acquire the new technology (amount TBD)</li> <li>Staff time for acquisition and installation, training, and ongoing maintenance</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 6: Explore how Los Rios/American River College might extend more support to online students outside of normal business hours</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key areas where student support should be extended to best serve online students</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Summer 2019, ongoing
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee time to survey, research, assess, and make recommendations</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 7: Explore how technology might be utilized to create connection and engage online students outside the classroom</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key areas where student support should be extended to best engage online students</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Summer 2019, ongoing
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee time to survey, research, assess, and make recommendations</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 8: Develop a student support team model for exclusively online students</b>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the unique support needs of exclusively online students</li> <li>Explore how other colleges support their online students such as through success coaching (e.g., ASU’s Success Center, Western Governors University, and Rio Salado College)</li> <li>Assess options to determine which dedicated online services could lead to increased online student success and retention</li> <li>Make recommendations and develop implementation plan</li> <li>Launch services which could include a pilot of selected services</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Fall 2019 - ongoing
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee time to survey, research, assess, make recommendations, develop plan</li> <li>new or reassigned staff</li> </ul>

	<b>Priority 9:</b> Explore how programs which support disproportionately impacted students can effectively engage online students
Action Steps	Building on the action steps outlined above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify existing programs and their current online options</li> <li>▪ Identify ways to highlight these programs in the VEC</li> <li>▪ Work with programs and communities such as Umoja-Sakhu, Puente, Native American Resource Center, the Pride Center, and DSPS to develop or further develop support options for online students</li> </ul>
Proposed Timing	Fall 2019 - ongoing
Anticipated Resource Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee time to survey, research, assess, make recommendations, develop plan</li> <li>▪ new or reassigned staff</li> </ul>

## 7. CONCLUSION

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One of the success indicators for this planning process was to foster the conditions that will enable [ARC ONLINE](#) to become a robust, fully operational, virtual education center which provides myriad opportunities for students to complete programs fully online so that they can achieve their educational goals and/or economic stability. While this DE plan is intentionally focused on specific objectives, it should be noted that [ARC ONLINE](#) continues to pursue innovative practices and emerging opportunities such as those described in the [Los Rios Online Education Consortium Concept Proposal](#). Therefore, this plan should not be viewed as all encompassing, but rather as a foundational set of strategies to support further development of an agile and responsive virtual education center.

## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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This appendix includes information and resources utilized by the project team.

### AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

- [ARC Distance Education Plan: 2015](#)
- [American River College Strategic Plan 2017-2021](#)
- [ARC ONLINE 2.0 Project Charter](#)
- [ARC ONLINE Website](#)
- [ARC ONLINE – 100% Online Programs](#)
- [ARC Academic Senate Resolution Supporting Use of the Online Education Initiative’s Course Design Rubric](#)
- [ATLAS](#) program mapping tool
- [Blackboard Ally accessibility tool](#)
- California Virtual Campus-Online Education Initiative (CVC-OEI) tool integration @ARC: [NameCoach](#), [NetTutor](#), [Proctorio](#) and [Quest & Smarter Measure](#)
- [FastTrack OEI Rubric Academy](#)

### CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- [2017 Distance Education Report - California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#)
- [California Community Colleges Regulations Summary - Distance Education](#)
- [California Guided Pathways Project](#)
- [Centers of Excellence: Leading source of regional workforce information and insight for California Community Colleges](#)
- [Understanding Labor Market Information Resources](#)

### CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS-ONLINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE (CVC-OEI)

- [Canvas Common Course Management System](#)
- [CVC-OEI Ecosystem Portal](#)
- [Finish Faster Online portal](#)
- [OEI Online Course Design Rubric](#)
- [OER Zero Textbook Cost Degree](#)
- [Online Education Initiative Website](#)
- [Online Network of Educators - @ONE](#)
- [Peralta Community College Equity Rubric](#)

### LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

- [Los Rios Online Education Consortium Concept Proposal](#)
- [Los Rios Online Education Consortium Proposal Concept - informational video](#)
- [Online Course Designation](#)

### STATE OF CALIFORNIA

- [Employment Development Department \(EDD\) Labor Market Information](#)

## OTHER

- [Online provider profiles - various institutions](#)
- [WCET LAAP Project Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners](#)

## APPENDIX B: PROJECT MEMBERSHIP

Role	Name	Role at the College	Team
Project Lead	Marsha Reske	Management, Dean, Distance Education, Virtual Education Center & Learning Resource Center	
Project Co-Lead	Daniel Gilbert-Valencia	Faculty, Computer Information Systems	
Notetaker	Tatyana Torgashev	Classified, Administrative Assistant I	
Member	Ben Barber	Classified, Web & Media Design Specialist	Team 2: Online Pathways-Existing Programs + Top Online Program Pathways
Member	Pamela Bimbi	Faculty, Distance Education Coordinator	Team 2: Online Pathways-Existing Programs + Top Online Program Pathways
Member	Sonia Ortiz-Mercado	Management, Dean of Counseling	Team 4: Online Academic & Support Services
Member	Reyna Moore	Faculty, Counselor	Team 4: Online Academic & Support Services
Member	Jason Ralphs	Classified, Records & Admissions Supervisor	Team 4: Online Academic & Support Services
Member	Frank Malaret	Management, Interim Dean Natomas Center	Team 1: Virtual Education Center (VEC) Course Scheduling
Member	JaNay Brown-Wood	Faculty, Early Childhood Education	Team 3: Online Pathways - New Programs
Member	Kevyn Montano	Classified, Lead Instructional Services Assistant	Team 1: Virtual Education Center (VEC) Course Scheduling
Member	Josef Preciado	Management, Director of the California Apprenticeship Initiative	Team 3: Online Pathways - New Programs
Member	Scott Crow	Communications and Public Information Officer	Team 2: Online Pathways-Existing Programs + Top Online Program Pathways

## APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

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AA/AS - Associate of Arts, Associate of Science

AAT - Associate of Arts for Transfer

ARC - American River College

AST - Associate of Science for Transfer

@ONE - Online Network of Educators

CCCApply - California Community College online student application

CCMS - Common Course Management System

CBE - Competency-Based Education

CPP - Clarify Programs Paths

CRTL - Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning

CSU-GE - California State University General Education

CVC-OEI - California Virtual Campus - Online Education Initiative

DE - Distance Education

ELSS - Enterprise Level Scheduling Solution

eSARS - Electronic Scheduling and Reporting System

ExCEL - CVC-OEI Exchange Cross Enrollment Link

FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

FTE - Full-time equivalent faculty

GE - General Education

IEP - Institutional Equity Plan

IGETC - Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum

LRCCD - Los Rios Community College District

LT/OT - Limited Term, Other Term classes (not 16-week, full term)

OEI - Online Education Initiative

OER - Open Education Resources

OGS - Online Grading System

SARS - Scheduling and Reporting System

SEAP - Student Equity and Achievement Plan

TBD - To Be Determined

VEC - Virtual Education Center

ZTC - Zero Textbook Cost

## APPENDIX D: DE ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING GOALS IN 2019-2022 STUDENT EQUITY & ACHIEVEMENT PLAN

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### **Metric 1: Access**

Increasing the number of students who navigate the application to enrollment in courses by 20%

*DE Activities that support the goal - Streamlined course selection process with online blueprint tools to make program and course selection easier to navigate. Ensuring Information is easy to find, relevant, and understandable for all students.*

### **Metric 2: Retention**

Increasing fall to spring retention by 20%

*DE Activities that support the goal - Comprehensive, equity-based, online academic and student support services for all students.*

### **Metric 3: Transfer**

Increasing transfer student population by 5.5%

*DE Activities that support the goal - Providing more DE course offerings for transfer programs with high enrollment such as Business Administration AST, Accounting AA, General Business AA, and History AAT.*

### **Metric 4: Transfer Level**

Completion of transfer level math/English by 20%

*DE Activities that support the goal - Improved DE course offerings for transfer level math/English. Development of a DE focused cyclical mechanism for improvement that includes analysis of success rates across demographics.*

### **Metric 5: Completion**

Completion of earned cert or degree over 18 units by 5.1%

*DE Activities that support the goal - Improved online course scheduling, increased DE course offerings and fully online programs, accelerated learning options to provide timely completion, built-in program improvement cycles.*

APPENDIX E: DE SUCCESS RATE BY ETHNICITY 2005 - 2016 CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Ethnicity	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	58%	59%	59%	60%	62%	65%	66%	67%	68%	68%	69%	71%
<b>Black/African America</b>	39%	40%	40%	41%	42%	43%	44%	46%	46%	47%	48%	49%
<b>Filipino</b>	50%	52%	53%	56%	57%	59%	61%	63%	63%	63%	64%	66%
<b>Hispanic</b>	46%	46%	47%	48%	50%	51%	53%	55%	55%	56%	58%	59%
<b>Native American</b>	47%	47%	48%	51%	51%	51%	54%	56%	57%	52%	55%	57%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	50%	51%	52%	48%	50%	52%	54%	56%	56%	57%	59%	60%
<b>White</b>	56%	57%	57%	59%	60%	62%	63%	65%	65%	66%	67%	68%

[2017 Distance Education Report - California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#)