

Bakersfield College Response to Cerro Coso Online: KCCD's solution to the State Wide OEI and FTES Decline

Prepared for BC College Council, February 20, 2015 by Andrea Thorson

The January 22, 2015 memo submitted to the District Consultation Council by Cerro Coso President Jill Board proposes the creation of a district-wide online campus, which would administer and coordinate all online courses and services across the district, and also offer courses through Cerro Coso Online that would be articulated to Bakersfield College and Porterville College, such that students from online courses with large waitlists "will be automatically moved into new CRNs of articulated courses."

The memo cites three intended outcomes from the creation of this entity:

1. The stabilization of enrollment numbers at Cerro Coso College and Porterville College.
2. An increase in success and completion in online courses for all three colleges.
3. Prevention of FTES loss due to the State Online Education Initiative (OEI).

While the actions in this proposal may effectively mask declining enrollments through the redistribution of existing students within the district, we do not believe that this is a true solution to the enrollment challenges faced by KCCD. Instead, our efforts should be directed at locating and reaching out to new populations of students within our respective service areas, including the in-depth exploration of students from both correctional and military populations.

Bakersfield College is enthusiastically supportive of higher levels of coordination and collaboration between the respective distance education areas of each of the three colleges. By sharing best practices, both technological and instructional, we can all become more effective in meeting the needs of our students. As we have done in other areas of technology, each college should voluntarily participate in shared activities and common plans to the extent that our differing needs will allow.

In response to the State OEI, all three colleges will need to pay close attention to areas where our online students' needs are not being met. Student services for online students will need to be reinforced, and additional sections of online classes may need to be strategically added to ensure that fewer students will be compelled to look elsewhere to meet their educational goals.

That said, Bakersfield College has significant concerns that this proposal is not in the best interest of KCCD students:

1. Student success and support needs will not be effectively met, because the majority of our online students live within our service area and concurrently take face to face classes.
2. Enrollment management will be crippled, because the colleges will lose the ability to balance their own waitlists and sections according to changing student needs.

Technology resources will be weakened across the board at the colleges, because online classes draw from the same technology pool as hybrid classes and any face to face classes using online technologies