

Perspectives

Community College Leadership for the 21st Century

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As leaders of our system of higher education become more aware of what technology can offer, they are instigating the design of technology-enabled solutions that serve the core mission of their institutions and expand its reach.

- U. S. Dept. of Education

While colleges have made advances—mostly by leveraging technology to drive institutional value and efficiencies that indirectly impact the student—there is still work to be done.

- Chris Vento

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Technology Use on Campus Requires Dedication and Talent Development

Jean Goodnow, PhD

President
Delta College
University Center, Michigan

Michigan's Delta College is a member of the League for Innovation in the Community College, serving as one of the founding board member institutions. As its president, I know how important it is to keep an eye on the horizon, always looking for new ways to innovate our educational landscape.

The changing environment for higher education presents many challenges in the search for enrollments and greater student success. It is evident that the integrated use of technology can affect community colleges' ability to thrive.

Technology transforms work inside and outside the classroom, but it is just a tool in our quest for innovation. Technology can help teams evaluate interactions with students, measure and understand classroom instruction, and following analysis, adjust interactions with our students.

However, when thinking about transformations on campus, college administrators need to keep in mind the importance of people, along with processes and technology, in order to be successful.

A Foundation of College Values and IT Expertise. The foundation for all innovation and technology use is for the college to have a strong set of values, to which every faculty and staff member can aspire. Delta College's Information Technology (IT) mission is "to provide information access, technology resources and support to promote the success of students and the community we serve." The vision is to "... provide and integrate relevant technology services to support its mission."

The College's IT leadership is also a critical building block. Delta College has contracted the management of its IT services to Ellucian since 1996, which includes staff onsite and delivery services for all applications, infrastructure, and professional services. The team's knowledge is key as we continue to consider growth in technology use across campus.

Staying current with technology requires continuing analysis of the software needed to operate the college, as well as what applications are needed in the classroom. The discussion and analysis of software and applications requires a competent group on campus to make assessments and recommendations.

Key Technology and Facilities. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems have been integrated as a core operational system in higher education. A CRM system enhances the ability to communicate with current and prospective students, alumni, faculty, and staff. In times of declining enrollments, the CRM tool helps staff recruit prospective students and retain current students.

Implementing a CRM system can be complex and involves changes to existing business processes and staffing patterns. Delta College phased its work by purchasing Recruiter (the CRM prospective student component) in one year and Advise (the CRM module for current students) the next year.

The CRM system manages data and automates messaging in order to improve retention and success. Key goals are academic planning, intervention with at-risk students, and connecting students to campus resources. This technology is fully integrated with Delta College's Colleague ERP (enterprise resource planning), as well as our Student Planning module.

However, when thinking about transformations on campus, college administrators need to keep in mind the importance of people, along with processes and technology, in order to be successful.

Delta is always working on campus improvements, including our facilities, learning environments, and state-of-the-art technology. The College added an Anatomage table in its Health Professions building, which in essence is a cadaver lab. It offers over 20,000 cross sectional views of a cadaver, which has been a game changer for anatomy and physiology courses. The manufacturer invited one of Delta College's staff members to serve as a lead instructor at their international conference last year because Delta College was acknowledged to be the leading community college in the United States using this technology, and is more advanced than many medical schools.

The College has also focused on its skilled trades area, due to the high demand for employees. We invested in the Computer Numeric Control (CNC) state-of-the-art facility, which also led to local manufacturers stepping forward to offer several large entrustments of equipment. Being able to learn on state-of-the-art technology in facilities like these gives our students the training they need to become valuable employees when they graduate.

Access to Information. Using data in our decision-making requires a strategic view of how to store, analyze, and access key data. When considering future offerings or services, college teams need to be able to view data points from an enterprise-wide view.

Although data access has been a challenge at Delta in the past, we are now able to address critical operations more efficiently. We share information with all employees through an internal access portal, which contains key performance metrics. Today's enrollment and student success issues cannot be solved without transparency and collaboration. (continued on page 4)

EMERGING LEADER PERSPECTIVES

In recent years, emerging trends and transformations in technology have had a profound impact on higher education, providing unprecedented opportunities for IT to function as a strategic campus partner in advancing the institution’s mission and goals. Community colleges have made significant advances in leveraging technology solutions to boost institutional efficiencies, expand college access, and foster innovative learning experiences. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders. Their answers appear below.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

How can the community college best leverage technology to support its goals of improved student success and completion?

Curt Rendall, MA

*Institutional Communications and Creative Strategist
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It’s easy to feel lost in the ever-changing tides of new technology. Leaders want to make sound investments that will keep pace with trends and facilitate organizational and student success. It’s easy to miscalculate or over-invest in technology that underperforms. In all the hubbub, we must not forget that technology is, first and foremost, a tool. It cannot, and should not, replace an institution’s most valuable asset: its people. Technology that faculty and staff are comfortable using becomes a valuable aid in helping students by facilitating real connections and promoting learning. By focusing first on human connection, leaders will be able to use technology with precision and prudence to maximize institutional effectiveness and student performance.

Technological innovations need not be “high-tech” to be effective. For example, nearly every student carries a cell phone. Institutionally texting students with needed and appreciated information at just the right moment, sometimes called “nudging,” can help students stay on top of their registration and financial aid deadlines and engage in activities of interest. This is a simple tool; however, it should be used with restraint. Irrelevant or poorly timed texts will cause students to opt out of texts and tune-out the institution’s communications. Prioritization is key!

Inspired by the work of Pacansky-Brock (2017), Sauk Valley Community College developed a strategy to build curricular relevance and a greater sense of belonging between students and instructors. Dubbed the “Humanize Online Course Series,” faculty from a variety of academic departments met during the semester to workshop course components including assignments, projects, and discussion board prompts. The group shared insights and collectively helped reshape these course elements to maximize engagement. The Humanize Series diffused teaching innovation across departments while fostering camaraderie among the faculty.

The next phase in leveraging technology to promote student success and completion may be found in chat bots and voice assistants. Institutions are already beginning to harness these technologies in recruitment, engagement, and in online course discussions. Artificial intelligence can free professors to focus their time and energy on personalized and deepened feedback. As in the past, technology that is cost-prohibitive and cutting-edge today will soon become baseline. Within years, many students will choose their college through conversations with voice assistants like Amazon’s Alexa, without ever having visited a college’s campus or website.

Community colleges must keep a pulse on the changing technology and expectations of their diverse constituencies. As trends continue to evolve, colleges must never lose sight of the purpose of technology: fostering relationships that support student learning, engagement, and connection. As colleges align technology with human connection, they will also secure student success.



Curt Rendall, MA, is an Institutional Communications and Creative Strategist at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, Illinois, where he works in marketing and advancement. Fluent in Spanish, he earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. He is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Community College Leadership in the DCCL program at Ferris State University. His dissertation focuses on digital trends in the community college.

Oscar Ramos, MBA

*Dean, LSC-Atascocita Center and
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Lone Star College
Houston, Texas*

**Choose Your Own Adventure IT Story and Pick a Path:
Treat IT as a utility – or Treat IT as a Strategic Partner**

- a) **Treat IT as a Utility.** A fairly common practice in community colleges, this approach – where the services provided are no more than a utility (like water or electricity) – has been an easy way to forget about this unit of the college. When was the last time you thought about your utilities at home? Likewise, many community college professionals have treated IT services in a similar fashion, yet this approach rarely leads to improvement and innovation that supports student success and completion.
- b) **Treat IT as a Strategic Partner.** This approach represents a growing trend in community colleges. With the ubiquitous nature of technology, there is a rising expectation that technology should be integrated into the student experience from campus services to the classroom experience. One major way that IT departments have become an essential strategic partner is in the movement of data democratization. Data democratization encompasses the idea that institutional data is readily available to the organization, providing the ability to use the data to make decisions at all levels of the organization. Tools such as Google Analytics and Microsoft Power BI have empowered users to find new and innovate uses for institutional data.

Another important way IT can be a strong strategic partner within the student services space is to ensure that student systems can be used on mobile devices. Smart devices have become one of the major methodologies for students to interact with the institution and our student systems. Ensuring that all of the websites and application are optimized for use with mobile devices is an important step to ensure students are accessing services in a simplified way.

Instructional technology is yet another way to ensure that IT becomes a strategic partner in student success and completion. Learning management systems such as Blackboard, Canvas, and Desire2Learn represent an important instructional technology for several reasons. The most basic way these tools are utilized is for teaching online courses or posting on instructional resources. However, these tools could potentially be used to pull grade information of students that can be utilized to integrate into analytics to be used to help understand students.

In an era of budget cuts and shrinking resources, the need for the IT organization to be a part of the strategic view of the institution is essential. The path of strategic partnership will allow institutions to leverage IT tools in finding new and innovative ways to enhance student success and completion. Ultimately, the *Choose Your Own Adventure IT Story* is not much of a choice when you understand what is possible.



Oscar Ramos currently serves as the Dean of Lone Star College – Atascocita Center and Lone Star College – Process Technology Center, where he oversees instruction, student services, and administration for those sites. He previously served as an Executive Director for the Office of Technology Services for Lone Star College. He received his MBA from Sam Houston State University and is currently pursuing a doctorate in the Ferris State University DCCL program.

NATIONAL LEADER PERSPECTIVE

In recent years, emerging trends and transformations in technology have had a profound impact on higher education, providing unprecedented opportunities for IT to function as a strategic campus partner in advancing the institution's mission and goals. Community colleges have made significant advances in leveraging technology solutions to boost institutional efficiencies, expand college access, and foster innovative learning experiences. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders. Their answers appear below.

How Leaders Can Leverage Technology for Student Success in the Modern Community College

Stephanie R. Bulger, PhD

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The Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges national survey report released in January 2019 by Porter and Umbach provides insight into some of the challenges of community colleges, based on the responses of 50,097 students in 10 community colleges. The top ten challenges cover both external issues and the college experience, and consist of the myriad ways that students are balancing work, family, and study. As community college educators grapple with thinking about how we teach and support students, tools afforded by rapidly changing technology are inevitably included in these thoughts. After reviewing several technology trends reports, opportunities that can be leveraged by community college leaders to increase student success are expanding mobile learning, maximizing data analytics, and cultivating an organizational mindset of innovation to make improvements happen.

Technologies that move mobile learning beyond applications to content delivery and engagement are worth considering in college strategies for improving access and success. While income levels of adults are correlated with mobile device ownership (e.g., higher income individuals may own a smartphone, tablet, and desktop or laptop), we are beginning to see mobile devices that are becoming affordable. This trend is expected to continue and expand to more types of devices such as wearables. In use now is software that provides proactive nudges to students to complete assignments and give encouragement, as well as platforms that help administrators improve intervention strategies (see Indiana University's Boost or Hobson's Starfish). Videos are being integrated within institutions' social media strategy. Algorithms are creating searchable functions of videos to an individual's learning needs, interests, and accessibility needs in online learning. Augmented reality content, co-developed by one Michigan startup, is being used to make chemistry concepts relevant to students. By incorporating software, enhancing content for delivery via mobile devices, and expanding functionality in new ways, colleges can mobilize, catalyze, and increase collaboration and communication, as well as student retention, learning, and achievement.

The massive amount of information available to institutions can be leveraged to identify issues and make informed decisions to address them. Issues in student learning, advising, work-based learning, recruitment, satisfaction, and employer engagement can be informed by the data in enterprise resource systems, learning management systems, customer relationship management systems, survey databases, swipe cards, kiosks, websites, and social media. For example, at one university, tutors and students changed their behaviors based on the data they saw on learning analytics dashboards (http://repository.jisc.ac.uk/6560/1/learning-analytics_and_student_success.pdf). A collaboration between a university and technology solutions company created software that would monitor progress and areas of improvement in student performance (educau.se/jeffcat). Such applications of analytics are empowering faculty to know more about how their students are learning. Developments such as improving critical thinking in online discussions, developing modularized and disaggregated degrees that

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suit students' life schedules, aligning courses to twenty-first century outcomes, enabling the flipped classroom, and changing content before the end of a course are more relevant endeavors for faculty because of learning analytics.

To leverage the technologies described above for student success, community college leaders would be prudent to set the tone for an innovation mindset

in their organizations to reduce the cost and speed of the implementation of the most promising innovations. After reviewing a number of techniques in the literature, an innovation mindset can be summed up as having four components. The first component is to introduce a new way of thinking, through training, that emphasizes experimentation with novel ideas and concepts, fast iterations, and rapid testing to scale what works and learn from what fails. The Research Planning Group's Leading from the Middle Academy and Innovation Engineering are two examples of professional development opportunities promoting structural change. In the second component, institutional members share ideas and collaborate. The third component is creating an environment where individuals form collaborative groups that generate and test new ideas on their own. Fourth, recognition for the best innovations motivates college members, communicates new ideas, and provides an opportunity to sustain the implementation. Makerspaces support this fourth component.

A few years ago, ED Surge published a story that shared examples of ways in which community colleges were embracing digital learning. One of the colleges experimented with Bazaar, developed by Carnegie Mellon University, wherein student groups in an online statistics course would be guided by a chatbot that encouraged them to reflect on what they were learning. In all of the examples, individuals – faculty, department chairs, deans, vice presidents, and provosts – were involved in collaborative solutions to problems facing students.

In 21st century community colleges, risk taking and failure are positive aspects of the culture, priority-setting, and daily work because they provide necessary feedback, insights, and results for ideas, prototypes, or processes. Experimentation with innovative ideas, fast iterations, and rapid testing to scale what works is a necessary mindset for leveraging technology in the modern community college.



Stephanie R. Bulger is Vice Chancellor, Instructional Services at the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD), the second largest community college district in California, offering postsecondary education and training to more than 105,000 students. As the chief instructional officer, Dr. Bulger is helping to drive innovation for student success. She is facilitating an open educational resources initiative, and is increasing the number of students who transfer in the humanities with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. She serves on the San Diego Imperial County Community College Association (SDICCCA) Regional Oversight Committee of the Strong Workforce Program, which is working to fill skills gaps in high demand occupations in the San Diego region. She was an expert panel member of the 2019 New Media Consortium Horizon Report on technology trends in higher education published by EDUCAUSE. She co-authored *Crossing the Chasm: A Case of Scaling Adoption of Open Educational Resources to the Early Majority in Technology Leadership for Innovation in Higher Education* (edited by Yufeng Qian and Guiyou Huang). She earned her MA from the University of Utah and PhD from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

QUICK TAKES Highlights from the Field

EDUCAUSE Horizon Report – 2019 Higher Education Edition

by **EDUCAUSE**

EDUCAUSE led a recent conversation about emerging trends in technology development and guided a 98-person global panel of experts from higher education to review recent literature and discuss their experiences and forecasts regarding technology adoption and educational change. With more than 17 years of research and publications, the Horizon Project can be regarded as education's longest-running exploration of emerging technology trends that support teaching, learning, and creative inquiry. Access this work here: <http://bit.ly/2XDI5TH>

Reimagining the Role of Technology in Higher Education

by **the U.S. Department
of Education, Office of
Educational Technology**

This Higher Education Supplement to the National Education Technology Plan (NETP) examines the principles of learning, teaching, leadership, assessment, and infrastructure in the context of higher education. The Supplement articulates a vision and action plan that responds to an urgent national priority – postsecondary success for all Americans – and describes specific actions to ensure that higher education continues to innovate and improve to provide all learners with opportunities for personal growth and prosperity. Access this work here: <https://tech.ed.gov/>



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Technology Use on Campus Requires Dedication and Talent Development *(continued from page 1)*

A practical use of data at Delta College is in support of our involvement with Achieving the Dream (ATD). Delta College earned Leader College distinction by ATD, a national designation awarded to community colleges that commit to improving student success and closing achievement gaps. With this recognition, Delta College has shown how data can inform policy and practice to help our students achieve their goals, resulting in improved skills, better employability, and economic growth for families and communities. Technology provides the tools our faculty and staff need to analyze the data.

Budget and Training. The competitive nature of college enrollment demands that even in times of declining student head counts, we must be sure to allocate budget dollars in support of technology. It is now an integral part of every young adult's life and there is an expectation for access everywhere on campus. Students make decisions about a college's commitment to innovation and knowledge, based upon the level of technology in the classroom and other community spaces.

Increased use of technology in the office environment can improve workflow and automate tasks in a variety of departments campus wide. However, it is important that we never lose sight of the importance of maintaining a personal connection with our students.

Every time we identify a new major technology, we must provide staff training to remove any barriers that would limit the efficient use of technology. Whether newly hired or new to a software system, our responsibility is to ensure employees are trained and coached in how to manage the technology. Delta College has internal systems to ensure employees receive needed training, included designated dollars for Professional Development Allowance (PDA) for each full-time faculty, staff, and support staff member. We also operate a Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence (FCTE) and the Center for Organizational Success (COS), which offers workshops and retreats, instructional support, coaching, and mentoring.

Vision of Technological Leadership. Top community college administrators must define the vision and support for technology on campus. Those individuals do not need to have hands-on experience with software and hardware to make that commitment. Rather, it takes an aspiration of how they want their college to be known in meeting the needs of students, faculty, and the community.

Recognition from outside your campus is an indicator of how well your college is meeting its technological goals. Delta College has been recognized as a tech-savvy college by the Center for Digital Education for the past half dozen years. Its Digital Community Colleges Survey Awards honors community colleges that use technology to improve how they deliver curriculum and services, including online courses and mobile environments, mobile apps, secure platforms, and wireless networks.

In addition, the Aspen Institute has named Delta College three times as one of America's 150 leading community colleges. The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence is awarded every two years and is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. In my opinion, it is not possible to reach this level of accomplishment without a strong commitment to technology and the use of data throughout campus.

On the Horizon. Our campus facilities have expanded, which means we are addressing the continuing upgrades of technology on main campus, but also in our geographically dispersed facilities. As buildings and spaces age, we must

face the question of how, and how often, to upgrade not only the structure, but also the infrastructure, in order to deliver the type of education our students expect. One of the greatest areas of change has been learning spaces such as libraries. The transition from book stacks to digital research is accompanied by the need for student interaction spaces and multimedia creation capabilities.

Students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors increasingly utilize mobile technology and expect higher education to be prepared to meet their needs. When allocating dollars, we must not only consider how to scale our systems and infrastructure to meet today's mobile demands, but also how to meet tomorrow's competitive, mobile-friendly marketplace. We need to see around the corners to know what is coming at us next, especially in areas of portability and "bring your own device" (BYOD), which will require new support services from our IT department.

Technology allows our team to be more collaborative, effective, and readily available. That includes advising from a distance through skype or video chat sessions. Delta College is building two new community facilities and needs to utilize technology to deliver admissions, advising, and financial aid counseling. It can be done, but will require staff training to ensure full implementation. Augmenting remote staff services will be the need for remote document access and team communications. And, we need to be able to respond to potential recruits through website inquiries off-hours. Whether that will be virtual content or FAQs on a chat site, we need to be prepared to respond.

As we look to the future, we need to be able to predict and deliver what our faculty, staff, and students want or need when it comes to technology. Getting the direction right will allow our College to offer what is needed in our higher education environment and to do so either face-to-face or remotely. No matter what direction we pursue, we must continue to change and evolve to serve our students and our community.

Dr. Jean Goodnow has been President of Delta College, located in the Great Lakes Bay Region of Michigan, since 2005. She earned both her PhD and MA degrees from the University of Iowa, and has also completed post-graduate study at Harvard University. At the national level, Dr. Goodnow is a Board Member and past Board Chair of the League for Innovation in the Community College.



She is a member of the STEM Higher Education Council, which partners with industry to provide a catalyst to meet the education and training needs of the global STEM workforce. She previously served on the Board of the American Association of Community Colleges and on its Sustainability Task Force and Commission on Diversity, Inclusion & Equity. In Michigan, she is a Member and past Treasurer of the Michigan Community College Association. Regionally, she serves on the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance Board of Directors, Field Neurosciences Institute Board of Directors, and Great Lakes Bay Regional Trails Committee.

Dr. Goodnow received Second Nature's 1st Annual Climate Leadership Award for Outstanding Individual Climate Leadership, the Shirley Gordon Phi Theta Kappa National Award, the Community College Alliance Leadership Award, and Delta College's Black Faculty & Staff selected her to receive The Spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award. Dr. Goodnow is the 2018 recipient of the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce's Athena Award. Last fall, she traveled to France to represent the United States and Delta College as a Fulbright Scholar, one of 12 American Fulbright international education administrators selected for this prestigious honor.