FULLY ONLINE AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAMS

Pilot Program  Strategic Plan
Council for Online Programs

Pilot Program Strategic Plan

MSU Denver Fully Online and Flexible Programs

Submitted to:

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November 20, 2015

Submitted by the Council for Online Programs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council for Online Programs, after deliberating between March-November 2015, recommends a pilot program between January 2016 and May 2017 with the goal of enrolling 100 new students between two degree-completion bachelors programs, Social Work and Health Care Management\(^1\).

The report outlines the budget, processes, tasks, resources, timeline, and student support necessary to establish new student markets and serve current students and industries that could benefit from fully online and flexible degree options.

Working with two programs (Social Work and Health Care Management) that are already online will inform the Council as it develops and implements a management structure and a consistent online delivery format prior to launching additional MSU Denver fully online programs in fall 2017.

MSU Denver led the way in online learning in 1996 when it offered ten of the first online courses in Colorado\(^2\). Since then, significant progress has been made by developing and supporting online course development and deploying the technology infrastructure needed to deliver the now over 1400 MSU Denver online courses.

Currently, MSU Denver is positioned to take advantage of several strategic online learning opportunities:

1) The enrollment and financial aid dollars earned by for-profit online colleges and proprietary universities are declining as the effects of the Gainful Employment Regulations\(^3\) take place. Historically, these institutions targeted adult students, which is also the typical student population of MSU Denver.

2) MSU Denver’s Fully Online Program Strategic Plan is to market to underserved Colorado students such as rural, students of color, Latino and Hispanic students using a modest marketing budget. It is recommended that we not try to compete with CSU-Global,

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\(^1\) Social Work and Health Care Management both have degree completion programs. Students complete their general studies requirement prior to enrolling in the programs. While the Council intends to include MSU Denver general studies at a later date, degree-completion programs allow a quicker path for pilot program deployment.

\(^2\) 1998 Presidents’ Retreat Handout, On-Line Courses at The Metropolitan State College of Denver, 1/12/98

\(^3\) https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/24/number-profit-colleges-declines-enrollments-wither
Arizona State University Online, or other online universities, many of which spend millions of dollars on marketing and promotion.

3) Online students want access to learning that is convenient and not dictated by location or time. However, evidence suggests that students also want the affinity of a physical campus—not a cyber-university—and to have the option for face-to-face interaction with faculty and the campus. Although online students can choose universities across the country or world, most choose to study at a college or university within a one hundred mile radius of their home.4

4) The MSU Denver Online Program plan markets our strengths: unique and relevant degrees, seamless student choice between face-to-face or online courses5, access to a high quality and invested faculty, and connections to the Colorado/regional workplace where most MSU Denver graduates remain.

5) MSU Denver offers highly affordable, state-accredited degrees that are nationally recognized while locally grounded in Colorado communities.

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5 Many online universities do not allow their online students to take courses on campus due to different organizational structures between online and on-campus and different fee structures.
BACKGROUND

MSU Denver established itself as a national leader for online learning by offering its first online courses in 1996, matriculating 843 students within the first two years. Since 1996, MSU Denver has expanded its online and blended course offerings to over 1400 course sections offered annually. During this 20-year time period, MSU Denver has continued to build an online learning infrastructure, which includes a versatile online learning platform (Blackboard Learn), online professional development for faculty, instructional design and media production services, as well as formal processes for course design, development, implementation, and continuous improvement.

MSU Denver has invested time, resources, and staff into building and maintaining a robust and solid infrastructure for online learning from a triangular perspective: Information Technology Services provides technology support; the Education Technology Center provides support for course design, online pedagogy, and learning platforms; the Center for Faculty Excellence provides pedagogical and instructional strategies support (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Online learning at MSU Denver is supported by a cooperative effort between Information Technology Services (ITS), the ITS Education Technology Center and the Center for Faculty Excellence.
Although MSU Denver’s ability to effectively deliver quality online courses is robust and continually improving, we currently lack the infrastructure, personnel, and student services needed to offer fully online academic degree programs. To move toward offering fully online programs, the Council for Online Programs was established by Provost Dr. Vicki Golich in April 2015. Building on the recommendations from the previous 2014 Online Task Force, and in alignment with the Metropolitan State University of Denver 2012-2017 Strategic Plan, the Council for Online Programs is charged with the following:

- Identifying 3-5 online programs in order to:
  - Assess needs/market demand.
  - Develop a strategic plan for sustainable online program development.
  - Develop an online program marketing and branding strategy.
  - Determine the procedures and processes needed for quality online programs.
  - Establish and maintain a process for ensuring the quality of online courses and online academic programs.

- Council outcomes:
  - Develop a model and actionable strategic plan for developing fully online programs by fall 2016.
  - Develop a business plan that identifies the costs and scalability of fully online programs.
  - Develop a branding and marketing plan that promotes a stronger MSU Denver online presence.

THE CHALLENGE

MSU Denver has invested twenty years and significant resources into the design, development, and deployment of an infrastructure that supports online teaching and learning and that responds to the ever-changing needs of MSU Denver’s student population. While modern online course delivery platforms (e.g., Blackboard Learn) have enabled MSU Denver to develop a rich online learning experience and provide flexible learning opportunities, such technologies have also enabled competing institutions such as CSU Global, ASU Online, and others to enter MSU Denver’s non-traditional student market.

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6 See Appendix A: MSU Denver Online Task Force Report 2014
7 See Appendix B: MSU Denver Strategic Plan
8 See Appendix C: Online and Hybrid Sections Taught, 1998-2015
While MSU Denver currently offers more than 1400 online courses, it has little presence in the online learning market. It is not easily discernable to prospective students that MSU Denver offers significant online options and learning opportunities that are not anchored to specific times or geographic location. Students often realize MSU Denver’s online learning opportunities only after they enroll.

Forty two departments currently offer online courses, but few have complete online degree program completion options—meaning that a student could complete their degree without ever coming to the MSU Denver campus. If departments do have online degree options that have been approved by the Higher Learning Commission, as in the case of Social Work and Health Care Management, they are not marketed as such. In addition, not all required student support services are available to students who cannot physically visit the campus. In order to effectively compete in the ever-changing and aggressively-advertised fully online education market, MSU Denver needs make additional student services and courses available online. Additionally, effort must be made to distinctively brand our online learning opportunities as academically rigorous, convenient, and accessible, regardless of time or geographic constraints. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2. MSU Denver online courses started in 1996 and progressed through course development and infrastructure building. Using this foundation, the time-to-market for future fully online programs is significantly reduced.
The goal of this strategic plan is to establish an online academic program, to create a unique brand for MSU Denver’s fully online program offering, develop a strong presence that allows us to compete within the online learning market, and advertise online programs as a degree path option that serves student and industry needs. This plan outlines the process for supporting and marketing the Social Work and Health Care Management fully online programs as a pilot from May 1, 2016 through May 1, 2017. The lessons learned from launching these two programs will inform the Council and the development of a full strategic plan to implement fully online programs throughout MSU Denver.

MSU Denver’s current online and blended courses (1400+) are developed and managed within their respective departments and are reviewed using the established MSU Denver curriculum process. That would not change. MSU Denver Online Programs will use the existing online courses, but the emphasis shifts to developing a degree completion path for fully online students. Departments can opt-in to offer fully online programs should they choose to serve industries and attract students for whom geographic location or time constraints block access to an MSU Denver education.

Access to online courses is only one part of the equation. Just as on-campus students are supported by a number of services, fully online programs must meet the same student support requirements. The MSU Denver Online Program plan provides an infrastructure that supports initial student inquiries and proceeds through registration, student services, advising, course development and improvement, course completion, program marketing, and, ultimately, degree completion.

The MSU Denver Online Program plan is divided into seven sections: Marketing, Management and Infrastructure, Student Intake, Student and Department Support, Course Development and Improvement, and Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The cycles occur consecutively but are isolated in this plan to describe each section’s detail, complexity, and the resources needed for implementation (See Figure 3).
Figure 3. Offering fully online programs requires that all courses and support services be provided online, allowing a student to complete an MSU Denver degree without coming to the physical campus.

Figure 4. The MSU Denver Fully Online and Flexible Program Pilot allows student to choose their learning style and context, taking into consideration where they live, the time periods they can devote to learning, and the amount of educational experience they bring.
SOCIAL WORK & HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT

The Council for Online Programs decided to develop a pilot project using the departments of Social Work and Health Care Management because both have 100 percent of their courses already online and both have been approved for online degree delivery by the Higher Learning Commission. Both programs offer degree completion options, meaning the student’s general studies should be complete before entering the program. The existing online infrastructure within the departments permits a rapid pilot deployment that will inform the larger goal of scaling fully online programs to other interested departments.

In order to market and promote programs as fully online, the pilot departments have agreed to work with the Education Technology Center to concur on an MSU Denver online template that assures consistent navigation and content access experience for students. The Office of Marketing and Communications will work with each program to identify niche markets that are not normally served by MSU Denver. The intention is to find and cultivate new and underserved students and industries, leading to increased enrollment and revenue.

The pilot program launches with Social Work in summer 2016 and Health Care Management in fall 2016. During the course of the program pilot, we expect to enroll at least 100 new students in both programs and generate a new, significant revenue source. Figures 5 illustrates the projected pilot program growth.

Figure 5. The pilot program is projected to enroll at least 100 new Health Care Management and Social Work students during the pilot period.
FULLY ONLINE PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Several market factors favor the launch of the MSU Denver Online Program pilot. MSU Denver’s visibility is heightened through the concurrent 50th Anniversary and Lives Transformed marketing and promotion initiatives. The increased visibility contributes to converting students considering for-profit or state/non-profit competitors to an MSU Denver online program.

THE DECLINE OF FOR-PROFIT EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The market conditions and public perception of for-profit and cyber campuses has shifted in the last few years and presents a significant opportunity for MSU Denver. Subsequent to the advent of Federal Gainful Employment regulations, nationwide for-profit enrollment declined 16.2 percent between 2011/12 and 2013/14 academic years. During that same period, enrollment increased 0.3 percent at public four-year institutions.10 For-profit and not-for-profit competitors typically serve similar to MSU Denver students:

- Adult students
- PELL eligible, low income
- First generation students
- Students of color
- Military veterans
- Traditional students

The decline in for-profit enrollments is not over yet. According to Inside Higher Ed, “As enrollments tumble at for-profit colleges, the number of proprietary institutions is dwindling, too.”11 The recent (July 1, 2015) imposition of final Gainful Employment regulations will likely preclude “about 1,400 programs (99 percent of which are housed at for-profit colleges) serving 840,000 students” from using “their financial aid dollars for programs that fail under the regulations.”12

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GROWING LOCAL AND NATIONAL DEMAND FOR ONLINE EDUCATION

- Nationwide, 25.8 percent of postsecondary students are enrolled exclusively (12.5 percent) or partially (13.3 percent) in online coursework\(^{13}\).

- In Colorado, the number jumps to 17 percent of undergraduate students enrolled exclusively in online coursework. Nearly a third—32.7 percent—of Colorado graduate students are enrolled exclusively in online education\(^{14}\).

- “Among adult learners in the immediate Denver metro area, MSU Denver has a very strong market position. It is essentially tied for the top spot with the University of Colorado at Denver in terms of both awareness and favorability.”\(^{15}\)

- At MSU Denver, 45 to 47 percent of our spring/fall undergraduates are adult students, =>25 years old. Adult students are predisposed to online education, which is easier to balance with work/life responsibilities.

- A significant percentage of current MSU Denver adult students consistently take online courses at the University (27.2 to 36.5 percent)

- Since fall of 2013, online classes have slightly edged evening coursework in popularity, among current MSU Denver adult students.

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\(^{13}\) https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80


\(^{15}\) Source: SEM Works market analysis report
The initial focus for the pilot program is marketing the online degrees in the Department of Social Work Masters of Social Work and bachelor’s degrees and the Department of Health Care Management bachelor’s degrees to students within Colorado.

**TARGET AUDIENCE**

Market Focus:

- Current MSU Denver students in their senior year; former college students (vs. those who have never attended previously), transfer students, community college attendees, MSU Denver stop-out/readmit students (esp. adult students, former Social Work and Health Care Management students, and undeclared majors; Latino and students of color because it fits specifically with the HIS initiative.
- Rural population of potential students, in counties where the Department of Human Services for that county reside and/or where a college/university resides from which we could pull prospects. We will refine advertising targets because of costs in Year 1, so not all counties will be included immediately, but will expand in subsequent years.
**Northeast**
Sterling, Logan County
Fort Morgan, Morgan County
Wray, Yuma County
Greeley, Weld County
Fort Collins, Larimer County
Burlington, Kit Carson County

**Southwest**
Grand Junction, Mesa County
Montrose, Montrose County
Durango, La Plata County
Gunnison, Gunnison County
Cortez, Montezuma County
Alamosa, Alamosa County
Aspen, Pitkin County

**Southeast**
Las Animas, Las Animas County
Walsenburg, Huerfano County
Pueblo, Pueblo County
Canon City, Fremont County
Colorado Springs, El Paso County
Eads, Kiowa County
Cheyenne Wells, Cheyenne County
Lamar, Prowers County

**Northwest**
Craig, Moffat County
Steamboat Springs, Routt County
Central Mountains
Bailey, Park County
Frisco, Summit County
Eagle, Eagle County

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Advertising Development</td>
<td>Marketing and Communications: Media Buyer, Graphic Designer</td>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MICROSITE

Microsite premises and recommendations for maximum enrollment yield for all MSU Denver programs, not just the pilot programs.

- Copy is written to address first generation college students with the minimum academic ability for admission to MSU Denver.
- Copy is written for the “stealth” applicant. According to the Education Advisory Board (EAB), “Nearly 70% of applicants are unknown to an institution before starting an application.” By providing all content and calls to action necessary for prospective students, MSU Denver effectively creates a low-cost, 24/7/365 enrollment vehicle.
- It is advisable that the University invest in “live chat” capability, in order to connect Admissions staff with prospective students (this vendor offers a service for just $21 per month, per user. It is estimated that one to two licenses would suffice for launch).
- Post online student Viewbook and student orientation manuals in “flip book” format (e.g. http://issuu.com/msudenver9/docs/msu.denverviewbookissuu/).

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<th>Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Coding/graphics</td>
<td>2016-2020</td>
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<td>$35,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live chat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
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</table>

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

- Direct mail: No additional cost for the list, but design, printing, postage costs.
- Coordinate contact (email, phone) to MSU Denver stop-out/readmit students (esp. adult students, former Social Work and Healthcare Management students, and undeclared).
• Direct mail to previously-received AdTaxi list (approximately 5,000 prospects): additional cost for the list, but design, printing, postage costs.

• Coordinate contact (email, phone) to MSU Denver stop-out/readmit students (esp. adult students, former Social Work students, and undeclared): Employee time costs only. This initiative may also help with retention/graduation rates.

• Coordinated contact (email, phone) to previous prospects who have not yet applied: Employee time costs only. This initiative may also help with inquiry-to-application yield.

• Coordinated contact (email, phone) to pool of previously accepted applicants who never enrolled/started: Employee time costs only. This initiative may also help with retention/graduation rates.

• Community College relations to Admissions staff and students (phone, email, visits, presentations, webinars): Employee time costs only.

• Coordinated contact to lists of relevant employers (e.g., direct sales to human resource professionals in, for example, health care/helping professions settings—attempt to set up on-site lunch-and-learn sessions, info sessions, site visits). Employee time and mileage costs only.

• Coordinated promotion to relevant social work and health care associations (e.g., attempt to set up on-site lunch-and-learn sessions, info sessions, site visits): Employee time and mileage costs only.

• Social media and additional social media advertising.

• Direct response marketing (e.g. targeted email campaign, complemented by digital leaderboard and cube ads).

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<tr>
<td>Listed above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016: $5,000</td>
<td>2016-2020 $25,000</td>
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</table>
FULLY ONLINE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Center for Online Leadership, which is part of the University of Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA), visited MSU Denver in August 2015. The consultants conducted stakeholder interviews and delivered a final report to MSU Denver. The establishment of a focused and centralized organization with senior leadership who can plan infrastructure and lead strategic online learning initiatives was among the key online recommendations. The hiring an AVP for Innovative Program Development and Delivery is in process.

A Director of Online Programs and an E-learning Innovation/Pedagogy Specialist should be hired in 2016. It is expected that in 2017, an additional Instructional Design Team and departmental Online Student Coordinators will be hired to support fully online programs.

HIRING 2016

MANAGEMENT

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>CUPA</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>Director of Online Programs</td>
<td>196040</td>
<td>$79,916-$105,035</td>
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E-LEARNING INNOVATION/PEDAGOGY SPECIALIST

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<th>Position</th>
<th>CUPA</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-learning Innovation/Pedagogy Specialist</td>
<td>325000</td>
<td>$46,093-$59,851</td>
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</table>

HIRING 2017

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16 Source: Consulting Report: Metropolitan State University of Denver, August 2015, University Professional and Continuing Education Association.
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN TEAMS

Current Instructional Design Team staff can accommodate the pilot program, however, depending on the success of the program, a third Instructional Design Team may be needed:

<table>
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<th>Salary Range</th>
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<td>Senior Instructional Designer</td>
<td>406130</td>
<td>$51,125-$64,182</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Course Developer</td>
<td>406120</td>
<td>$46,115-$56,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Media Specialist</td>
<td>406100</td>
<td>$46,403-$56,044</td>
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</table>

ONLINE STUDENT COORDINATOR

It is recommended that each academic department hire a resident Online Student Coordinator to provide support and guidance to fully online students. These specialists should be very familiar with the academic department as well as the specific needs of online learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>CUPA</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Online Student Coordinator</td>
<td>325000</td>
<td>$46,093-$59,851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FULLY ONLINE STUDENT INTAKE

Expanding MSU Denver’s online programs to include students at a distance, who do not have access to or choose not to come to our physical campus, requires additional student support services. Students inquiring about online programs need to be immediately directed to an online advisor who can guide them through the admissions and advising process. Once the student is admitted and has an advisor and course of study, students must become prepared to learn in an online environment and have access to student services such as tutoring, supplemental instructors, and the Access Center. Departments offering fully online programs need support services such as student authentication, assessment proctoring, and technology that supports disciplinary learning for online students.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application for admission is currently fully online. Transfer students would need to have transcripts from previous institutions sent to the Admissions Office directly from the previous institutions via mail or electronic format. The student would apply for admission to MSU Denver. A code specific to online programs would be on the application in order to track the students allowing MSU Denver to gather pilot program evaluation data.
### ADEMINISTRATION AND ADVISING

Once the students have applied for admission and indicated the online program codes, the pilot program students would be assigned specific advisors with discipline- and department-specific knowledge. The advisors would interact with the students from the first contact and be available throughout the student academic lifecycle. Technologies such as Skype, Blackboard, phone, or email would be used to communicate with the students. As the Online Program expands beyond the pilot phase, advisors dedicated to online learning students would be required.

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<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add an online program code through Banner</td>
<td>Banner Managers, Office of the Registrar, ITS</td>
<td>Add code and communicate change</td>
<td>Ready May 1, 2016</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skype or other synchronous communication technologies</td>
<td>Specific person to work with Online Program students from each pilot department (SWK, HCM)</td>
<td>Plan for general advising for Online Program students</td>
<td>Ready May 1, 2016</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### FINANCIAL AID

All students apply for Financial, once, each academic year online at the FAFSA website https://fafsa.ed.gov. Financial Aid may require additional documentation and will notify the student via MSU Denver email. Any additional documentation can be emailed to Financial Aid from the student’s MSU Denver email account.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate future technology/process requirement in support of fully online programs</td>
<td>Financial Aid, ITS</td>
<td>Process analysis</td>
<td>Ready May 1, 2016</td>
<td>$0</td>
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REGISTRATION

All registration is done online via Self-Service Banner, which is accessed through the Student Hub.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Already in place</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>

PREPARATION FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Some learners may not be familiar with fully online degree programs or may be new to online learning. Students enrolling into a fully online degree program should feel comfortable navigating online learning environments and understand the benefits and drawbacks of a fully online degree program.

MSU Denver should provide an online orientation course for students who are new to online education and online programs. The course should be designed as a full-featured online course to expose students to the various types of online course functionalities and engagement options. The course should provide information about how to navigate an online course as well as provide tips for student success in an online environment. Furthermore, this course should assess the learner’s ability to be successful in a fully online program in order to identify areas of need (e.g., technology issues, unrealistic expectations). The student’s online advisor would guide them to this course and, upon completion, assist them in registering for the online program.

- Online Learning Readiness Course: Recently a consultant provided a quote for the external development of such a course for about $23,000. However, the ITS Educational Technology Center has already started with the development of a new introduction to online learning course that will assess the learner’s online readiness. This course will be launched by spring 2016, with ample time for revisions by summer 2016. In addition, the ITS Educational Technology Center will continue to host about 20 face-to-face student workshops each semester.

- Online Technology Needs Assessment: While initially not included as part of the new Online Learning Readiness Course, the course could easily be expanded to also assess the technology needs of the learner. Currently, MSU Denver hosts a brief 10-question technology readiness quiz that can be expanded into a more comprehensive offering.
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<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of Online Learning Strategies course</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center</td>
<td>Development of Online Learning Strategies Course</td>
<td>100hrs Instructional Design Team – Ready May 1, 2016</td>
<td>$0 – Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of technology needs assessment</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center</td>
<td>Development of Technology Needs Assessment</td>
<td>40hrs Instructional Design Team – Ready May 1, 2016</td>
<td>$0 – Use existing resources</td>
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</table>
Students need to have access to comparable support services whether they participate in courses on campus or fully online. Ideally, academic advisors must be trained to work with online students, be able to respond in a timely manner, and be available at times when students want to access services (evening, weekends).

TUTORING
Currently, Student Academic Success uses Brainfuse, which all students can access through Blackboard Learn. Brainfuse is available to any student, including fully online students, and provides tutoring for a long list of subjects. At MSU Denver, the most frequently used feature of Brainfuse is the essay submission feature. Students can get feedback on a paper within 24-48 hours. There is no cost to the student; however, the cost to MSU Denver is $24 per hour. Currently, there is no limit for student usage, but the unlimited use of Brainfuse is under evaluation because the cost may not be practical as demand increases. If the use of Brainfuse is determined to be essential by more faculty and online programs, a budget allocation would be necessary.
### SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

MSU Denver has used supplemental instructors in online classes in the past. The success depends on the structure created by the professor. The supplemental instructor can manage a high volume of student emails and provide timely feedback in online discussion forums. It is good practice to place supplemental instructors in courses with traditionally high incomplete, failure, and withdrawal rates. Student Academic Success would evaluate online classes that need or would benefit from a supplemental instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate online classes to determine need for supplemental instructors</td>
<td>Supplemental instructors to assist with high volume online courses</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0 SWK and HCM indicate that they do not need this service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility services for fully online students are currently available and many online students use these services. The Access Center staff is able to complete an intake over the phone and process the needed documentation to provide accommodation. All online courses would need to be accessible to all students. The Access Center supports faculty in making sure courses are accessible. The Access Center has not used online proctoring for exams in the Center, but the concept is currently being tested. Online exam proctoring would be an option for students who need exam accommodations.
## AUTHENTICATION

MSU Denver must be able to ensure that any student completing coursework and taking assessments is the student-of-record. This can be accomplished with varying levels of electronic or manual authentication. Students enrolled in the fully online degree program should be asked to authenticate on a regular basis. It is recommended that MSU Denver implement a standard authentication platform for coursework and assessments across online programs.

MSU Denver should consider adopting an advanced two-factor authentication system. Several service providers, including ProctorU’s UCard service, offer an online keystroke cadence tool that can be easily embedded within assignments and assessments. Such secondary authentication systems that integrate with Blackboard Learn are available for about $10 per student. These systems flag anomalies and notify the instructor. However, more secure and sophisticated systems exist and could be extended to other MSU Denver systems beyond Blackboard Learn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select and implement the appropriate authentication application</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center</td>
<td>Integrate with Blackboard Learn &amp; provide faculty training</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Real-time remote proctoring services are available and are currently being tested by the MSU Denver Testing and Assessment Center. Advantages of such services include the ability to provide answers to basic questions about the exam logistics. However, these in-person proctoring services have costs that are significantly higher and usually billed to the student when the exam is scheduled. (e.g., exams proctored through ProctorU cost the student $8.75 for a 30-min. exam, $14.75 for a 1-hr. exam, $21.50 for 90-min. and 2-hour exams, or $30.25 for 3-hour exams, regardless of how long it takes to actually complete the exam).

While effective, the ProctorU service is quite expensive and billed to the students directly. Thus, it is recommended that an alternate online proctoring solution be selected and implemented in support of fully online programs. For example, a fully automated proctoring system that detects unusual student behavior, records the behavior using a web cam, and sends a video file of the situation to the instructor can be implemented for less than $10,000 annually.

While for ease-of-implementation and scalability during the pilot implementation, the Council recommends that a fully automated proctoring system be implemented. On a course-by-course basis, faculty could still opt for the more sophisticated live proctoring solution already in place, which is billed to the student. However, the fully automated proctoring system could be made available as the default proctoring system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement fully-automated proctoring tool</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center and the Access &amp; Testing Center</td>
<td>Integrate with Blackboard Learn &amp; provide faculty training</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

University systems will need to be enhanced to facilitate access for fully online students. For example, significant investments must be made to Banner, the Student Information System (SIS), to support fully online programs and to ensure scalability.

Depending on existing priorities and plans, the implementation of such enhancements may not be possible within the pilot phase. Existing governance bodies, such as the Banner Managers group and/or the ITS Strategic Oversight Committee could assist in establishing these priorities. Several major projects are underway, particularly Banner XE that will radically improve the online and mobile experience for learners.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tasks</strong></th>
<th><strong>Resources</strong></th>
<th><strong>Processes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Timeline</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pilot Budget</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perform needs assessment and deploy necessary technologies, including an enhanced online password reset tool and a simplification of holds</td>
<td>ITS, Banner Managers, ITSOC, Enrollment Services</td>
<td>Assess needs and make recommendation</td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>$0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Programs can launch using manual processes, however, to achieve growth and scalability significant investments are needed in this area.
Ideally, students enrolled in fully online programs would have access to the full range of Student Engagement and Wellness units and programs. Certain services are required for compliance purposes, such as student conduct support, Title IX/VAWA/Clery compliance, and the CARE Team. Other services would have to be evaluated in order to develop ways for online students to participate in these programs. Expanding these programs would require students to pay the student fee/campus rec fee/health fee (or equivalent developed specifically for online students) for participation in these programs.
BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

For the pilot phase, students would receive information about the Student Code of Conduct, Title IX reporting, and resources. The information would be included in New Student Orientation Program or through e-mail, which is one of the current methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0 – Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONSULTATION, ASSESSMENT, REFERRAL, EDUCATION (CARE) TEAM

MSU Denver online and on-campus students have the same student conduct requirements and receive the same response to violations and student behavioral concerns. Processes for student conduct violations can be conducted over the phone. As the online programs grow, additional conduct and CARE and support staff will be necessary to provide support for fully online students. Data will be tracked to determine the additional caseload from these students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track need for additional</td>
<td>Personnel for Conduct and CARE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0 – Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In response to issues raised about online course quality by the 2005 Online Task Force, the 2007 Higher Learning Commission visit, and the 2014 Online Task Force, a consistent, clear, and measurable path toward achieving greater online course quality was developed using benchmarks informed by Quality Matters but modified by the Council for Online Programs. The revised guidelines better fit the nature and reality of MSU Denver and are now titled the Continuous Course Improvement (CCI) guidelines. The implementation timeline, goals, and benchmarks are detailed in Appendix C. 

Students enrolled in fully online programs need a consistent navigation scheme within each course in order to quickly acclimate to the course and efficiently find important course components such as the syllabus, assignments, content modules, and assessments. The MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Course Template provides a consistent online experience for students from course to course.

Described in the Continuous Course Improvement process section below, Level 1: Consistent Navigation and Level 2: Consistent Access to Content, Discussions, and Assignments provide course appearance and navigation consistency. Level 3: Instructional Design and Component Alignment and Level 4: Continuous Improvement address specific disciplinary content needs and requirements are conducted in collaboration and at the direction of the department.

The MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Course Template, which meets Level 1 and Level 2 of the CCI guidelines (see below), would be applied to each department’s online courses prior to the pilot program launch. The additional CCI Levels: Level 3: Instructional Design and Components Alignment and Level 4: Continuous Improvement, would be initiated by the department and implemented over a three-year period using SWK and HCM faculty in collaboration with Education Technology Center processes and resources: Agile Instructional Design Network, Course Constellation, Course Select, and Course Assist.

In addition to the course-level continuous quality improvement initiatives, MSU Denver should implement a formal continuous quality improvement strategy using national benchmarks and best practices at the fully online program level (e.g., Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Quality Scorecard, Quality Matter Program Certification).

17 See Appendix D: Continuous Course Improvement Plan
18 See Appendix E: Continuous Course Improvement Support Initiatives
CONTINUOUS COURSE IMPROVEMENT

The MSU Denver Continuous Course Improvement plan has four phases:

Level 1: *Consistent Navigation*

The Social Work and Health Care Management courses would be moved to the MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Template. For existing courses, a re-alignment of course navigation into the template structure would be required.

Level 2: *Consistent Access to Content, Discussions, and Assignments*

The Education Technology Center will develop a guide to assist instructors with revising courses.

Level 3: *Instructional Design and Components Alignment*

Instructional design alignment is applied to individual courses. The instructors and instructional designers dedicate a significant amount of time per course to identify and address instructional design alignment inconsistencies, modify instructional strategies, and add media component where appropriate.

Level 4: *Continuous Improvement*

An ongoing course review process assists in revising the course for instructional strategy, pedagogical, and content changes to ensure the course is current and continues to meet quality benchmarks.
### INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The Social Work and Health Care Management programs were chosen for the pilot because the departments have already invested time and resources into online course quality and both departments have Higher Learning Commission approval for online degree delivery. Part of the MSU Denver Online Program strategy is to build a culture of collaboration and continuous course improvement. The Education Technology Agile Instructional Design Network\(^{19}\) can assist with courses that the department determines could benefit from additional instructional design or media components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Pilot Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional design</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center and faculty</td>
<td><strong>Year 1:</strong> Review 3 courses (10% of total)</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>$0 Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Year 2:</strong> 6 (25% of total)</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
<td>Faculty Stipends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Year 3:</strong> 30 (100% of total) courses at $250 each, $7500</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
<td>$9750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Year 1:</strong> Review 2 courses (10% of total)</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
<td>39 courses x $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Year 2:</strong> 3 (25% of total)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Year 3:</strong> 20 (100% of total) courses at $250 each, $7500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{19}\) See Appendix E: Continuous Course Improvement Support Initiatives
COURSE DEVELOPMENT

The Social Work and Health Care Management departments have been delivering online degrees for a significant amount of time and have a cadre of qualified online instructors. At the direction of the department, the ITS Education Technology Center could start new faculty cohorts and assist with a wide-range of coaching, training, support, and course development and improvement options through the CourseConstellation, CourseSelect, and CourseAssist\(^20\) initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New course development</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center and faculty</td>
<td>CourseConstellation, CourseSelect, and CourseAssist</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>$0 – Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSE DELIVERY PLATFORM

The continued use of the Blackboard Learn learning management system for online courses during the pilot phase will ensure that students, faculty and staff are well-versed in the platform’s systems and processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0 – Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^20\) See Appendix E: Continuous Course Improvement Support Initiatives
Online students need equal access to discipline-specific and campus-based technologies. The ITS Education Technology Center should work with Social Work and Health Care Management to identify necessary student technologies and develop processes that ensure that the technologies are available to remote learners. Examples might be remote desktop access or field interview technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tasks</strong></th>
<th><strong>Resources</strong></th>
<th><strong>Processes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Timeline</strong></th>
<th><strong>Budget</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey online program faculty to determine specific needs</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center and faculty</td>
<td>Survey/interviews</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>$0 Use existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop plans and implement specific technologies needs based on findings</td>
<td>ITS Educational Technology Center and faculty</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regular and sustainable professional development opportunities are required in order to maintain a supportive culture of academic excellence and quality practice for existing MSU Denver online and hybrid courses. This includes strengthening the academic climate by raising awareness of current developments and research in online teaching and learning.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is, or will be, offering professional development opportunities: Online Course Design Institute, Facilitating Online Learning, and discipline-specific workshops. Social Work and Health Care Management faculty can participate in or lead professional development sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Personnel to deliver and oversee online professional development activities</td>
<td>Biannual on-line Institute, workshops, cloud repository</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>e-Learning Innovation/Pedagogy Specialist $60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 See Appendix F: Center for Faculty Excellent Online Faculty Support Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Master online teachers from outside MSU Denver to deliver discipline-</td>
<td>Online Course Institute,</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,000 for pilot year, $4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>specific workshops</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td>annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td>Personnel to deliver and oversee consistent online professional</td>
<td></td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Personnel salary noted above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>development activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,000 for pilot year and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PEER SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

Consistent cross-disciplinary collaboration and peer support are required through the sharing of resources, skills, and knowledge between faculty, across programs, and among other professional units.

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is, or will be, offering peer review opportunities: Faculty Learning Communities, eLearning and Instructional Technology Exemplar (ELITE) Certification Program, Cloud Repository and Faculty Commons.22

Social Work and Health Care Management faculty can participate in or lead peer review sessions.

22 See Appendix G: Peer Support and Collaboration plan.
The MSU Denver Budget Office is in the process of developing a budget and a break-even analysis for the Fully Online and Flexible Programs pilot.
APPENDIX A: 2014 ONLINE TASK FORCE REPORT

http://msudenver.edu/media/content/technology/itsoc/agendasminutes/Online%20Learning%20Taskforce%20Recommendations%2014.pdf
APPENDIX B: METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER STRATEGIC PLAN

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER STRATEGIC PLAN 2020

https://www.msudenver.edu/about/strategicplan2020/
APPENDIX C: ONLINE AND HYBRID SECTIONS TAUGHT 1998-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FALL/SPRING AVERAGES</th>
<th>Hybrid Sections Taught (FA/SP Avg)</th>
<th>Online Sections Taught (FA/SP Avg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>119.5</td>
<td>461.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>113.5</td>
<td>467.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121.5</td>
<td>456.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105.5</td>
<td>455.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>340.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>318.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>298.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>280.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>235.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>185.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Sections
APPENDIX D: CONTINUOUS COURSE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Based on the 2014 Online Task Force recommendations, a Council for Online Programs was formed with the goal of developing an implementation plan toward the launch of MSU Denver’s first fully online certificate and degree programs. In an effort to ensure high-quality student experiences in these new fully online programs, a measurable and consistent quality framework is desired.

Furthermore, in response to concerns regarding online course quality identified by the 2005 Online Task Force, the 2007 Higher Learning Commission visit and 2014 Online Task Force, it is suggested that a clear and measurable path toward achieving greater quality in MSU Denver’s online course offerings using the benchmarks established by Quality Matters.

The following implementation timeline presents detailed goals, organized by year, to meet the identified continuous quality improvement goals described above.

Year Zero (Academic Year 2014-2015) Goals:

- Provide professional development opportunities and Quality Matters rubric training for all MSU Denver instructional designers
- Participate in the Quality Matters conference
- Join Quality Matters Instructional Designers Association
- Include Quality Matters practices in the University instructional design process
- Develop a Quality Matters-informed institutional online course template
- Pilot the Quality Matters-informed online course template
- Host a conference themed on the topic of course quality (TLTS2014)
- Draft a Quality Matters implementation plan
- Develop a prototype of a continuous quality improvement process

Note: All Year Zero goals were completed in the 2014-2015 academic year.

Year One (Academic Year 2015-2016) Goals:

- Ensure that at least 10 percent of all Social Work program courses are delivered using the MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Template
- Complete an external (formal) review of two exemplary courses as recommended by the ITS Educational Technology Center and the Center for Faculty Excellence to better understand the process
• Facilitate completion of the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQRM) course for up to five MSU Denver faculty members
• Facilitate completion of Peer Reviewer Certification (PRC) course and certification for one MSU Denver faculty member
• Launch three distinct programs that facilitate continuous quality improvement for online and hybrid course development and enhancement
• Develop a Quality Matters infographic for use in outreach effort
• Implement an outreach effort through meetings and communication to all academic departments
• Communicate initiatives and progress through The Daily University newsletter

Year Two (Academic Year 2016-2017) Goals:

• Ensure that at least 25 percent of all Social Work program courses are delivered using the MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Template
• Conduct an informal (internal) review of up to 25 percent of courses in the Social Work program, on a voluntary basis
• Facilitate completion of the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQRM) course for up to ten additional faculty members
• Facilitate completion of Peer Reviewer Certification (PRC) course and certification for one additional faculty member

Year Three (Academic Year 2017-2018) Goals:

• Ensure that at 100 percent of all Social Work program courses are delivered using the MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Template
• Conduct an informal (internal) quality review of up to 50 percent of courses in the social work program, on a voluntary basis
• Develop a plan for fully online program certification benchmarks (e.g., Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Quality Scorecard and/or Quality Matters Program Certification)
• Facilitate completion of the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQRM) course for up to ten additional faculty members
• Facilitate completion of Peer Reviewer Certification (PRC) course and certification for two additional faculty members
• Facilitate completion of Master Reviewer Certification (MRC) course and certification for one additional faculty member
These following initiatives are designed to sustainably support enrollment growth in online courses as well as the upcoming launch of fully online certificate and degree programs.

It is estimated that the successful implementation of the proposed 2015-2018 Quality Matters Implementation Plan would require less than $30,000 annually, which could be facilitated through the ITS Educational Technology Center operating budget and/or academic department funds.

Level 1: Consistent Navigation – all existing and future courses would need to be moved to, or developed using, the MSU Denver 2014/2015 Institutional Template to achieve Level 1. For existing courses a thoughtful re-alignment of course navigation into the 2014/2015 Institutional Template structure would need to occur. This work could be done by any MSU Denver instructor or instructional designer with the proper training and should take no more than 2 hours per course.

Level 2: Consistent Access to Content, Discussions, and Assignments – ideally the work required to achieve Level 2 would be conducted by the course instructor using a guide developed by the ITS Educational Technology Center. To reach this level of quality, most existing courses would require about 10 hours of review and/or implementation.

Level 3: Instructional Design and Component Alignment – to ensure level 3 quality, course instructors and an instructional designer would need to dedicate a significant amount of time per course. An instructor, working closely with an instructional designer, would first identify alignment issues and address these as needed. The amount of time required to achieve alignment could vary widely based on the existing quality of alignment.

Level 4: Continuous Improvement – to ensure courses of this level of quality, regular course reviews should occur on a three-year basis. Courses at this level will undergo a rigorous review using a national course quality benchmark. This review will also inform strategies for meeting minimal quality benchmarks.

Note that all of these initiatives will use existing ITS operating budgets and/or contributions from academic departments (i.e., faculty stipends for course reviews).
AIDNet (Agile Instructional Design Network)

Starting January 2016, the ITS Educational Technology Center will reorganize members and processes of its existing instructional design and media teams to form two independent, cross-functional and agile instructional design teams. Each team will include staff with diverse skills in the roles of Senior Instructional Designer, Online Course Developer, and Instructional Media Specialist. The agile approach will ensure that team’s members are enabled for fast, effective and empowered decision-making and course development efforts. This organizational change will facilitate an ability to quickly adapt, easily communicate, and apply agile development methodologies to support the CourseAssist, CourseSelect, and CourseConstellation initiatives.

CourseConstellation

During August 2015, the ITS Educational Technology Center launched an innovative cohort approach to new online and hybrid course development. This approach empowers faculty cohorts to establish realistic goals and to self-govern their course development efforts, by selecting from a wide-range of coaching, training, and support options. While all cohorts would receive support based on best practices and empirical evidence, faculty with diverse online teaching experience may decide to utilize advanced approaches, while first-time online faculty may select more conservative approaches. Each CourseConstellation cohort would be led by a Senior Instructional Designer or an eLearning and Instructional Technology Exemplar (ELITE) award recipient.

CourseSelect

The development of comprehensive, high-quality courses developed using national benchmarks and appropriate instructional design theories are a significant, resource-intensive undertaking. The CourseSelect initiative will provide academic Deans with the opportunity to have specific courses developed to such standards. Selected faculty subject matter experts must be willing and able to dedicate at least 100 hours toward the course development process. A three-person agile instructional design team, consisting of a senior instructional designer, an online course developer, and an instructional media specialist will dedicate an additional 300 hours of development time toward such courses. Courses that complete this exhaustive process will be nominated for discipline-specific and design awards, such as the Webby Awards and the WCET Outstanding Work Award. The ITS Educational Technology Center plans to coordinate with the academic Deans throughout the Spring 2016 semester to select four initial courses for the purpose of performing a pilot of the CourseSelect initiative during the Fall 2016 semester.
**CourseAssist**

The goal of the CourseAssist initiative is to implement a supportive culture of continuous improvement for existing MSU Denver online and hybrid courses. Courses that may benefit from participation in this continuous improvement effort could be selected randomly, based on how often they have been delivered, or using performance indicators as established the Office of Academic Affairs or specific academic Deans. Next, outstanding faculty, identified through experience and credentials such as having earned the *eLearning and Instructional Technology Exemplar (ELITE)* award, would be asked to perform substantial course reviews using national benchmarks for effective course design. Finally, the course instructor would meet with an instructional design team to establish and implement a course improvement strategy. The ITS Educational Technology Center plans to implement the CourseAssist pilot initiative during the Spring 2016 semester.
Regular and sustainable professional development opportunities are required in order to maintain a supportive culture of academic excellence and quality practice for existing MSU Denver online and hybrid courses. This includes strengthening the academic climate by raising awareness of current developments and research in online teaching and learning.

**Online Course Design Institute:** The Center for Faculty Excellence will regularly offer an intensive Online Course Design Institute which will focus on interactive, learner-centered course design for online courses. Topics to be covered include student interaction and collaboration, learning activities and assessments, effective pedagogical practices, instructional strategies, and communication strategies. The institute will focus on the best practices in course design for engaging, instructing, supporting, and communicating with students in the online environment. Topics would include: Theories of Learning and the Online Environment; Preparing to Teach Online; Online Learner Characteristics; Online Teaching Competencies; Online Teaching Strategies and the Role of the Online Teacher; Workload and Time Considerations. This institute could be included as the first module of the integrated ELITE award program.

**Facilitating Learning Online (FLO):** Faculty should experience the teaching and learning conditions they plan to create for their own students through constructive activities. Having such an experience provides an authentic context for their learning. The Center for Faculty Excellence will provide this experience for faculty with this hybrid FLO course that builds incrementally on the topics covered in the Online Course Design Institute. This hybrid course will focus on the communicative knowledge needed to be successful in the online classroom. This might include how to establish an online teaching presence, how to establish a relationship with the students, and how to have the students develop relationships with each other. The focus of this hybrid course will be on teaching and managing an online course.

**Discipline-Specific Workshops:** In order to ensure that course design is not separated from the content experts, faculty developing online courses need to learn from master online teachers within their own specific discipline. Faculty express a desire for discipline-specific online teaching support in addition to the generic support offered for course design and development. Research indicates that when formal discipline-specific support is offered to faculty, that faculty report feeling highly-confident in their online teaching skills.
See Marek, 2009. Learning to teach online: Creating a culture of support for faculty. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 50(4), 275–292. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40732589?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents). Since developing online programs is a new endeavor at MSU Denver, bringing in master online teachers from outside the university to share their knowledge with us would be extremely beneficial. The Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) will host intensive content-specific workshops in online teaching and learning. To begin, master online teachers in the areas of Social Work and Health Care Management will be brought in to work with MSU Denver faculty in those departments. As more departments develop online programs, CFE will continue to bring in master online teachers from those disciplines to lead content-specific workshops.
APPENDIX G. PEER SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

Consistent cross-disciplinary collaboration and peer support are required through the sharing of resources, skills, and knowledge between faculty, across programs, and among other professional units.

**Faculty Learning Communities**: The effectiveness and quality of online teaching at MSU Denver is closely tied to consistent and continuous faculty development opportunities. Faculty Learning Communities sponsored by the Center for Faculty Excellence will be offered yearly to connect faculty teaching online courses with one another so that they may exchange ideas and share teaching tools, resources, and best practices. The Faculty Learning Communities devoted to online teaching and learning will provide online teachers the opportunity to focus in on specific areas related to the dynamics and challenges of online teaching and learning with the intention of improving their online teaching.

**eLearning and Instructional Technology Exemplar (ELITE) Certification Program**

During August 2015, the ITS Educational Technology Center launched a pilot certification program designed for exemplary faculty who wish to enhance their online pedagogy, learner engagement, and course delivery. This certification program requires 102 hours of participation and leads to two MSU Denver certifications, two Quality Matters certifications and the *eLearning and Instructional Technology Exemplar (ELITE)* award. Currently, fourteen faculty members have completed over one-third of the course work and all participants are expected to achieve the award by Summer 2016. Faculty members that complete this program will be qualified to perform in-depth and independent course reviews for the CourseAssist initiative and to lead CourseConstellation cohorts.

**Cloud Repository and Faculty Commons**: Create and maintain a centralized Cloud repository of resources that is readily available to all faculty for the dissemination of online discussions, collaborations, and information. This repository will help create a learning space within the Faculty Commons (Community of Practice), an online shared space that offers all faculty the opportunity to keep abreast of online practices.