LEAP TEAM #6
Business Plan

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Executive Summary

Online education is important now and will be even more important to College of the Canyons' (COC) success and the community's success as the area population grows, the economy declines, and the high cost of transportation continues to increase. College of the Canyons is becoming a leader in the field of online student learning. College of the Canyons goal is to become the leader in online student learning support.

LEAP Team #6 proposes to step up COC's commitment to online student learning support by developing and launching a new and innovative online 24/7 campus web portal. The portal will be a user friendly, one-stop website where students, faculty and staff can find information about all services provided to them at COC. All that is needed is a student ID, personal PIN and an Internet connection.

The portal is a Datatel product, called Active Campus Portal. It will interact with the campus calendar, servers, networks and various departments. The portal will be a campus wide collaboration which will be strategically marketed and demonstrated to students, faculty and staff. Once the portal is active and live, students will have a "one stop shop" for all of their online needs, faculty will have an easy way to communicate and distribute information to all their students, and staff will have a new center to share and exchange information.

In the words of the Chancellor of the Santa Clarita Community College District, and President of College of the Canyons, Dr. Dianne Van Hook, "..with 'consistency of purpose,' those who pass through these doors (*on-ground and online*) and take advantage of this wonderful community resource will succeed and College of the Canyons will continue to be the college of "first choice" for the people of Santa Clarita."

Project (*Goals)* Objectives

In order to make COC's online education more appealing to students, COC should provide one stop access to online support for all students, faculty, staff and programs.

Key Objectives

- Launch a simple and user friendly portal
- Portal includes everything needed to enroll and attend classes online
- Access will be available 24/7 / Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section
- Students will have a "one stop shop" for all of their online needs
- Faculty will have an easy way to communicate and distribute information to all their students
- Staff will have a new center to share and exchange information.

Mission Statement

To step up our commitment to online student learning support by
launching a 24/7 campus web portal.

Organization Summary

College of the Canyons, having served the Santa Clarita Valley community for 36
years, has become a vital, enduring, cultural, educational and economic force in the
region. The college is proud to have modern facilities, an outstanding and enthusiastic
staff, innovative programs, and advanced technological solutions. Those who are
currently involved with the college and those who will enter its doors in the future will
find unlimited opportunities, a chance to be innovative and entrepreneurial and to set
the stage for things to come. The college has been one of the fastest growing
colleges in the state for the past 16 years. The college has extensive online courses,
including a 100 percent online associate degree, a Sheriff's Academy, a biomedical
clean room in the Al Mann Biomedical Park, and a Manufacturing Education Center in
the Valley Industrial Center.

Three technology plans have been implemented at the college leading to the
development of a technical support team, a Technology Center, online registration
and student services, online library access, training programs, assistive technology for
disabled students, a campus-wide LAN connecting over 1600 computers, 33 students
labs and 1 faculty/staff lab, online classes and traditional classes with online
components, and numerous other technological advancements.

Start-up Summary

In order to launch a new portal, the project will require buy-in from the campus
community.   The project team recommends the formation of an *ad-hoc committee*
that would have representation from administration, faculty and students. The
development committee requires shared governance as the decisions made will have
a direct impact on students. This committee would be required to evaluate the
functions of the portal and provide input as to design and features. The committee
would create a timeline in order to set a realistic start-up plan. The start-up costs
would involve labor and product development; these costs are detailed in the Cost
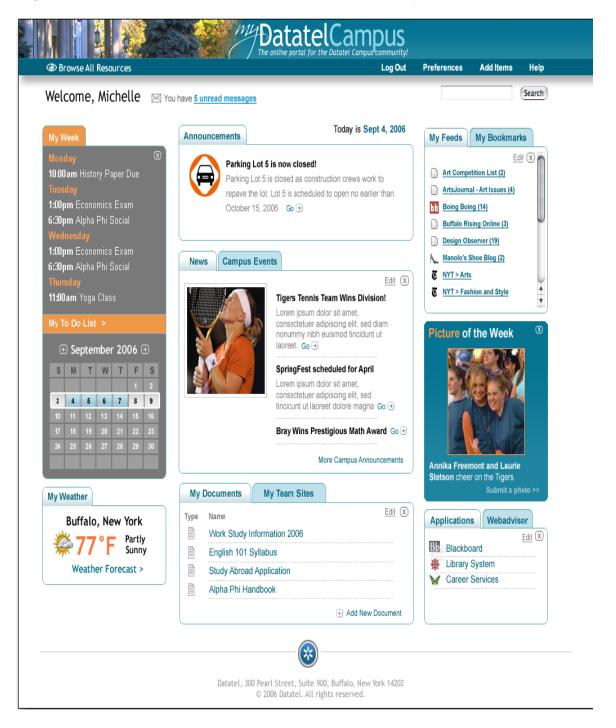Analysis section of this Business Plan.

Products & Services

Top Benefits & Features

- Single Password Sign-On
- Customizable interface
- Bookmarks
- Blogs
- Wiki
- Podcasting
- Discussion Board
- Content and Document Management
- Outlook Integration
  - ➢ Campus E-mail
  - ➢ Campus Calendar
  - ➢ Class and Work Schedules
  - ➢ Outlook To Do list
- Web Advisor Integration
  - ➢ Application
  - ➢ Orientation
  - ➢ Transcripts
  - ➢ Financial Aid
  - ➢ Account Information
  - ➢ Grades
  - ➢ As well as all other Current Web Advisor Functions
- Document Sharing
  - ➢ Office Documents
  - ➢ Class Documents
  - ➢ Easy Access to files for Collaboration
- Blackboard Integration
- Section 508 Compliance

"Whether you're a student, faculty or staff member, the MyCanyons Portal shares the same customizable interface."

The sample snapshot below shows an examples of not just the differences in appearance compared to the current MyCanyons, but also the improvements in organization, customization and user friendliness of the portal.

Market Analysis Summary

Distance Education and Online Services continues to rapidly grow at community colleges. Community colleges reported an 18 percent increase in distance education enrollments in a 2007 survey released at the annual meeting of the American Association of Community Colleges, in Philadelphia.

The survey on community colleges and distance education is an annual project of the Instructional Technology Council, an affiliate of the AACC. The survey is based on the responses of 154 community colleges, selected to provide a representational sample of all community colleges. Last year's survey found community colleges reporting an increase in distance education enrollments of 15 percent.

This year's 2008 survey suggests that distance education has probably not peaked at community colleges. First there is evidence that the colleges aren't just offering a few courses online, but entire programs. Sixty-four percent of institutions reported offering at least one online degree — defined as one where at least 70 percent of the courses may be completed online. Second, colleges reported that they aren't yet meeting demand. Seventy percent indicated that student demand exceeds their online offerings.

The top challenge reported by colleges in terms of dealing with students in distance education was that they do not fill out course evaluations. In previous surveys, this has not been higher than the fifth greatest challenge. This year's survey saw a five percentage point increase — to 45 percent — in the share of colleges reporting that they charge an extra fee for distance education courses.

Training professors has been a top issue for institutions offering distance education. Of those in the survey of community colleges, 71 percent required participation (up from 67 percent a year ago and 57 percent the year before). Of those requiring training, 60 percent require more than eight hours.

Several of the written responses some colleges submitted suggested frustration with professors. One such comment (included anonymously in the report) said: "Vocal conservative faculty members with little computer experience can stymie efforts to change when expressing a conviction that student learning outcomes can only be achieved in a face-to-face classroom — even though they have no idea what can be accomplished in a well-designed distance education course." Another response said that: "Our biggest challenge is getting faculty to participate in our training sessions. We understand their time is limited, but we need to be able to show them the new tools available...."

In last year's survey, 84 percent of institutions said that they were customers of either Blackboard or WebCT (now a part of Blackboard), but 31 percent reported that they were considering a shift in course management platforms. This year's survey suggests that some of them did so. The percentage of colleges reporting that they use Blackboard or WebCT fell to 77 percent. Moodle showed the largest gains in the

market — increasing from 4 to 10 percent of the market — while Angel and Desire2Learn also showed gains.

The survey provides an update on the status of many technology services for students, showing steady increases in the percentage of community colleges with various technologies and programs.

Status of Services for Online Students at Community Colleges

Service	Currently Offer	Offered a Year Ago
Campus testing center for distance students	73%	69%
Distance ed specific faculty training	96%	92%
Online admissions	84%	77%
Online counseling / advising	51%	43%
Online library services	96%	96%
Online plagiarism evaluation	54%	48%
Online registration	89%	87%
Online student orientation for distance classes	75%	66%
Online textbook sales	72%	66%

Source: *Scott Jaschik, Inside Higher Ed*

SWOT Analysis

Strengths
- Online services for students - Application, Counseling, Orientation, Registration, Transcripts, Financial Aid, Schedule, Instructor Evaluations.
- Blackboard
- Number of sections offered online.
- Online Annual Student Survey
- Professional Development training for instructors

Weaknesses

- The online services are in many different areas. Not all in one easily accessible place for students to find.
- Assessment is not online for students. Our assessment test is not available at other colleges for them to take.
- Tech Support- Limited hours, people and there are many pathways students have to take to get the help they are looking for, depending on where they start looking for help.
- Each department handles the support differently. There is no consistency.
- Communication with instructors.

Opportunities

- Gas prices
- Demand for classes
- Grant
- 100% online degree
- Inform High Schools of the online opportunities for classes.

Threats

- Academic Integrity
- Perceived quality of instruction
- Funding/State budget
- Student's technology
- Cost of books

Competition

There are literally thousands of learning institutions around the country that offer online classes. COC intends to stand out in online learning and support with a simple and easy to use portal.

24/7 Blackboard Support for Students and Faculty

The COC system office is entering an agreement with Presidium Learning to provide this support at a discount. The cost quoted for COC was $25,000 per year. An overview of the service is below.

About Presidium Learning

Presidium was founded in 2003 based on the notion that higher education support demands a unique set of processes, procedures, and skills that are not offered by traditional contact center providers. The core tenets of the Presidium offering are: providing cost-effective staffing to meet higher education peaks and valleys; delivering high touch service combined with high rates of first call resolution;

mastering technical skills unique to higher education systems and applications; and excelling in a multi-channel approach to meet the needs of the institution as a whole.

Presidium currently partners with over 700 colleges and universities. Through a collaborative, shared-sourcing partnership model, Presidium Learning provides 24/7 support services which contribute to our clients most vital strategic objectives including user satisfaction, retention, growth, and a reputation for excellence in providing 24/7 support and facilitating the day-to-day technical and application troubleshooting needs of today's educational stakeholder

Completive Approach to Managing the Online Educational Experience

- Maintain a skills and account-based contact center team that routes calls to a cluster of customer service representatives (CSRs), who are trained to be "specialists" on a handful of core accounts; by managing account specialists and generalists, we are able to provide highly skilled and specialized support for a large and distinct suite of systems and applications
- Deep expertise in the creation, management, and ongoing development of knowledge management systems and knowledge base environments that are customized to each implementation
- Management of a variable staffing model that ensures consistent service levels across each of our clients registration and enrollment periods
- Utilization of e-Learning to provide training, assessments, QA, updates and contact center agent and quality assurance
- Privately branded multi-channel contact center solutions for the education industry

Other California users of Presidium Learning:

- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Los Rios Community College District
- Antelope Valley College
- Brooks Institute of Photography
- California Coast University
- CourseSmart
- Fresno City College
- Mills College
- Pearson Achievement Solutions
- Samuel Merritt College
- San Diego Community College District Online
- San Francisco State University
- Southwestern College Chula Vista
- Vanguard University of Southern California
- California National University for Advanced Studies

The project team has researched and taken online field trips to eleven colleges and universities. The team found a variety of online products that are offered for online students at various colleges. The three colleges below provide some of the most modern and user friendly websites for their students, faculty and staff. Some of the highlights are listed for each college.

West LA College

- Offers a student portal for easy access to online course offerings, technical support and student services.
  - Forum for online student technical support
  - Links to college resources including Library A&R & Instructors

The West LA College site is comparable to what most colleges offer as a student portal. The site design itself is bland and not as easy to navigate as others but like many colleges Student Services forms are available for download, as well as easy access to contact information. The main reason this site stands out is because of their dedicated information for online students. This area of the web site offers easy access to online class schedules, and technical support information. The college offers a web forum, which allows students to post comments and concerns with the online learning system. This allows for positive feedback and a searchable library of information regarding any issues that may occur with students accessing the system.

Ohio University

- Offers a comprehensive student portal covering all areas of Student Services and includes a comprehensive help resource for online students and teachers.
  - Attractive design and easy to navigate.
  - Streamlined sight, layout and design are consistent throughout entire site
  - Updated information of student events and activities
  - Easy access to student support numbers and forms
  - Very detailed information and support for online students and teachers

Ohio University's website is an excellent model of what can be offered in a student portal without the use of prepackaged systems. Navigation is simple and the site design is consistent. Student Services are available online so students can access basic information such as grades, schedules and financial aid information from the same place. The technical support section for online students stands out because it contains an easily accessible wealth of information covering almost every aspect of the online learning system. Online support is available for both students and faculty and information regarding technical support numbers, as well as, real time chat is easily accessible.

University of Cincinnati

- University of Cincinnati offers a comprehensive portal covering many areas of Student Services and a very comprehensive online student technical support area.
  - "One Stop" – Access to Student Services (A&R, Bursar, Counseling, Financial Aid)
  - Easy access to library catalogue
  - Direct contact information for support
  - Very detailed information and support for online students

University of Cincinnati offers a comprehensive system which is actually a combination of a prepackaged software offering from BlackBoard.com and an in-house website. Navigation is simple and site design relatively is consistent throughout. Students have access to Student Services information and are able to print access transcripts, grades, and schedules. The dedicated online student area offers comprehensive technical support information, easy access to the campus library, as well as, access to Student Services. Technical support is easily accessible via phone and e-mail and hours are posted.

Strategy and Implementation

Based on the timeline created by the development committee, a team comprised of both MIS staff and Computer Support Services would evaluate the plan and create an implementation strategy. The implementation team would need to involve all parties on campus that would be impacted by the launch of the product. Instruction and Student Services would be required to select a timeframe that would have minimal impact on the daily functions that students need on Web Advisor.

Prior to implementation, a test environment would be required to assure that all pieces are functioning before the launch of the portal. The project team also recommends that a student panel be assembled to test the product and gather feedback as to what works well and what doesn't. Other areas that will require evaluation prior to implementation would be Board policy, user training, technical support and security permissions. It is the goal of the project team to ensure that all areas of the portal are properly tested and evaluated before releasing a live version to the campus community.

Strategy and Promotion

An important part of promoting the portal is understanding the "benefits" of the product and services. In all promotional ads and materials, the importance and advantages of the new features of the portal will be emphasized. The benefits that

come from these advantages will be equally emphasized. Students seek certain benefits. These include saving money, saving time, gaining comfort, lowering costs and many, many more. The service and promotion strategy is all about the benefits that the portal brings to the users.

Marketing Strategies

- Mailing the COC class schedule with simple instructions on how to use the portal
- Marketing flyers and pamphlets at local high schools
- Marketing flyers and pamphlets at senior centers
- Promoting online learning through other departments such as:
  - Career Services
  - Community Education
  - Admissions & Records

Management Summary

The portal will need to be implemented by a committee. On this committee there will need to be representation from many different areas on campus. Since the portal encompasses the entire campus, the committee will need to be able to address the concerns of many departments. The team proposes that there be representation from the same areas as shared governance committees. Therefore there will be two faculty, two staff, two students and two administrators. However, the committee will also need representation from IT (Information Technology), MIS (Management Information Systems), Student Services, Instruction and PIO (Public Information Office). All parties should have a vested interest in seeing this product go live with no errors and keep with the belief that this will provide for a one stop shop for students, faculty and staff. This committee will also work under the assumption that this is a portal that lives on our website and is not intended to function as our main website. This is only a portal. This committee shall not exceed a size of 10 individuals.

The portal is a Datatel product, called Active Campus Portal. Therefore, we will need support from Datatel and MIS to help this product be successful. However, it interacts with the campus calendar, servers, networks and various departments. Therefore we will need IT support throughout the lifetime of this product. This portal will be a campus wide collaboration.

The LEAP team consisting of Tom Bilbruck, Paul De La Cerda, Hsiawen Hull, Rick Killey, Jasmine Ruys, Diana Stanich, and mentored by Dr. Michael Wilding, helped to bring this concept to the attention of the campus and will be implementing a committee to start this project within the 2008-2009 academic year.

Cost Analysis

Software

Item	Cost	Status
Datatel Student Portal License	$32,000	Paid in Full
Yearly Maintenance	$4,000	Paid in Full
Microsoft Sharpoint	Not Available	Research In Progress

Hardware Costs

Item	Cost	Status
1 Database Server	$9,000	Not Incurred
1 Indexing Server	$5,000	Not Incurred
4 SharePoint Servers	$20,000	Not Incurred

Staffing Costs

Item	Cost	Status
Full Time Staff	$48,096+ Benefits	Not Incurred
60% Staff	$28,857+ Benefits	Not Incurred

Appendix