

Mohawk Valley Community College
Virtual Campus Design Team Task Findings

Prepared by Scot Connor – Design Team chair
April 26, 2010

Compiled by Design Team members

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Design Team Purpose: The purpose of the *Virtual Campus Design Team* is to explore ideas and make daring recommendations to create and implement a comprehensive web-based learning system to provide abundant learning and support opportunities for students in the virtual world.

Design Team Tasks

1. Research and identify areas for advancement; recommend additions, deletions, and modifications to current practices, procedures and systems.
2. Research best practices for a virtual campus at Rio Salado, Anne Arundel CC, and Franklin University.
3. Research and identify areas for advancement with the use of technology for teaching and learning to create full on-line degrees and programs.
4. Conduct a needs assessment and survey the College community for their perceptions and needs regarding support services for the online community
5. Review and implement new technologies and training to enhance the student experience.
6. Establish a web-based framework for full spectrum student support services.

Design Team Findings

- 1. Research and identify areas for advancement; recommend additions, deletions, and modifications to current practices, procedures and systems.**

FERPA - How do we verify student is who they are? On campus classes do not verify student's identification.

There is not an automated way to **add or drop** an online class. (NOTE: There is an online drop form for online classes, although it does not automatically interface with Banner.)

Placement testing in the Virtual world - How can this be done with writing samples? FAX the writing samples over? Math and Reading placement testing is already online.

Advisement - They have tried online advising in the past and it did not seem to work well. Does advising need to be 24/7 for those students who perform their online activities in the middle of the night? Furthermore online support 24/7...if server down,

we can't expect students to wait for 8 hours until someone comes in to correct the problem. We would need to have a dedicated staff for online support.

MMR requirement for fully online students? This should not be a requirement for fully online students.

Student Activities / DGV requirements: Student activities, while not currently available online, has ideas regarding requesting student IDs and other processes. DGV requirements for on campus events can be automated with a software package to verify that students have accessed a DGV approved online event.

Business Office - **Residency requirement**....how will it be handled in a Virtual world?

Financial Aid - mostly online. Only problem for Virtual world would be servicing students face to face. Most ask the same questions so a FAQ may be a good work around for this.

Library - A majority of their information is available online now via their website (<http://www.mvcc.edu/academics/library/index.cfm>)

Disabilities - see Task 4: Assess and Survey area

Tutoring - navigation is the biggest concern. There is already an on-line tutoring course site in Blackboard. Peer tutoring? Absolutely...it can be handled by work studies

2. **Research best practices for a virtual campus at Rio Salado, Anne Arundel CC, and Franklin University.**

A. **Institution Name:** Rio Salado <http://www.riosalado.edu>

The set up is fairly straight forward. Within two clicks I found the entire list of program offerings. All the displays are easy to understand and access. I think the look of the sight is fairly pedestrian, not very exciting. Their colors and logo are dominant in the banner and maintain throughout each page. The main nav bar is nice in that it has all the necessary features for students available. (gathered by Kyle Lince)

It took a while to find the bookstore link. It was not readily apparent. Easy to navigate once I found the link. Left navigation bar was easy to use. Typical L shape, but I had to search for the Logo. There was a unique opportunity to join a virtual student union and chat with other students about the college experience. Another unique feature is a wish list link for adding classes. (gathered by Doreen Nicholls)

Their home page is very similar to our present setup, once inside navigation is much easier. Layout is very clean not confusing in any way. The site seems to have the least amount of streaming or interactive media but does feature a live chat (IM) area staffed by college representatives. The branding and overall appearance is very "safe". Their slogan, "Education Your Way" is very appropriate as they have classes starting every Monday. No need to

wait for the start of a semester.

This college also has a nice "ability to benefit" placement test. (gathered by Alex Piejko)

Program/Course Offering Features (Kyle Lince)

<http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/Pages/default.aspx>

Basic "Quick Links" function, but done in a clever way as an expanded feature, with all areas alphabetically listed. Despite the nice nav bar, the page is really just a list of links. This works in the sense that they are compacting all of their programs in one area without having to scroll.

Technical Support Features (Kyle Lince)

<http://www.riosalado.edu/help/Pages/default.aspx>

Again, the Quick Links bar is used. The nice feature here is the quick scroll left, which allows the user to see the information quickly without waiting for a page to load. This page is neatly organized with 9 areas of interest in Help. You can get all your answers online as well. There is an ability to speak with a live person to get any special questions answered quickly.

-Advising Features (Nicholas Gioppo)

<http://www.riosalado.edu/advisement/Pages/default.aspx>

Looks bright & eye-catching ... seems easy to access, right off of "quick links". Has 8 tabs to go through, set up nicely ... online advising can seemingly be done to a degree through email, & something called "webphone", but advisors are apparently available at the local mall as well.

Registration Features (Nicholas Gioppo)

<http://www.riosalado.edu/selfserve/Pages/default.aspx>

There is a registration link right on the main advising page. The registration main page is nicely set up as well ... seemingly clearly spelling out every step of the way for the students to be prepared not just for advising, but registration as well.

After visiting Anne Arundel CC's site, I now realize that the above info is not from the "Virtual Campus" section of their website, but I did not change it, because there is none present to change it to ... they do mention that there's no application, & classes start every Monday ...

What follows is a link for "new students", but I think it bounces back off of the Virtual Campus on to the main page ...

[http://www.riosalado.edu/selfserve/pages/quickstart.aspx?
utm_source=RioFuturePage?
&utm_medium=BodyLink&utm_campaign=QuickStart](http://www.riosalado.edu/selfserve/pages/quickstart.aspx?utm_source=RioFuturePage?&utm_medium=BodyLink&utm_campaign=QuickStart)

Library Features (Alex Piejko)

<http://www.riosalado.edu/library/Pages/default.aspx>

Live Chat and nice access to the library. Live chat area (Ask a Librarian) 24/7 is a nice feature. The access to research is this colleges most outstanding feature.

Orientations Features (Paul Graziadei) no data supplied

Bookstore Features (Doreen Nicholls)

[http://www.bkstr.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/StoreCatalogDisplay?
catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=10230&demoKey=d](http://www.bkstr.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/StoreCatalogDisplay?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=10230&demoKey=d)

Important information link should have been closer to the top of the page. Shopping cart and account allows for ease of purchasing with a familiar format. Textbooks for individual courses were easy to identify. Strongest feature of the site was the availability of ebooks along with the free reader. This seems like a seamless transition for a virtual campus.

Virtual Open House Features (Doreen Nicholls)

Could not find a link identified as Virtual Open House. I used the ask RIO search box and none was identified.

Testing Features (Placement & Other) (Alex Piejko) no data supplied

Podcasts, Animations, Tutorials Features (Alex Piejko) no data supplied

Tutoring Features (Chrono Ho) no data supplied

Student Clubs/Organizations Features (Chrono Ho) no data supplied

Financial Aid (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

Admissions (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

Other Features (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

B. **Institution Name:** Anne Arundel CC <http://www.aacc.edu/>

Virtual Campus link was easy to find using Meet the Virtual Campus Link. There is a clear explanation of intent and purpose of Virtual Campus. Video of Dean gives a personal touch to the Virtual Campus and links a name and face for contact info. I liked the inclusion of the Am I Readi link to determine if you are ready for this type of learning experience. Also, there was an inclusion of computer info to determine if your computer is ready. Since students would be completely dependent on their computers in this environment, that link was quite important. (gathered by Doreen Nicholls)

Their home page is quite busy. Everything there fights for attention. Once you navigate to their Virtual Campus page things are cleaner and easier to navigate. It appears to be designed by a different team.

One outstanding feature is a downloadable campus map and podcast files for self guided tours.

The ANGEL site has quite a bit of streaming video that loads immediately. The Virtual campus site is this college's best asset. The videos quizzes and tutorials would help alleviate any new students concerns and is a very positive experience.

By far I was most impressed with Anne Arundel CC in its ease of navigation and its overall welcoming atmospheres for both their Virtual and physical campus environments. (gathered by Alex Piejko)

Virtual Campus link right off of main page ... divided into 12 main links, looks like lots of info (gathered by Nicholas Gioppo)

This website was less appealing to me. I found the direction to be less user-friendly. The academic information was under the "what do we offer?" heading. It was actually the last one I looked at. The drop-down menus at the top were confusing when they went over the menu on the left side. (gathered by Kyle Lince)

Program/Course Offering Features (Kyle Lince)

<http://www.aacc.edu/offer/degreescertific/>

This web page was fairly basic, much like any other. A list of links to each degree program offered. The banner at the top was the same as all other pages. Overall this was the best page as far as accessibility in the entire site.

Technical Support Features (Kyle Lince)

http://www.aacc.edu/search/site/site_search_results.cfm?cx=012421356508183933408%3Axqszbo_a6uc&cof=FORID%3A11&q=help#911

This page was difficult to find, and in some way didn't really exist. There was no real help portion. There is an advanced and google based search at the top of the page. This site has a lot of information, but not easy to locate anything specific. This would make it hard to get the information in the traditional 3-click approach.

Advising Features (Nicholas Gioppo)

Not seeing any reference to advising process in their virtual campus area

Registration Features (Nicholas Gioppo)

<https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=aacc>

Not seeing any reference to registration process in their virtual campus area. I did find an online registration link, but it was off of the main camps page, & about 3 or 4 clicks in ... not easy to find .. the link is above.

Library Features (Paul Graziadei) no data supplied

Orientations Features (Paul Graziadei)

see Podcasts, Animations, Tutorials Features below

Bookstore Features (Doreen Nicholls)

<http://www.aaccbooks.com/>

Clean appearance, easy to navigate. It was also easy to identify texts for specific courses and instructors by course number and section. There is a shopping cart available for accounts and checkout. Login is required to establish account. They also included a link for availability of e-texts. They also had an interesting feature where you could swap texts with another student. Textbook link was also available on Facebook.

Virtual Open House Features (Doreen Nicholls)

<http://www.aacc.edu/virtualtour/default.html>

<https://www.aacc.edu/virtualcampus/orientation/default.asp>

Identified as "meet the virtual campus" - Excellent tutorials for Angel and learning the online classroom management system.

Did not find a virtual open house, but did easily find a link for Virtual Tours of most buildings and services.

Testing Features (Placement & Other) (Alex Piejko)

<http://aacc.readi.info/>

It has a nice "Are you REDI" quiz that tests your on-line readiness and tech savvy.

After trying to fail I found out that I was indeed ready to undertake online classes!

Podcasts, Animations, Tutorials Features (Alex Piejko)

<https://www.aacc.edu/virtualcampus/orientation/default.asp>

Nice tutorial for navigating online courses

Campus Tour podcast

<http://www.aacc.edu/information/podcasttour/default.cfm#audio>

http://www.aacc.edu/information/podcasttour/file/Map_new.pdf

I found this to be a nice feature. Students can listen to the files and gain a sense of familiarity before ever setting foot on campus.

Tutoring Features (Chrono Ho) no data supplied

Student Clubs/Organizations Features (Chrono Ho) no data supplied

Financial Aid (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

Admissions (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

Other Features (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

C. **Institution Name:** Franklin University <http://www.franklin.edu/>

<http://www.franklin.edu/online-learning/virtual-campus/>

As a student **earning a degree online** with Franklin University, you'll have access to your [classes](#) and grades - as well as the [library](#), the [bookstore](#), and [student services](#) - through your unique online learning portal, my.franklin.edu.

These are the most prominent provided links – the site was crowded with a lot of text and information. (gathered by Doreen Nicholls)

Clean, easy site to navigate, but you need to work for it! What I mean is you need to spend more time reading and searching for the information you may be interested in. A lot of streaming testimonials! In fact almost on every page. Surprisingly this site was not very impressive. (gathered by Alex Piejko)

Pretty basic, no frills ... not a whole lot of info ... call or email for details kind of set up ... least helpful of the 3 of these. (gathered by Nicholas Gioppo)

This is a slick site, there was definitely a lot of research and though put into this. The home page is very simplistic in design, but it works. The buttons are direct and straight-forward. I found what I was looking for quickly and easily. (gathered

by Kyle Lince)

Program/Course Offering Features (Kyle Lince)

<http://www.franklin.edu/degree-programs/>

Again, a very basic structure, a series of links directing users to each degree program. There were more options in regards to the links on the left that break apart undergraduate and graduate programs.

Technical Support Features (Kyle Lince)

<http://www.franklin.edu/student-services/technology-resources/help-desk/>

This page did not have a direct link. Instead I used the search box at the top of the page. It took me right to the help desk. From my understanding, there is a more direct link to help through the myFranklin portal that students log into. Once on the page, it was very useful and direct on how to find the basic user information.

Advising Features (Nicholas Gioppo)

no references to advising on the online campus page

Registration Features (Nicholas Gioppo)

<http://www.franklin.edu/getting-started/apply-now/>

Easy to access right off of the online classes page ...

Library Features (Paul Graziadei) no data supplied

Orientations Features (Paul Graziadei) no data supplied

Bookstore Features (Doreen Nicholls)

<http://franklin.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=32052&catalogId=10001&langId=-1>

One unique feature was the ability to sign up for text message and email updates. E-books and download codes were available, but not as easy to find at this site. One unique feature was the inclusion of a video on how to submit textbook orders. Also, there was a product Accessibility template to determine which texts had features that support accessibility.

Virtual Open House Features (Doreen Nicholls)

Could not find a link for Virtual Open House or Virtual tours. There was a link to chat with a Virtual Advisor.

Testing Features (Placement & Other) (Alex Piejko) no data

Podcasts, Animations, Tutorials Features (Alex Piejko)

<http://video.franklin.edu/Franklin/tutorials/DemoCourseTour/Opening.htm>

Didn't come across as inviting and friendly. Too matter of fact and rushed.

technical requirements page

<http://www.franklin.edu/online-learning/technical-requirements/>

Tutoring Features (Chrono Ho) no data supplied

Student Clubs/Organizations Features (Chrono Ho) no data supplied

Financial Aid (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

Admissions (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

Other Features (Jim Lynch) no data supplied

3. Research and identify areas for advancement with the use of technology for teaching and learning to create full on-line degrees and programs.

Video/audio introductions/lessons might necessitate dedicated equipment and personnel to prepare and design media.

Standardization of video/audio and rich media delivery needs to be explored. Most institutions deliver media online. Other media may need to be delivered on disc or have FTP access to a server.

4. Conduct a needs assessment and survey the College community for their perceptions and needs regarding support services for the online community

A. Admissions - Denis Kennelty / Dan Ianno

B. Business Office - Dan Porcelli

C. Library - Steve Frisbee

Start from the outside—how to get into the library—for ambulatory and handicapped students.

On one side of the library everything does not circulate.

1. Highlight the info desk
2. ref books
3. ref computers
4. reading area and newspapers
5. microfilm machines and microfilm
6. Periodicals
7. photocopiers

On the other side everything does.

8. Circulation desk
9. Bestsellers
10. AV area
11. stacks A to Z
12. the LC classification chart
13. children's books
14. quiet study area
15. computer lab
16. viewing room
17. study rooms
18. bathrooms

And then provide access to the expansive Library web site – which includes:

1. the library catalog
2. electronic resources
3. research databases
4. subject guides
5. and much more!

Show some virtual librarians, as the library is more than just a warehouse for books!!

D. **VPLAA** - Rich Pucine

Currently from the office of Learning and Academic Affairs there are three areas that would need to be made virtual that do not currently exist. Since much of what their office deals with is curriculum related, or "in house" and not directly student interactive, most of their services would not need to be made virtual.

1. Registering over 18 credits: This function would need to be made virtual. This may be changing though, as this seems like it may become the purview of the academic deans.
2. Late Enrollment: Currently the process mandates that the student come to the campus and get signatures in order to enroll late. There would need either to be a "no late online enrollment" policy, or some electronic procedure put into place.
3. Academic complaints: This process uses both this office and counseling. The student needs to see a counselor, file a written report, and meet with an

instructor then assistant dean, dean and vice president. This process would need to be looked at very closely if offered as a virtual service.

E. Registrar - Kate Barefoot

Many of the services that the Registrar offers are already available online, or are expected to be once Banner 8 goes live.

Currently the forms are PDF's, so an automated system for submission would need to be developed. Currently there is no drop/add form, but that is in the works. There also would need to be further instructions added to the processes that are currently available, to make them more accessible and user friendly for the students.

Anticipated problems associated with a Virtual Campus

The most immediate problem would be that of authentication. FERPA would require an authentication process that does not currently exist. At some point there would need to be a visual authentication of a registered student. This carries with it numerous technical difficulties associated with making this verification.

Once the verification is made the records would be safe using Bb and SIRS which need sign on for authentication. The single sign on portal for the web would be helpful, but is not yet a reality.

F. 1st Year Experience - Jennifer DeWeerth

There are several areas associated with the office for First Year Experience. Many of these are currently online, and the office is continuing to add online services.

1. Application for admission: We have an online application up and running.
2. Placement Testing: This process still creates difficulty in an online forum. The students still need to take a written test in addition to the Compass reading and math tests that can be done at remote sites all over the US. The test is administered and graded on campus using the "blue book." There would need to be a complete overhaul of the placement testing system to make it an online system.
3. The Application for Financial Aid is currently online.
4. Communication with advisors is still struggling. Research shows that online programs that work best are those that have a dedicated student contact person. In order for advising to be fully online we would need either to take part of an existing position and make it an online contact person, or we would need to hire new positions as online contact people.
5. Students are currently able to register for classes online, but as stated in Rich Pucine's report, late enrollment is a problem. Also, there currently is not an electronic drop/add process once the term begins.
6. Tuition and all fees are payable online.
7. All current SIRS services are available remotely.
8. Learning Center services are not available online. This was experimented with at one time, but the usage was very low to nonexistent. With fully online programs this might be a more used service.

9. Counseling (personal and crisis): This is a controversial issue nationwide. The nature of counseling does not lend itself to the online forum.
10. Career, Transfer and job placement services: The services of this office are online. The student can use the FOCUS instrument, receive help with resumes tailored to the MVCC student, search for jobs, and apply for those jobs online.
11. DGV: the tutorials are online, but how would an online student attend an event (assuming they are at a distant geographical location, or there is some other impediment to coming to campus)

G. Disabilities Services - Lynn Igoe / Tamara Mariotti

More than anything else, we provide our students with support: transition-to-college guidance/advice/problem-solving assistance/information about campus and off campus services/referrals to campus and off campus services/ service facilitation. Some of this has nothing to do with disability; it's something that virtually every student would benefit from, but most don't have a place to go to get. Some of it is directly disability-related; for example, we would tell a student with a mild hearing loss that she should sit in the front row of the classroom and tape record classes so that she can crank up the volume at home to see if there's anything that she missed. And some of it is a by-product of the disability, wherein we see students who have multiple needs and no experience negotiating systems and self-advocating because in high school, their parents, resource room teachers, guidance counselors, classroom teachers, Committee on Special Education, etc., took care of everything for him. In these cases, we guide, teach, even push students to become independent self advocates.

Other services:

Testing accommodations-

"On land"- large numbers of students with disabilities who are taking classes "on land" use testing accommodations for a variety of reasons. Almost all need extended time, probably about 40 percent of them need their tests read (by assistive technology, not "live" readers), some need to use a computer for tests involving essay or short answer questions, a few need to take long tests or final exams in more than one sitting, and the occasional student needs enlarged font or someone to transfer answers to a computer "bubble" sheet.

Online - due to the nature of the online environment, most of these issues are no longer issues. There are no bubble sheets, students who need to do so may enlarge the font, and those who need to use a computer to type their answers are using a computer to type your answers. Students who need to have their tests read would also need to have their courses read and presumably have the software that's necessary to do both. The one issue that we have had to address is extended time. In these instances we have talked to the course instructors and agreed upon solutions.

Note-takers -

"On land"- In the case of several different disabilities, it may be difficult or impossible for student to take notes during a lecture. The way we've handled this to date is to rely on instructors to find someone in class who is willing to come to our office and to make copies of notes for the student in need of them. And in a few instances, instructors who use PowerPoint presentations or other prepared-in-advance materials such as lecture notes or detailed study guides share these with our or all students.

Online – note-taking is no longer an issue.

Alternate format materials –

"On land" - increasing numbers of our students are using electronic format textbooks in (rather than books on tape), then using specialized computer software that reads their books to them. Countless hours are spent by office staff ordering these e-texts, and in some cases, scanning and producing them. We can also scan and convert other written materials such as the course syllabus.

Online – we can do all of these things for online students as well.

Facilities Access and Modifications –

"On land" – we frequently intervene on behalf of students to remove physical barriers to full access, relocating and rearranging furniture and equipment, substituting a more accessible item for a less accessible one, purchasing equipment, installing accessibility features such as automatic door openers, advising instructors how to modify class requirements; for example, since a student in a wheelchair can't get down to the creek to study aquatic plant life, what can he do instead, or is there a way to project what classmates are seeing through a microscope onto a screen for the visually impaired student who can't see the microscope image.

"Online" – these barriers don't exist in the online environment.

Indeed, the online environment eliminates many of the barriers students with disabilities encounter when they attend class "on land." There are no parking problems, heavy doors, icy sidewalks, fast-paced lectures, exact days and times they must be in a specific location, etc. Deaf students don't have to worry about sign language interpreters, blind students don't have to get a record of what their instructors write on the board, students with chronic illnesses don't have to live up to strict attendance policies that may result in a drop in the students' grades when not adhered to.

The flip side of this, however, is that everything that is presented online must be accessible to all people, with all types of disabilities, using every kind of assistive software and hardware, and this can become a particularly significant barrier when instructors incorporate or create content utilizing new or uncommon

technologies. The physical layout of an online page may be impossible for a student's screen reader to read; audio content will be completely unavailable to deaf students unless it is captioned; pictures, colors, and other visual messages and cues will be missed by people who are blind; content is sometimes accessible to one brand of a particular type of software but not others. An example is the online test program that the math department has recently started using that cannot be read by the "reading" software (Premier) that we chose to purchase for every computer on campus (although it can be read by others); a student who owned Premier at home would have this same problem. [This problem isn't limited to online courses, since "on land" faculty are more and more frequently using the online environment to test or make other course material available to students – those math tests, for example.]

H. Tutoring Services - Donna Sawyer-White

1. A sense of place – when a student logs onto the site there will need to be a "welcoming feel" to the site with pictures of the Learning Center and staff etc
2. Ability to add and or delete tour guides, presentations, text, links to study helps and photos, etc
3. Ability to move around easily from tutor schedule, online handouts and resources/workshops
4. Learning Styles evaluation
5. How to use BB tutorial (delivered in interactive voice, visual and PowerPoint)
6. Content areas such as math , writing , reading , grammar, ESL will have interactive links to learning support software
7. PLATO Learning Modules for GED prep and underprepared students along the VARK and LASSI Learning Assessment tools
8. Log in system for assessment purposes and counting and monitoring use of service, and scheduling tutors
9. Black Board On line peer/professional tutoring in all courses we offer on BB
10. Professional BB on line tutoring for all math and writing students
11. Chat room for Q/A

I. Financial Aid - Mike Alsheimer

1. FAFSA application is on-line
2. The internal MV form and the TAP form should be a form that can be completed on-line or save, complete ,and attach to an e-mail
3. There needs to some means of answering immediate questions
4. Mike will survey all for commonly asked questions etc.

J. Student Services - Sandy Cummings

5. Review and implement new technologies and training to enhance the student experience.

Based on the wishes of student support service departments and what is currently being implemented by other institutions; tutoring, student retention, and orientation features would enhance the student experience to the virtual campus. Specialized personnel would be required for such features.

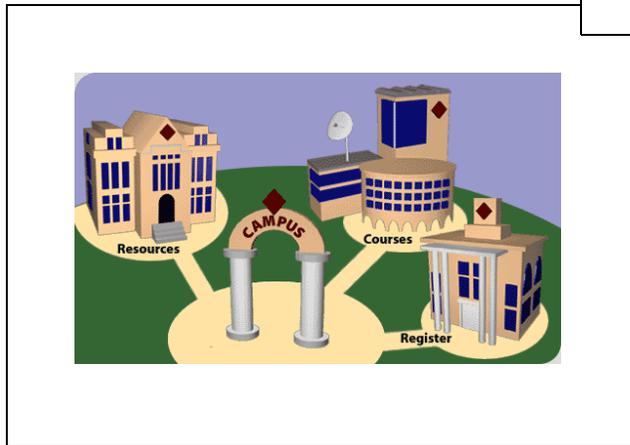
6. Establish a web-based framework for full spectrum student support services.

This would likely include virtual tours, building and classroom tours/maps. Media can be delivered as video, full interactive 3D environments, and/or downloadable documents, usually in PDF format.

The following images would be an example of a virtual campus. Each building would house information as follows;

Resources would include the Library, Learning Center, Academic Affairs (academic Appeals, etc), Disability Services and Student Activities

Courses would include a link to our



Blackboard site, a list of degrees and course on-line, a listing of courses offered, orientation videos, computer requirements, username and password info, and other information needed for coursework.

Register would include a link to SIRS, Financial Aid, Admissions, Business Office, Advising, and Registrars office.

Each building would have a live chat operator that any student could use to chat real-time with a campus representative based on needs by the building. The courses building would have a tech support person, the Register building would have a counselor available via chat for all issues in that building and the same premise would prevail for the Resources building. These buildings could be renamed, but once you click on a building you would enter the lobby of the building and each office would be represented that would link the student to important information, video or interactive modules to help the student with each the department. The chat assistance would be available in the lobby.

As indicated in section 4:C, an on-line librarian would compliment this support network.

- ***Additional notes*** by Lynn Igoe regarding an ***Online Support Specialist***

We all know that students in online courses, particularly those at a geographic distance, have an extremely difficult time accessing services and obtaining information (you wouldn't even have contacted me if this wasn't the case). While each office and faculty person has the ability to respond to e-mail or phone inquiries specific to his or her area of expertise, the fact is that many if not most student questions/problems/challenges involve more than one office. I already responded to your inquiry regarding my office and students, but I've long had an idea that I would like to share here. (I need something to think about when I have trouble falling asleep at night!)

Consider a student thinking about dropping a class and changing her major. She may need to talk to her instructor, advisor, financial aid counselor, (Counseling Center) counselor, and someone from the new program she's considering. An on-campus student can make the rounds, and if he's lucky, deal with all of these issues within a day or two. The online student doesn't have this ability. First she has to know, or figure out, that she needs to talk to all of those offices in order to resolve her concern. Since she may have limited or no access to a phone during the day, e-mail may be the only way she can communicate to resolve her issues, so she has to send an e-mail to each of those five people (but who IS her advisor?), maybe wait a day or two to hear back, then possibly have to send a follow-up e-mail (or two) asking for clarification or posing additional questions, then figure out in which order to do everything that needs to be done. The minimum here is five different e-mails; the final number could quite possibly be double that, even triple. And these are students who quite likely work during the day, who may not have access to a computer until the end of the day, so the response to a question asked Wednesday night may not be seen until Thursday, even Friday night (and the person who received it might have to say he's the "wrong" person), and the additional e-mails and follow-up questions may not get answered until late the next week.

What I've envisioned is a full-time Online Student Support Specialist. He or she would field ALL questions, know all of the steps required to answer them, gather together all of the necessary information from all of those college offices, and clearly outline present it in one e-mail response – and then immediately respond to those follow-up notes. In

many cases, the Specialist could obtain and provide all of the information needed; in others, he or she would make a direct connection (via use of Cc) to the person who can.

The Online Support Specialist could also do a newsletter for online students, send out information and reminders about important dates, tell them about upcoming events and activities scheduled on campus, provide tips and strategies for navigating the online environment, provide information about campus processes such as placement testing, and make referrals/facilitate communication between this person and others on campus or even in the community. This person might also be the one who responds to the "Ask MVCC" questions that are directed to the website by on-land students as well as by online students.

I suppose this is similar to what a "call center" might do, but with a couple advantages – the information arrives in writing, presented in carefully delineated steps that can be read and referred back to as needed, and the initial inquiry and access to the response can take place at any point during the day rather than just during the hours when a call center would be open.