University of California Innovative Learning Technology Initiative

"Using Technology to Enhance UC Students' Learning Experiences"

May 14, 2013

Overview

UC's Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) is a direct response to the Governor's plan to earmark $10 million from UC's FY 14 core budget to use technology to increase access to high demand courses for UC matriculated undergraduates. ILTI will help UC undergraduates get the courses they need when they need them, satisfy degree requirements, and graduate in a timely manner. ILTI will employ sound pedagogical strategies and knowledge of how students learn to create UC-quality undergraduate online courses and online modules for hybrid courses.

ILTI will take advantage of and move beyond what UC campuses are already doing to use innovative learning technology in the undergraduate instructional program. With leadership from the UC Office of the President and the Academic Senate, faculty, students, and administrators have engaged in a thorough four-month planning process. Assuming the Governor's $10M commitment spans three years, ILTI's four strategic interconnected elements constitute a comprehensive, cohesive plan that will enhance the educational opportunities and achievements of UC's undergraduates.

1. Courses and Course Components

After three years, ILTI will have a set of about 150 active online and hybrid courses that are credit bearing and meet specific general education or major requirements. In the set will be entirely new courses created to meet all of ILTI's criteria and requirements, as well as courses developed by substantially revising current courses so that they fit into ILTI. Courses will be offered year-round, including summer. A Request for Proposals soliciting Letters of Interest issued in March 2013 produced nearly 120 responses from UC faculty. The request for full proposals will be issued in June. A peer-reviewed, competitive process will guide the selection of ILTI courses that meet undergraduates' needs throughout UC's nine general campuses. $4.6M-$5.6M in FY 14.

2. Department and Campus Support

Departments and campuses will commit to offering ILTI courses multiple years on two or more campuses. Faculty will ensure that ILTI courses are approved for unit credit and for satisfying particular general education or major requirements. To ensure that ILTI courses are of UC quality, instructional designers and technical support will be made available, according to campus needs. Instructional support will cover additional costs (e.g., instructors and TAs) a campus incurs when teaching undergraduates from other campuses while a permanent method for cost allocation is developed. $1M-$2M in FY 14.

3. Cross-Campus Facilitation

ILTI will develop and maintain a robust, searchable database of UC for-credit undergraduate online courses offered across the system. The database will be linked from each campus's directory and linked to each campus's course catalog. Additionally, a "hub" that supports the necessary communication about student enrollments and course grades from one campus to another will be developed. $3M ($0.5M database, $2.5M hub) in FY 14.

4. Evaluation and Accountability

ILTI will use a variety of strategies to assess how it is working, what it is achieving, and how it affects UC's instructional costs. Evaluation and accountability data will be collected at the course and program levels. Routine assessment of how ILTI is implemented and what differences it makes will shape ILTI as it moves ahead. $0.4M in FY 14.

Building to ILTI

As a leading research and teaching institution, UC has been actively engaged in providing online learning opportunities for matriculated and UC Extension students for decades. Currently there are at least 250 online courses available for credit to UC students, including undergraduate and graduate, academic year and summer offerings, at all 10 UC campuses. Three campuses each offer a fully online master's degree program, and several other online graduate degree proposals are currently under review. Another 2,250 online not-for-credit courses are being offered to non-matriculated students through UC Extension. UC Online Education, established by President Yudof in 2010, provided a vision and focal point for creating a systemwide set of campus-based, faculty-developed, high-need undergraduate courses. Today, as a direct result of all these activities, UC online courses span the breadth and depth of a quality undergraduate education. From the culture and context of dance to climate change, foreign language classes, and programming software in engineering, these courses that UC faculty have designed and taught are strong and viable options for student learning. ILTI builds from this base.

In January 2013, UC President Yudof announced an incentive program to develop additional online high-enrollment, high-demand courses for UC undergraduates. It became the first of ILTI's initiatives. In late March, an initial Request for Proposals (RFP) generated nearly 120 Letters of Interest (LOIs) from UC faculty wanting to develop online courses or online modules for hybrid courses. The LOIs were in many disciplines, from STEM to social sciences to humanities and the arts, including calculus, engineering, psychology, philosophy, foreign languages, and music. A number of the LOIs involved cross-campus faculty collaborations. This strong response to the initial RFP demonstrates there is a vigorous "coalition of the willing" ready to develop and teach online courses for UC undergraduates on multiple campuses. The request for full proposals will be issued in June, and the proposals submitted in response will be peer reviewed. The best will be chosen for course development as the first of the many that will come from ILTI.

To ground ILTI in the faculty and campuses that will implement it and benefit from it, UC systemwide working meetings and briefings were held from mid-April to early May. More than 200 UC faculty, students, staff, and administrators participated in developing a vision for ILTI that addresses the goals of the Governor's $10M earmark and enhances UC's uses of technology to offer online and hybrid courses to undergraduates throughout the UC system. The sessions were productive, generating extensive feedback and recommendations, while building a shared sense of understanding of what the initiative is intended to accomplish. That information has been compiled and is available for review on the UC Office of the President SharePoint site (https://sp2010.ucop.edu/sites/acadaffairs/om).

Components of ILTI

ILTI will be most effective if it focuses on UC campus needs, develops high quality online or hybrid courses to meet those needs, and includes thorough course evaluations that assess student success. To meet these goals ILTI assumes a three-year development effort in four major areas.

Courses and Course Components

At the heart of ILTI are the courses and course components that use innovative learning technology and sound pedagogy to offer matriculated UC undergraduates expanded opportunities to take the courses they want and need. UC will annually expend $4-7M of a $10M earmark such that after three years there will be a set of about 150 active courses that meet ILTI criteria: high demand courses that are appropriate for many different degrees and satisfy major or general education requirements for a UC bachelor's degree. Some courses will be newly created for ILTI. Others will come from revising selected existing undergraduate online courses so that they meet ILTI criteria, will be offered during the academic year, and will help students on other campuses, as well as students on the original campus, meet their general education and/or major requirements. ILTI funds will provide for faculty release time and/or other staff and technical resources needed to create a course. This allows faculty to invest the time and energy needed to produce an

outstanding course. The support of instructional designers and other technical specialists will allow faculty to focus on course content and develop the best instructional methods to facilitate learning. Intellectual property rights of the faculty will be respected, and written agreements to that effect will be a part of the process of initiating an ILTI course or module development project.

The lead person responsible for the course, particularly at the time of initial development, must be an Academic Senate faculty member. The faculty leaders will work closely with their departments to choose the courses that are most likely to improve a student's progress toward graduation, and they will engage with their Senate course approval committees to ensure the work meets requirements in regard to use of high quality technology and will receive Senate approval when completed. Faculty will prepare the proposal in response to a request that will be distributed by mid-June. The first due date for proposals will be 4-6 weeks later; the second due date will be in November. Those faculty who submitted an LOI in March will all have received feedback that should be helpful if they decide to develop a full proposal. Pending continuation of the $10M earmark, future requests for proposals will be released once a year in the fall.

Department and Campus Support

So that ILTI courses can serve large numbers of UC undergraduates, the departments and campuses must both make certain commitments to the courses. With rare exceptions, ILTI funding will only support courses available to, and meeting the general education or major requirements of, students beyond the "home" campus of the faculty member responsible for the course. The home department/campus must commit to offering an ILTI course for 3-5 years, at least once if not more often during each academic year, and making it available in a way that can serve a substantial number of undergraduates from other UC campuses. Before funds are expended, there must be assurance through some reasonable process that the course is very likely to be approved by the normal campus procedures and that it will satisfy general education or major requirements on multiple campuses.

In addition to funding course development, ILTI may need to provide for a number of campus mechanisms that support course development and appropriately fund instruction when students take courses at other UC campuses. ILTI will need to spend $1M-$2M per year to support these two types of campus efforts, each of which is described below.

As ILTI ramps up course development, there may be the need to augment resources currently available on individual campuses through a needs-based assessment. A designated senior academic administrator on each campus will have the opportunity to review all faculty proposals and combine them with a request for additional course production support.

Instructing substantial numbers of students from other campuses presents a funding challenge because, traditionally, each campus receives instructional funds only for students on its own campus. ILTI will support certain instructional costs (e.g., instructors and TAs) for students coming from other campuses while a new funding model is developed to support cross-campus enrollment using normal instructional allocations. Allocation of such funding would be based on campus requests.

Cross-Campus Facilitation

Most UC campuses have been using technology to increase the number of courses available to their matriculated undergraduates, as envisioned in the Governor's budget. ILTI will go a step further and increase the number available to undergraduates on all UC campuses and to support cross-campus registration and recordkeeping. To ensure that each campus can handle a large number of students from other campuses taking one of its ILTI courses, UC will streamline the administrative functions electronically rather than use paper approvals that only work for small numbers of students. This data "hub" will interface and translate between campus systems, and a small-scale beta version will be developed and used FY 14. The full-scale system will be developed over 2-3 years. $2.5M will be budgeted in FY 14 for the entire cost of the beta version and the start-up work on the permanent, all-campus hub.

To make it possible for students to find online courses across campuses, a searchable, systemwide database will be created. Each campus directory will be linked to it and each course in the database will be linked to the appropriate campus course catalog listing. The database will contain approved online courses, with metadata identifying for each course such characteristics as disciplinary area, level, units, general education/pre-major/major requirements it satisfies on each UC campus, and when it is available. ILTI courses may substitute for courses required on campuses other than the campus offering the course or they may increase the course options for satisfying general education or major requirements on the other campuses. ILTI estimates $0.5M for this effort in 2013-14 and is looking at existing systems to build from rather than starting from scratch.

Evaluation and Accountability

Evaluation and accountability will be an integral part of ILTI's work. ILTI will allocate about $0.4M in FY 14 to this effort.

Information will be sought from campus records, students in ILTI courses, faculty developing and/or teaching ILTI courses, TAs, and student work. Among the relevant data to examine are student and faculty opinions about course quality and characteristics; student and instructor experience; student completion of courses; student learning outcomes; frequency with which courses are offered; enrollment levels; which students enroll at particular campuses; who teaches the courses and what they do; what TAs do; cost to develop courses; cost to offer them; wait lists for courses; student opinion about course availability in general; and the like. Additional data will be collected to get a better understanding of how faculty workload is affected by teaching online courses that utilize different presentation formats (e.g., fully online or hybrid).

Despite serious financial challenges, UC continues to perform well in making available the courses undergraduates need to make normal progress to a degree. For undergraduates, UC's graduation rates are comparatively high and its time to degree comparatively low. Both have been improving over time, and both are better than the average of the public research universities who are members of the prestigious Association of American Universities. Nonetheless, UC expects that ILTI will help ensure that needed courses are available and that undergraduates who enter as freshmen can complete a bachelor's degree in four years and those who enter as transfers can complete the degree in two years. Changes in graduation rates occur slowly and ILTI's contribution to them would not be separately identifiable, but UC can include in its reports on ILTI the data annually collected on undergraduates' graduation rates and time to degree.

As a research institution and one that prides itself on faculty teaching, UC will explore whether ILTI can ensure that certain kinds of data would be available to those interested in studying online education. ILTI will not itself fund research, but its evaluation and accountability data could be an information source for faculty and students to use in research supported from other sources.

ILTI in Operation

ILTI has already been launched. An initial request for proposals was distributed and responded to in March. Development of the systemwide searchable database of ILTI courses has begun, as has development of the electronic hub to support and facilitate cross-campus enrollment for all credit-bearing courses, for all UC students. With receipt of the proposed earmarked $10M, FY 14 will be a year of great activity and accomplishments. The work will provide a strong foundation for additional achievements for ILTI in the years ahead.