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1.

What improvements have been planned/implemented:

During the fall of 2011, 76.51% of Austin Community College District's student population attended college on a part time basis as compared to 72.45% in the Fall of 2007. Further, students from ages 19 to 30 have increased approximately 30% since 2007. The aspect of time for this student—who often works to support themselves and a family—is a commodity. Further, while it is of little secret that this younger generation is technical and media savvy—the generation gap to remain connected is disappearing. In fact, according to a survey in 2009 from Media'ZBiz, a social and digital media company, "Seven in ten Americans (70%) feel it's "important for me to always be accessible" and nearly eight in ten (78%) feel they are constantly connected with family, friends, and colleagues, regardless of physical location". Finally, "66% of Americans expect to be able to access the same content no matter where they are".

Based on the above research and observation, it is imperative that educational concerns provide ongoing connectivity to classroom content via mobile devices through open source learning. While accessing Blackboard with a mobile device is fairly simple, the ability to view an instructional video or listen to a podcast is cumbersome.

For the past year, the division of Computer Studies and Advanced Technology (CSAT) has pursued setting up an itunes u site to assist students with "anytime instruction". An itunes u site integrated with Blackboard will allow students to access content, including video and podcasting on a 24/7 basis—provided the student has internet access.

2.

How did you decide that these improvements would benefit your unit or what weakness is the unit trying to improve:

In the Computer Studies and Advanced Technology (CSAT) division the main reasons for attrition, according to volunteer responses when a student drops a course, are as follows: 1) course takes up too much time was rated at 7.40% compared to the college as a whole at 6.60%; 2) conflict between class and job was rated at 20% compared to the college as a whole at 18.20%; and 3) missed tests or assignments was rated at 10.30% compared to 5.60% with the college as a whole. As a result, CSAT is attempting to improve persistence semester to semester by addressing the issue of time by providing the opportunity for "anytime instruction".

3.

Measures: what measures are going to be used to determine if the improvements were successful.

Success will be determined by measuring the baseline data provided above on a semester-by-semester basis along with the rates of persistence from course to course.

3a. Baseline data: the data used to determine improvements were needed

In the CSAT division the main reasons for attrition, according to volunteer responses when a student drops a course, are as follows: 1) course takes up too much time was rated at 7.40% compared to the college as a whole at 6.60%; 2) conflict between class and job was rated at 20% compared to the college as a whole at 18.20%; and 3) missed tests or assignments was rated at 10.30% compared to 5.60% with the college as a whole.

3b. Target goals: the data that shows your improvements have achieved your goals

A goal of the itunes u pilot is to first lower attrition but to also be at par or below the college average for the above reasons cited when dropping a class.

3c. Current data: where you are currently in reaching your target

We are still building the itunes u site and in the process of procuring server space.

Narrative:

During the 2011 division wide meeting, Cindy Franco from Vanderbilt University, an Apple itunes u representative presented the pros and cons of hosting an itunes u site. Regardless of the perceived issues, faculty appeared to be genuinely excited about the prospect of uploading digital media to a site that would support their curriculum. As a result, the division applied to become a private itunes site and was accepted during the fall semester of 2011. A contractor was hired to build the site and information presented to the Department Chairs at the end of the fall semester.

During the spring of 2012 an issue about procuring server space was ongoing: will Apple host or will CSAT have to purchase a server? After months of negotiation, the Blackboard administrator will apply for an itunes u public site that will be hosted by Apple. It is expected that by the end of spring 2013 we will be begin piloting a new means of offering digital media on mobile devices.