

STRENGTHS

1. Online course development and delivery are embedded within each academic department as is the budget.
2. The College has of a proactive highly skilled Instructional Specialist who offers custom training to help faculty design, develop and deliver online courses.
3. Faculty are given the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of workshops and training offered through the Teaching and Learning Center. The Center offers drop-in training and development in online learning.
4. Faculty and staff are provided support from an Instructional Technology office that has a design and production staff consisting of an instructional designer, graphic designer, photographer/videographer, video editor, and audio and editing personnel to support various media that is incorporated in online classes.
5. The College has the Blackboard Management System with an online Blackboard Orientation Module, face-to-face orientation sessions led by online faculty, and a required point of entry for all online courses.
6. The College has a Student Online Learning Panel on the Students' Page of the College website with access to user id and password information which promotes security and integrity of student work, a student email system, online help, online learner readiness assessment tools to determine potential success, minimum hardware and software requirements, Blackboard tips and frequently asked questions, resources and downloads, as well as links to the Illinois Virtual Campus and Illinois Virtual Campus tutor.
7. Many online services and information were made available and more convenient for students with the introduction of PeopleSoft. Students can apply for admission, register for classes, check financial information, and check academic history from any computer with Internet access 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
8. The College has been offering Internet online courses since 1998, beginning with seven in FY 1999 and 172 in FY 2003. In addition, many traditionally taught courses include an online component allowing students to do some work at a distant site.
9. Faculty have committed time and effort to professional development to become better equipped to teach online courses. Fifty-four of the online 59 instructors have committed two hours to training, with two instructors becoming Master Online Teachers and one a Master Online Teacher Facilitator.

10. There is an online orientation to Blackboard for students to learn the basics of navigating a Blackboard site. Additionally, during Fall Semester 2003, face-to-face workshops were offered to students for hands-on instructor-led Blackboard experiences.
11. The College is working through process management teams to standardize parameters for online classes/programs. The copyright booklet is one result of Process Management Team 30's initiatives. In addition, the College is working diligently to train faculty to effectively teach online.
12. The Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board support technology and articulation of online classes by providing:
 - Illinois Virtual Campus catalog of distance education offerings
 - ILCCO grant funding for online development
 - ILCCO course sharing mechanism (ICE)
 - Illinois Articulation Initiative - IAI
13. The library's holdings of electronic serials, periodicals, and other material has grown from 4,171 in FY 2001 to 11,088 in FY 2003. These are available to online students thereby making research more accessible. ICC is also a member of a 24-hour Virtual Librarian Service.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. The College should review its academic advisement process for distance online learners. While some advisors will conduct advisement sessions over the telephone or through email, many students are still led to believe that they must physically come to the College for signatures.
2. The College should examine its process for the purchase and distribution of textbooks for distance learners. Currently, students must come to campus to purchase their books or call with a credit card and have them shipped. Future plans include incorporating an online order form with a possible payment and delivery option.
3. While the College strives to improve websites for students with disabilities, the instructional technology system "Blackboard" has presented many challenges for these students. The information technology staff and the Coordinator of Access Services are aware of these challenges and are working to improve them.
4. Online courses require additional time and skills of the instructors, yet the College does not grant additional ECH for their endeavors.

5. The College does not offer an established stable online tutoring environment with reliable services and tutors.
6. Many face-to-face faculty know little about online learning theory. Each should be required to take the Overview course offered by the ION or other course work in online education before teaching online.
7. Many students cannot access the Help Desk when they are studying due to the current Help Desk hours that end at 10:00 p.m. and are nonexistent on weekends.
8. A comprehensive checklist does not exist for designing and developing quality online education.
9. Many students are placed in online classes when they are not self-disciplined or motivated to handle such a format.
10. Currently, the only science course that is available for students seeking an online Arts and Science degree is a hybrid one or one available through ILCCO.
11. Currently, only a public speaking course is available online and it does not meet the SPCH 110 requirement. Students need to attend class at ICC or another local college to meet that AAS degree requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Advisors should be encouraged to provide online student advisement in addition to telephone or email.
2. The College should continue pursuing ways to allow students to purchase textbooks and pay tuition online.
3. The College information technology staff should address the problems and challenges facing students with disabilities when they are using Blackboard.
4. The College should establish a stable, reliable, online tutoring service.
5. All faculty should be encouraged to participate in the four-day Blackboard Institute.
6. The College needs to consider expanding Help Desk Service hours to include weekend and late night times.

7. Process Management Team 37 should be encouraged to finalize the comprehensive process plan and checklist that it has been developing for designing and developing quality online education.
8. The College should consider surveying online students to determine whether the availability of these courses was the determining factor for the student enrolled in the College.
9. To prevent placement of students who are not motivated or self-disciplined in online classes, appropriate measures should continue to be taken to help advisors steer students to appropriate classes.
10. The College should investigate providing additional ECH value for online classes since these courses require additional time and skills.
11. The College should continue to support the development of science courses with virtual labs.
12. The College should encourage the development of an online SPCH 110 class.
13. The College should consider expanding the web-based online learning portal as the single point of entry for all students and faculty into the online learning environment. The College Website should offer links to all information, tools, and services required to engage in online learning.