University of California, Berkeley

Operational Excellence

Building an Online Academic Commons

An online "Academic Commons" would unify the student experience and streamline student access to time-critical information, replacing disparate, inefficient, and often frustrating systems and processes, consolidating student and academic services and resources in a single, integrated online platform. The Online Academic Commons would allow students, staff, and faculty to interact efficiently and productively, eliminating many of the communication problems associated with gaps and failures in the University's current, aging systems.

Summary

The primary complaint heard from students regarding student services is that UC Berkeley has too many different online channels—often requiring navigation of dozens of web pages and applications and multiple log-ins to achieve simple yet critical administrative tasks or manage basic academic functions. In addition, many student systems today are unreliable and difficult to use; and some are still paper-based. Developed independently over many years, Cal's current patchwork of legacy applications not only create frustration, they represent a huge lost opportunity to increase overall personal and institutional efficiency.

This proposed project provides the opportunity to reorganize and manage UC Berkeley's student-facing online interfaces and governance to support a seamless experience that addresses the student workflow and communication needs. In addition to eliminating the problems of the current systems and significantly improving productivity, an Online Academic Commons would provide a platform that unites the campus learning environment with student academic and administrative services, providing tools through which to communicate with the student-body as a whole or within meaningful subgroups. With its breadth and approach, this proposal would act as a trigger for establishing campus-wide enterprise services and data infrastructure, supporting and enabling the development and maintenance of technologies for long-term solutions that bring campus benefits well beyond this project.

Delivering the Vision

An Online Academic Commons will help achieve the vision of Operational Excellence by centralizing information and processes, improving student services, increasing efficiencies, and supporting a culture of continuous improvement. From course planning to online sharing and collaboration, this proposed project provides an opportunity to refocus on the administrative and academic support needs of students. This proposal requests $6.9 million in OE funding, along with $4.4 million in other funds for a total investment of $11.3 million and is projected to result in annual run-rate savings of $540,000.

Timeline

If approved by the Executive Committee, the proposal calls for pilot releases in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012; production releases in Fall 2012, Spring 2013, and Fall 2013; enhancement releases in Spring 2014; and a campus-wide rollout in the Fall of 2014.

Leadership

Sponsor: Cathy Koshland, Vice Provost of Teaching, Learning, Academic Planning and Facilities
Sponsor: Harry LeGrande, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
Sponsor: Claire Holmes, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Public Affairs
Initiative Manager: Anne De Luca, University Registrar

For More Information

Complete copies of the Student Services Business Case as well as the Request for Resources and the proposed budget for Building an Online Academic Commons can be viewed online at the OE web site at
http://oe.berkeley.edu

Questions and comments about this proposal for the initiative team: oestudentservices@berkeley.edu

Questions about Operational Excellence: oe@berkeley.edu