

## **Initial Comparator Research – Colorado Boulder**

(LMS = Desire2Learn)

General Impression: Colorado has a number of very active programs (for MOOCs, Continuing Education, the Arts & Sciences Support of Education Through Technology unit) which differ significantly from UO, but services and programming is distributed across campus. The College of Arts & Sciences has a very prominent role in providing technology services, often lacking visibly at other schools and colleges. The Office of Information Technology provides the direct support (resources and staff) for MOOC creation.

### 1) What services does this institution's Extension unit provide to campus partners?

The Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies offers for-credit undergraduate-level course options in the evenings (both f2f and hybrid offerings) and entirely online, in both cases from a range of academic departments. Current students are automatically able to enroll in all for-credit Continuing Education courses. They are charged in addition to and separately from their campus tuition; it is unclear whether or not that fee structure feeds back into campus in a manner similar to AE's.

Potential contact: Nathaniel Bindel, director of budget and finance, Continuing Education. [Full staff list](#).

This division also houses some graduate education efforts, including the Center for Advanced Engineering and Technology Education ([begun in 2003](#)), which offers engineering degrees (primarily graduate) online through [Engineering Anywhere](#). Tuition is collected through Continuing Education. This is a joint effort with the College of Engineering and Applied Science.

Continuing Education also houses the university's Office for Outreach and Engagement. The Office for Outreach and Engagement's primary mission is to bring university resources to off-campus communities and locations across the state of Colorado. Most outreach is therefore external (as per [their definition of outreach and engagement](#)). They claim to facilitate internal partnerships that are outreach-oriented, and [list many joint projects between campus partners on their website](#); it is unclear if the outreach office takes an active role in seeking out such partnerships, however, especially since individual community members can submit their programs online via a web form.

### 2) Where is digital education housed? Are there separate units for online learning and blended or hybrid courses? Are technology and pedagogy combined or separate? How much of this effort is centralized?

[The university is offering MOOCs through Coursera](#). While the number of MOOCs offered is small, it appears to be a campus-wide effort; offerings include courses from physics, engineering (an outgrowth of Engineering Anywhere, described above), computer science, and English.

Apart from these MOOCs, the university's fully online offerings are managed through Continuing Education. CE has a total of five technical staff, three of whom (two instructional designers and an academic technology consultant) might be said to be in pedagogically oriented positions.

Blended and hybrid learning has support in the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) through [ASSETT](#) (Arts & Sciences Support of Education Through Technology). ASSETT has a staff of 20 (including 12 student workers, almost all of whom are drawn from Engineering and Computer Science). One of ASSETT's full-time staff liaises with the campus-wide Office of Information Technology (OIT).

- One of ASSETT's largest projects is Spotlight Around the College, or [SPARC](#). This uses BuddyPress (a WordPress add-on for community building, also widely used at CUNY and other universities) to create a campus-specific social media network & publishing platform. Undergraduate student workers support SPARC as Community Coordinators.
- ASSETT also offers two faculty seminars: Teaching with Technology, and Hybrid and Online Course Design. Participation in both is by application, and both [are efforts to create cross-disciplinary digital learning communities](#).

Given that A&S is the largest college within the University of Colorado system, and has the longest history, ASSETT's efforts are worth examining; they may have an impact on a large portion of the Boulder campus community. While they are not centralized, they may "feel" centralized to faculty (and students).

3) What structures, formal or informal, are in place to encourage pedagogical innovation on campus? Is there any effort to centralize such activity?

All of the educational technology efforts on campus (ASSETT, ALTEC, OIT) have web sites that speak to pedagogy as a key motivational component. To the extent that they are publicly viewable, the digital resources these teams have created in-house back that up; the Teaching & Learning Tools Navigator from OIT communicates content via a pedagogical lens, for example, focusing on particular tasks faculty might want to accomplish in the classroom, regardless of the particularities of course content.

The [National Education Policy Center](#) is housed on campus and directed by University faculty. This single center isn't responsible for pedagogical attitudes on campus, but its presence suggests an abiding interest in education and the public sphere—which may motivate some of the participants in the University's MOOCs and other efforts.

Pedagogical *innovation* has the strongest concentration through ASSETT and ALTEC, as opposed to pedagogical *improvement*, which is the stated goal of

FTEP. There's no evidence to suggest any these divisions communicate with one another. Interest in pedagogy remains decentralized, if viewed from an institutional level. (This may "feel" different in A&S, given the visibility of the college's efforts.)

4) Where are instructional design and instructional technology housed? What pathways exist to guide faculty to instructional technology services? Is access to instructional technology support uniform across different faculty groups at the institution?

OIT has a nice [Teaching & Learning Tools Navigator](#). Hard to find (nested page), but an effective visual reference/guide for faculty, includes a symbology of the sort we've discussed—and integrates both the LMS *and* other tools! It's part of an aesthetically-pleasing and seemingly robust [IT services catalog](#).

There is additional support for the use of instructional technologies in language education; this support comes through the [Anderson Language and Technology Center \(ALTEC\)](#). ALTEC provides not-for-credit online courses in languages, but it also runs a "course redesign" competitive grant for language instructors, and a Foreign Language Technology Program—a certificate program in the theory and practice of instructional technology, available to all language instruction staff (explicitly including graduate students) at the university.

Finally, one unit providing services to all faculty regardless of college is the [Faculty Teaching Excellence Program](#) (FTEP); their [summer institute](#) often has an instructional technology focus. (2014's offering was "Increasing Student Engagement and Improving Learning with Online Educational Technologies.")

Apart from A&S, ALTEC, FTEP, and Continuing Education, what support exists comes from the Office of Information Technology. OIT contains an [Academic Technology Design Team](#) of ten people. Seven of those appear to be involved in MOOC development and other strategic projects, including team leadership and a number of Academic Technology Consultants. ATCs are instructional technology or instructional design specialists, assigned to individual schools and colleges, providing educational technology support and serving as liaisons between the colleges and OIT. The other three members of this group are Academic Technology Assistants, front-line support tasked with helping faculty with OIT-supported technologies (this includes their LMS, clickers, Qualtrics, and other institutional investments).

Faculty interested in instructional technology might...

- a) work with an Academic Technology Assistant to learn a specific tool
- b) speak with their college's Academic Technology Consultant to do deeper course development or think about MOOCs,
- c) leverage the resources available through ASSETT (A&S faculty only),
- d) train with ALTEC (graduate students and instructional staff in languages only), or

- e) attend the summer institute offered through the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program (all faculty)

Most of the energy seems to be around the Coursera initiative, which is a centralized effort, as opposed to anything which has originated from within one of the colleges. To a certain extent the university's Coursera faculty must be working around (rather than with) many of the units listed in this report; the ATCs are the only staff who specify having any involvement with the MOOC programming.

5) At what administrative level are digital education initiatives, endorsed, supported, or made a fundraising priority? For example, does the institution count, encourage, or otherwise track student enrollment or participation in digitally-inflected (hybrid, blended, tech-enhanced F2F) courses? What institutional investments have been made in hybrid and/or blended learning?

As far as I can tell, the institution does not track enrollment in digitally-inflected courses. FTEP has an abiding interest in assessment and analytics, and periodically offers an assessment institute ("Achieving Course Goals: Gathering Evidence About Student Learning") but this program appears to be on hiatus. Faculty reporting on how the lessons of the assessment institute were implemented is available for [2010](#), [2011](#), and [2012](#). No evidence on how this might apply to blended learning, but it suggests that an apparatus exists and might be applied institutionally. FTEP calculates its impact in terms of the number of faculty member participants in its programming, and not the number of students taught by those faculty members.

ASSETT offers [Development Awards](#) to faculty within A&S, with a maximum award of \$5000. The money can go to any effort to advance teaching and learning through technology; most of the projects funded to date would fall within the definition of hybrid or blended learning. Further non-monetary investment in hybrid or blended learning is concentrated in ASSETT's seminars for A&S faculty.