DIGITAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
Final Narrative Report

Agency Overview

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) Office of Correctional Education (OCE) provides educational programs and services to incarcerated individuals in California's prisons. OCE's mission is facilitate the successful reintegration of the individuals in our care back to their communities equipped with the tools to be drug-free, healthy, and employable members of society by providing education, treatment, rehabilitative, and restorative justice programs, all in a safe and humane environment.

OCE offers a wide range of educational programs, including adult basic education, high school diploma, high school equivalency, vocational education, college programs, transitional education, and more. OCE serves over 100,000 incarcerated individuals, 37,000 of whom are enrolled in a formal course of study, at 31 accredited adult schools located in California's prisons. OCE's programs are designed to not only improve academic skills but also to provide vocational training and life skills necessary for successful reentry into society. OCE partners with other CDCR divisions and community organizations to provide a continuum of services to incarcerated individuals from admission to release.

DLAC Team Members

Dr. R. Lynne Ruvalcaba, Ed.D. Administrator, Educational Technology Office of Correctional Education	**Patrick O'Neill, MA** Supervisor of Academic Instruction Office of Correctional Education
Erin Case IT Manager I Incarcerated Population & Community Services	**Bryan Boel** Peer Literacy Mentor Program Teacher Valley State Adult School Valley State Prison

John Richards	Vera Valdivia-Abdallah
Academic Teacher	GED Teacher
Tsunami Adult School Pelican Bay State Prison	New Horizon Adult School California State Prison, Lancaster

IDEAL 101 & 102 and CDCR'S Site Plans

IDEAL 101 and 102 was tailored to individual adult schools, intended to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop a site technology plan. CDCR's DLAC, representing the interests of not one site but thirty-one sites with unique needs, found the course challenging as it progressed from generalized information to more specific tasks focused on creating a single site plan. At that point, with OTAN's support, CDCR's DLAC diverged from content in the IDEAL 101 and 102 courses and created an approach that best served the needs of our system, helping our team create a document that is actionable and appropriate to our schools.

IDEAL 101 focused on key topics such as assessing technological needs, distance learning, creating a technology vision, identifying barriers, and evaluating technology effectiveness. Recognizing the diverse needs of the team, CDCR's DLAC created not one but three individual site plans that were brought together to support a system-wide strategic technology plan outlining goals, objectives, and action steps for achieving our technology vision.

The development and completion of these site plans helped meet the program goals for CDCR's DLAC in several ways. Firstly, their creation provided a framework for other schools to use when identifying and addressing technology needs, aligning them with CDCR's overall technology vision. The plans also included strategies for addressing gaps in resources and evaluating the effectiveness of technology implementation, ensuring that CDCR resources are allocated efficiently, and that progress was tracked.

IDEAL102 challenged us to create a case study in which we focused on building capacity and community and the use of NorthStar. Our challenges centered on the lack of experience,

ability, and extreme reluctance with respect to technology integration as up until three years ago, the resources were extremely limited in our prisons.   Our solution was to begin small and use NorthStar to assess teacher and student abilities at one site, California State Prison, Los Angles. Due to a myriad of security and other issues, we were unable move forward. We have secured permission to pilot at another site and are in the initial stages.

Accomplishments to Date

- Creation of three school site plans

  - New Horizon Adult School

  - Tsunami Adult School

  - Valley Adult School

- Implementation of an Initial Technology strategic plan for OCE

- Creation of the Education Technology Leadership Committee (ETLC)

  - Bylaws and initial stages of goals and objectives created.

Use of Skills Learned at Training Sessions

Team Building

CDCR is a vast system and staff at individual schools rarely get the time or opportunity to work together. DLAC's training sessions and the work we have done between those sessions has allowed us to truly collaborate and create a vision for what work in CDCR can look like in the future. By including individuals from OCE, Incarcerated Populations & Community Services, and the individual site level faculty, the team has truly operated in a fashion where leadership is shared, ideas are presented and built upon, and each team member has been positioned to contribute value to the finished product. We have learned to work not only within the constraints of our system but also within the limitations of individual schools and security levels to arrive at a work product broad enough to meet the needs of the system yet unique enough for each school to adapt it to their processes.

Our ETLC represents an enormous success. The group consists of seventeen members who take on the additional duties voluntarily without release time. They went through a rigorous application process. Of the eleven leadership committees convened

by OCE, ETLC is by far the largest. Clearly, the professionals in the field are interested and motivated to fully integrate technology instruction into our curriculum.

Handling Conflict

Conflict in our team has been minimal and we have been aware of the need to give each member time and grace where necessary. We have rescheduled our regular team meetings to work with the demanding schedules of team members and recognized when those meetings have not been productive. The team has struggled to find a time that works for everyone to meet but there has been only collaboration toward resolving that barrier rather than conflict over whether the meetings are productive at all. The next CDCR Cohort will be from a single site making the schedule much easier.

Communications Skills

Effective communication is essential for any team involved in strategic planning, particularly when working remotely. Our team has utilized virtual meetings, the Canvas learning management system, our coach, and our regular check-in meetings to significantly improve our communication skills. Our virtual meetings improved our ability to facilitate communication and help build rapport among team members between times when we are in the same physical space. Our team members are located across the state and virtual meetings have been the most effective means of keeping the work going and allowing each member to contribute to the work.

Regular check-in meetings have improved communication by ensuring that team members can contribute to and remain informed about the progress of the strategic planning process. These meetings provide an opportunity for team members to ask questions, provide feedback, and identify potential roadblocks as they progressed through their individual site plans.

Using and Encouraging Strengths

Each person on the CDCR DLAC team brings a different background, experience, and area of expertise. We have used this diversity to the benefit of our work, recognizing that the challenge in front of us is not to create a site plan for CDCR but to create flexible site plans that work for our various sites and the needs of our staff and students. We have leveraged the strengths of those who are detail oriented, those who are visionary, those with technical expertise, and those with the capability to message important requests to the executive team to ensure our work remains relevant and on track. Our team does not have one leader-it has six individuals who step up to leadership and relinquish the responsibility as the work and time demand. We learned that this work requires the development of new strengths and recognize the time to use those appropriately.

Challenges, Barriers, and Setbacks Encountered

As we recognized the unique nature of CDCR in the context of DLAC, we have adjusted both our approach and our work product to overcome and continue toward our goals. Real life concerns, deaths, injury, workload, shifting priorities, etc. have played havoc with our progress. We have managed to pull through and move forward but not at the speed we had hoped or intended.

Our major challenges are centered around infrastructure and logistics. We continue to encounter challenges with the deployment of our network and accessibility. Security vs functionality conflicts continue to hamper our progress. State services and growth initiatives take on a particularly challenging aspect in that vision and priorities change rapidly and dramatically impacted by the election cycle and budgetary concerns. Our leadership, in

particular Dr. Ruvalcaba, has charted the course and make adroit and graceful course corrections as we encounter the inevitable storms.

Changes Made

We changed our approach from one site plan to three with an overarching strategic plan. We also changed our coach to an individual more appropriate to our needs. The most impactful change will be our focus from the big picture to the site level focus when our next CDCR cohort is up and running.

Planned "Next Steps"

We will continue building on our strategic plan, meeting with key OCE staff, and creating a long-term vision for technology in CDCR. We will also pilot Northstar to enhance digital literacy and add eTextbooks to our digital offerings on a wide scale. We will leverage the strength, diversity, and expertise of our newly formed ETLC to envision and activate plans for our future. Finally, we will support or next CDCR cohort, a single site, as the take on the adventure of DLAC and build upon the firm foundation CDCR Cohort I has set.

Additional Support Needed and Help Needed from DLAC Staff

OTAN has provided superior support and been responsive to our every need. Our EdTech team looking forward to an ongoing and mutually supportive relations with OTAN and its professionals. We endeavor to pay back the gifts received by contributing to the success of others as we remain engaged with the organization.

Sustainable Long-term Plan

The creation and onboarding for our first ever ETLC represents the first step in assuring our long-term success. The group represents every region of our system, drawing upon

professionals from each of our concentrations and programs. Its membership can be characterized as diverse. We have members from multiple ethnic, cultural, religious, educational, and temporal backgrounds who bring experiences far beyond correctional education. Our EdTech strategic plan with subsequent goals and objectives to be developed by the ETLC are key to sustaining our efforts.

Embedded within our strategic plan are elements designed to assure sustainability including succession planning, continuous review of goals and achievements, process for nominating future DLAC schools/ cohorts, developing systems of measuring and reporting advancements, cycle of plan review and update, and creation of Tech Coaches to support individual schools and teachers. An additional goal has been added to our Strategic Plan to foster assure the inclusion of all stakeholders.

Technology and Distance Learning Symposium

This report would not be complete without lauding the special gift that was TDLS. This small but mighty conference has provided more that can be listed here. Each of us individual and as a group have benefited from both the content and encouragement to present at conferences give back to our profession.

Summary

CDCR's experience in DLAC has been rewarding and productive. Our team has come together effectively despite logistical barriers and has learned to communicate well, utilize strengths effectively, and overcome roadblocks that could have impeded our work. Specific change needed to make the work applicable to our environment was embraced by OTAN and the DLAC members. We are well positioned to continue our work as DLAC graduates coach

focus on providing an actionable work product to the Office of Correctional Education, schools, and students. Our strategic plan is well underway, we have three site plans, and an active and engaged ETLC. Our involvement in DLAC has been transformative.

Finally, no words or sentiment could fully express how grateful we are for the guidance and leadership of our, Coach Marion Thacher, and our DLAC mom, Neda Anasseri.