

MASTER PLAN GOALS

In broadest terms, the mission of the California State University is to provide affordable access to high-quality post-secondary education for all eligible Californians. The Information Technology Strategy (ITS) facilitates the use of new technologies in support of this mission. All of the ITS initiatives adopted in the “first wave” in 1996 and the recently adopted “second wave” initiatives are designed to enhance accessibility, improve quality, and contain costs..

The ITS complements policy options that were adopted by the CSU Board of Trustees in May 2003 to achieve enrollment and access goals. One of these policy options addresses academic technology expansion: “The Board further expects campuses to expand the use of academic technology in ways that maintain and improve the high quality of education provided by the CSU in order to free existing physical capacity and to expand access.” The intent to use information technology beyond the classroom walls is reflected in the ITS vision statement:

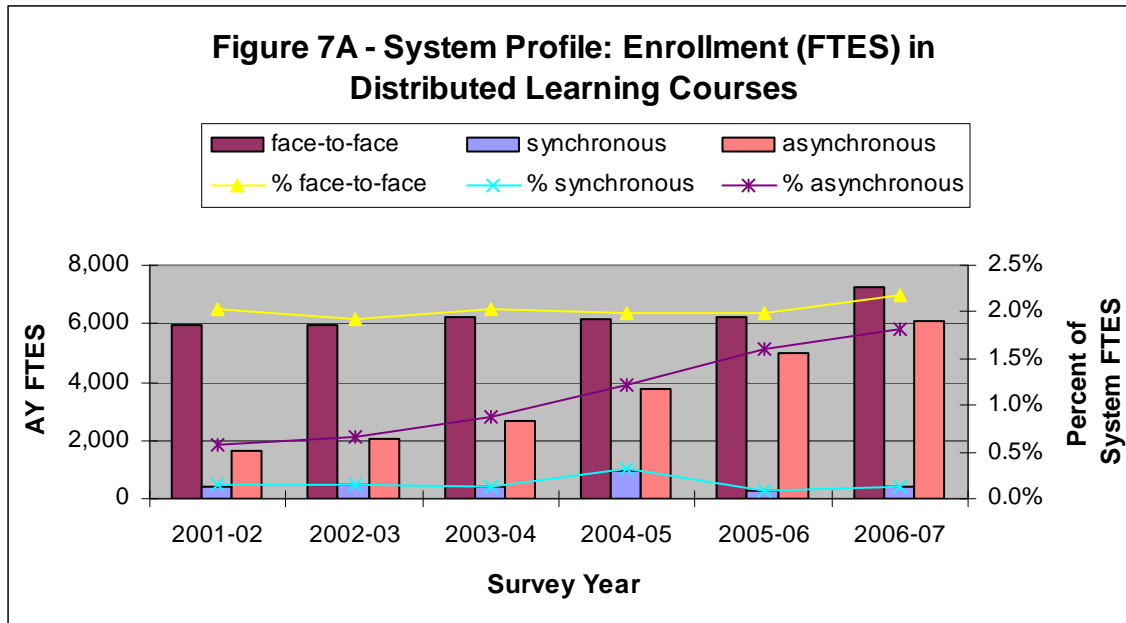
“...to provide the best possible environment for the education of CSU students through an integrated electronic environment that enables all CSU students, faculty and staff to communicate with one another and to interact with information resources from anyplace, to anyplace at anytime...”

The CSU budget compact, which covers 2005/06 through 2010/11, is the framework for CSU funding. The compact assumes a 2.5 percent enrollment increase annually through 2010, or 8,800 new FTES, the physical equivalent of a medium-sized campus each year. Campuses, like San Diego, San Francisco and Long Beach, are updating campus master plans to increase their enrollment ceiling limit. Specific funding for technology is included in the compact in recognition of its role in meeting this demand with as few new facilities as possible.

Extending Existing Physical Capacity

The California Master Plan for Higher Education, adopted in 1960, calls for the California State University to provide space for the top one-third of graduating high school seniors and to provide access to undergraduate degree programs for qualified students transferring from community colleges. The CSU has taken several steps aimed at accommodating enrollment demand and facilitating graduation, including ways to make more efficient use of lecture and laboratory rooms. The most cost-effective option available to campuses to meet this challenge is the expansion of online learning or of other forms of distance or distributed education. Thanks to recent improvements in the information technology infrastructure, CSU campuses are in a position to support substantial and rapid expansion of asynchronous (i.e., Internet or Web-based) instruction at very little additional cost compared with construction of new classrooms.

Growth in the amount of instruction occurring in modes and venues apart from state-supported facilities has been slow but steady. Figure 7A summarizes the volume of enrollment in classes employing three principal modes of distributed learning. These figures include both enrollment from classes taught entirely in a distance-learning mode and enrollment aggregated from classes using a combination of traditional and distance learning approaches. *Face-to-face* instruction—where instructor and students meet together at scheduled times in non-state support sites (e.g., a hospital or a school)—accounts for just over one half of all full-time equivalent student enrollment (FTES) since tracking of distributed learning began in academic year 2001-02. The share of enrollment attributable to *asynchronous* (online) instruction has doubled from 20 percent in 2001 to 44 percent in 2006-07. FTES in *synchronous* mode (i.e., traditional televised instruction requiring instructor and students to meet at fixed times and sometimes at fixed locations) continues to hover around two percent.



Enrollment in distributed learning modes in AY 2006-2007 totaled 13,772 FTES, an amount equivalent to 4.1 percent of total main-campus FTES for the system. Eleven CSU campuses have smaller FTES enrollments than the aggregated total for distributed learning. (The median percent for all 23 campuses is 4.2 percent of the total system academic year FTES) For AY 2006-2007, enrollment in asynchronous instruction alone (6,078 FTES) exceeded that of the five smallest campuses. Because this enrollment is dispersed across all of the campuses, it does not, directly offset the need for new construction. By enabling students to engage in instructional activities from their homes or other off-campus locations distributed learning can, however, extend the capacity of existing facilities to handle additional students. Significant expansion of online learning in particular has the potential to reduce the need to build additional classroom buildings.

The first indications of institutional movement in this direction began to appear in this year's campus technology survey. Two campuses reported that they had, during 2006-07, reassigned classroom space made available through faculty employment of a hybrid course model. "Hybrid" or "blended" courses feature the integration of an asynchronous learning component with traditional instruction in a regularly scheduled class on campus.

For this report CSU Northridge agreed to the inclusion in pertinent part of an announcement to faculty about a course grant program, Share the Space, the campus initiated to achieve better utilization of classrooms.

The Office of Online Instruction is sponsoring grants of \$500.00 each for faculty interested in offering a course which is half online and half in a regularly scheduled classroom. This course must be paired with a second section of the same course or another course offered at the same time, which would share a classroom on alternate days at the same time of day. If the time that the two classes meet, for example is normally on Tuesday and Thursday, one class will meet face to face in the assigned room on Tuesday, and the second class will meet there face to face on Thursday. Both classes will complete the remaining time online. Department chairs must be consulted because of the scheduling requirements.

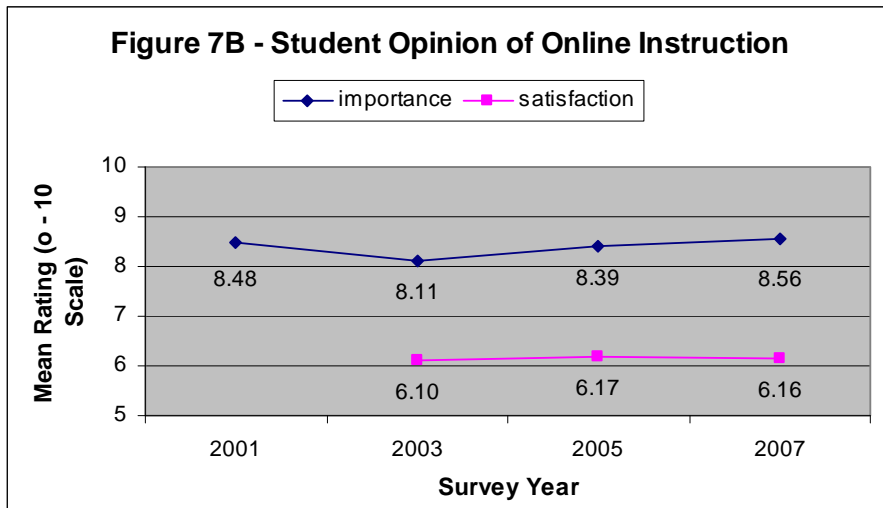
The practice of substituting online activities for some portion of the coursework in a regular class has become common nationwide and in the CSU; however, because faculty are not accustomed to determine in advance how many and which days of the term would take place online, campuses typically cannot reassign these rooms for other uses. The experiments reported in this year's survey demonstrates that campuses may be able to solve the logistical and information system programming challenges associated with the change in scheduling practices.

Previous editions of *Measures of Success* have reported the results of surveys of CSU faculty and student opinion about online learning. No other question in the survey has elicited such strong and opposing responses as the question about the importance of making online learning available. Faculty have consistently assigned a very low priority to online instruction and relatively few have taught online classes. In each of the four surveys faculty were asked "how important they believe it is to provide students with access to electronic on-line course instruction at anytime, in any place." The

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mean scores for responses to this question have consistently ranked below 6.00 on the zero-to-ten scale where zero equates to “not at all important” and 10 means “extremely important”. This question has, in fact, received the lowest mean score rating of any item in all four faculty survey administrations.

By contrast, students have consistently accorded high importance ratings to online learning. The 2007 student survey provides the most recent confirmation of this view (Figure 7B), Students ranked availability of online instruction second in importance only to the technology preparation for future employment in four biennial survey administrations. Just as consistently, students rated “satisfaction with online courses compared to regular classroom instruction” the lowest of any similar question in the surveys. The survey did not ask whether the low satisfaction relates to high expectations, or reflects dissatisfaction with the modality of learning, or with the instructional practices. One of the new academic technology initiatives, Transforming Course Design, is an effort to improve online learning using nationally endorsed best practices. (See further discussion in the Academic Initiatives section.)



Campuses differ greatly in the amount and kind of distance and distributed learning opportunities they provide. Figure 7C shows the amount of distance learning FTES earned in 2006-07 by learning mode. For purposes of reporting a fuller picture of instructional activity by learning mode, FTES from off-campus centers has been aggregated and is reported in the chart below as an additional campus. The total number of campuses is thus 24.

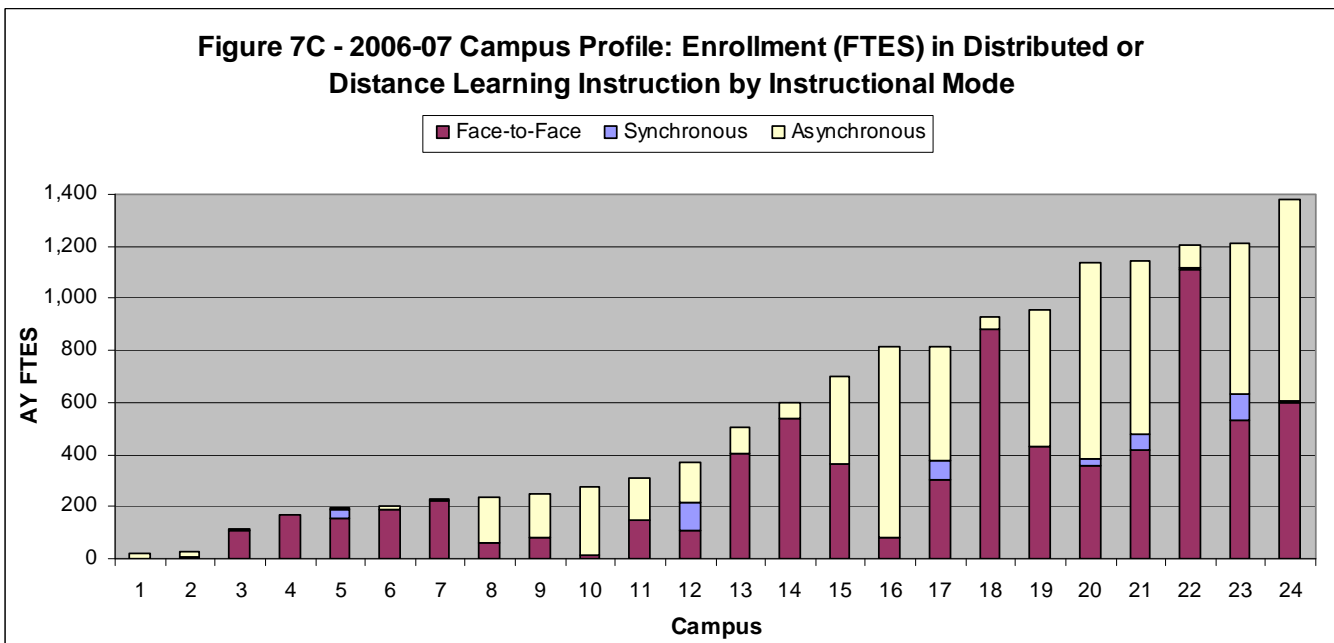
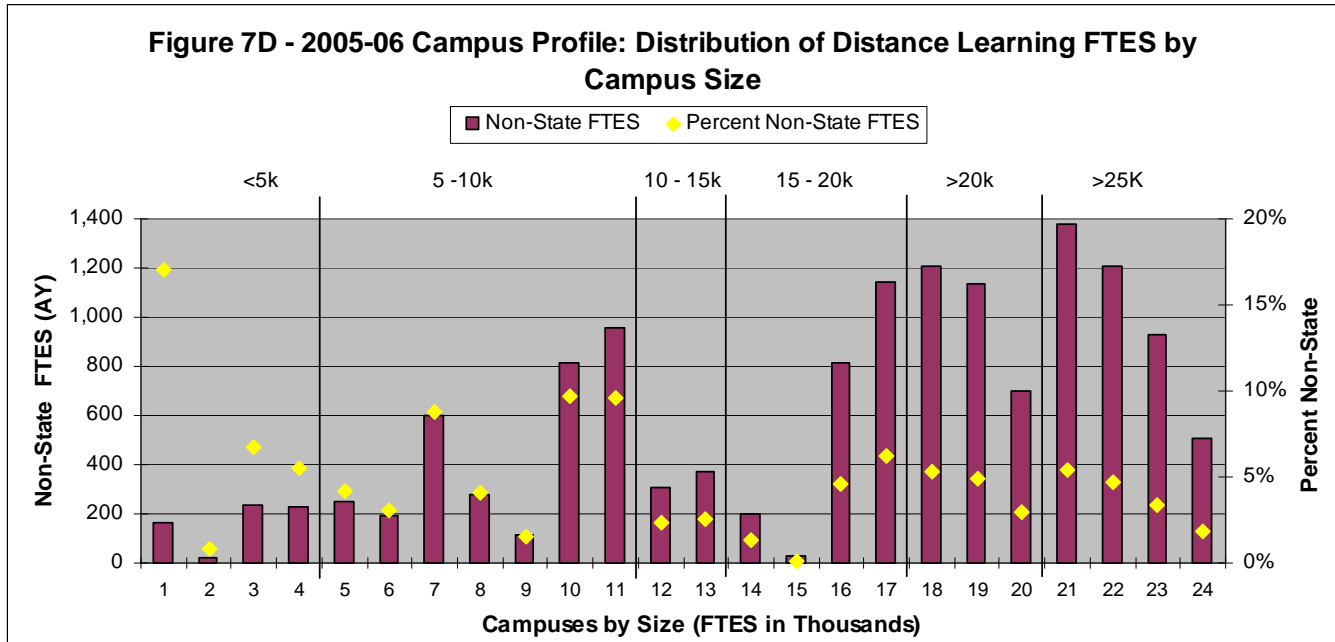


Figure 7D shows the amount of distance learning FTES earned on each campus, and on all off-campus centers as a group, and the percentage of total academic year FTES it represents for each campus. Campuses are grouped by relative size, as indicated by enrollment ranges in increments of 5,000. The percentage of FTES earned in a distance or distributed learning mode ranges from near zero to just under ten percent of total campus FTES.



Applications of Online Learning

CSU campuses make use of the technology infrastructure in various ways to achieve strategic goals of the Master Plan. For example, offering online degree programs demonstrates the capability both to serve the needs of Californians who find it difficult or impossible to attend traditional on-campus programs and to mitigate the need for new physical space. Innovative use of technology tools is providing a convenient and effective method to ensure that incoming students have the basic academic skills necessary to undertake college-level work thus reducing demands for remedial instruction in Math and English.

As noted in last year’s MOS report, a June 2006 survey showed that 15 CSU campuses offered 44 online degree programs, two-thirds of which were self-support. While the majority of programs were at the masters level in professional and technical fields, baccalaureate and credential programs attracted more students. CSU executive management is exploring ways to expand and improve delivery of online degree and credential programs.

Ensuring that students enter the university adequately prepared for college level work is one of the top priorities of the CSU. The Early Assessment Program (EAP) has been established to provide high school juniors with a snapshot of their readiness in reading writing and mathematics. To support advance preparation for college in these areas a variety of online learning tools have been developed. These tools help high school students, their parents, school counselors and teachers plan and prepare for admission to the CSU.

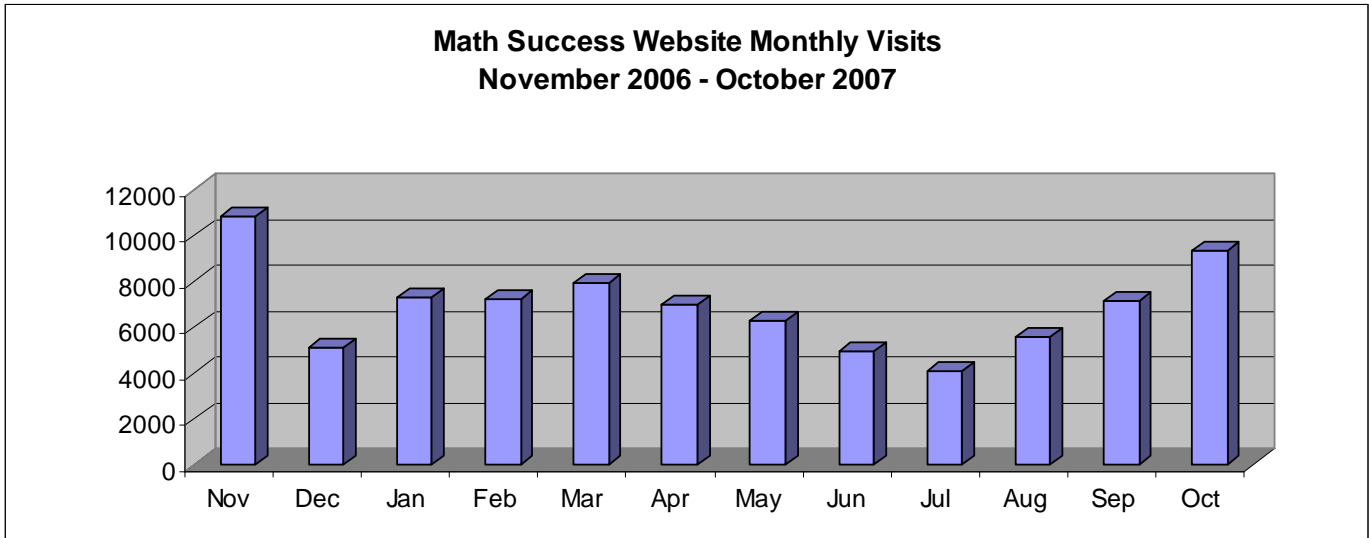
The CSU Math Success and English Success websites help incoming students prepare for college level work in these and other related disciplines. The websites provide high school students, parents, teachers and counselors with the following services.

- Personalized authoritative advice about the CSU English and math placement requirements and how to meet them.
- Testimonial videos motivating students to take proactive steps to satisfy the CSU placement requirements in the most efficient and expeditious manner.

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- Educational tools and planning resources that students can use to map their progress toward meeting CSU placement requirements while they are still in high school.

Usage of both the Math and English Success websites has grown steadily over time. The graphs below show the usage over the past year for both Math and English Success. Although monthly visits to the Math website have remained relatively constant compared to last year, monthly visits to the English website increased significantly.



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