Section 4: Application Abstract (250 word maximum)
The Foothill-De Anza Community College District (FHDA) and Butte-Glenn Community College District (Butte) propose establishing a statewide Online Education Ecosystem (OEE) to dramatically increase the number of California Community College (CCC) students who obtain college associate degrees and transfer to four-year universities by providing online courses and support services within a single environment.

“We are ecstatic about this opportunity to make a difference for the entire state and for countless number of students. This is a cutting-edge vision for California! I believe it will transform online learning in our state.” - Dr. Linda Thor, FHDA Chancellor

This Initiative is critical to ensure that California’s future workforce has the 21st century skills required to compete in tomorrow’s fast-moving economy. With special focus on the needs of underrepresented students, this proposal helps ensure that California remains a leader in today’s fast-moving economy by providing all CCC students access to a high-quality, affordable 21st century CCC education.

The path to success is clear: Universal public access to higher education through the California Community Colleges and innovative teaching and learning that responds to each student’s unique learning style by offering multiple options for class schedules and locations. Students feel personally engaged in their education through sophisticated online tools based on analytics and behavioral patterns and are provided with many levels of support from the time they consider entering a CCC to successful completion of their CCC education. Continuous improvement ensures that the California Community Colleges continue pioneering leadership in public school education.
Section 6: Need
Foothill-De Anza Community College District and Butte-Glenn Community College District (Online Education Initiative Partners) propose the establishment of a statewide Online Education Ecosystem (OEE) for students of the California Community Colleges (CCC) students as an expansion of the California Virtual Campus (CVC). The Online Education Initiative Partners (OEI Partners) respectfully request $26.9 million for the 19 months beginning December 1, 2013, to establish a dynamic and robust statewide online ecosystem for CCC students. This proposal also anticipates funding of $10 million for each year of the following three years to continue this good work. Both partners strongly believe in the immense potential that this initiative holds for the CCC system, the state, and as a model for the nation.

6.1 Problem Statement and Need
California is facing another remarkable juncture in the history of California higher education. The 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education contained the vision of universal access for public higher education.

“...It was the first time in the history of any state in the United States, or any nation in the world, where such a commitment was made -- that a state or a nation would promise there would be a place ready for every high school graduate or person otherwise qualified.”

– Dr. Clark Kerr 1999

Throughout the history of California higher education, there have been moments and opportunities to move rapidly toward the future. Since fall 2008, California Community Colleges’ (CCC) enrollments have shrunk by 485,000 students (17 percent) due to decreased state funding and the resulting reduction in the number of course sections offered. An unprecedented course backlog is now occurring in a state that pioneered the vision of universal access to public higher education.

The state of California is a global leader in innovative, leading edge solutions to very complicated problems. California’s Silicon Valley is the center for technological solutions that reverberate globally. California has the opportunity to extend this innovation to the world of higher education by providing widespread educational access for students beyond the bricks and mortar confines of college campuses. At the same time, this innovation can strengthen and increase the efficiency of on-campus experiences for students as they progress toward degrees and certificates.

The Online Education Initiative (OEI) provides a tremendous opportunity for distance education (DE) to move the dial forward toward universal public access to higher education. The explosion of online and communications technologies allows the development of DE capabilities beyond historic dreams. At the same time, funding is now available to make these dreams a reality. This is a significant moment in history.

With over 15 years of experience in designing, refining, and offering online courses and support mechanisms, CCCs are leaders in distance education. Even under severe budget cuts, 12 percent of all CCC enrollment is now in the distance education mode, with most via online courses. By putting the collective wisdom of CCCs together into one program design, the opportunity is ripe to move the success and retention needle and build a scalable solution for the entire CCC system. Each college has had

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1 Testimony to the California legislature, 1999
2 Distance Education Report, California Community College Chancellor’s Office, August 2013
pieces of this puzzle, but none has ever had the funds or the broader collaboration necessary to put it all together until now.

**The FHDA-Butte Proposal**
The Foothill-De Anza Community College District (FHDA), in partnership with the Butte-Glenn Community College District (Butte), will address the California Community College Online Education Initiative by establishing a statewide Online Education Ecosystem for CCCs and their students as an expansion of the California Virtual Campus (CVC).

The Online Education Ecosystem (OEE) encompasses all elements of the OEI deliverables including the organizational structure and Online Education Consortium (Consortium); online course development, approval, and delivery; associated faculty/staff orientation, professional development, and support; the wide range of associated student services; and the technology to provide these capabilities. Central to the OEE is a Common Course Management System (CCMS) within a statewide Education Management Platform (EMP). This sophisticated, responsive, next generation online environment will provide a rich set of online courses and support services that meet the unique needs of CCC students, faculty, staff, and colleges.

The OEI Partners must look insightfully at a full range of alternatives to serve the growing enrollment demands of students for public higher education. All CCCs will be encouraged to participate in the OEI Consortium to ensure that the unique needs of each college are addressed and that all CCCs have the opportunity to play a substantial role in the EMP design and implementation. Faculty will play a lead role in making significant pedagogical contributions as online courses expand to serve increasingly specialized segments of the CCC population.

Research shows that addressing one aspect of an issue, such as student success in online courses, can have only limited impact. Adding a support service or special program for a certain group of struggling students can be very helpful, but meaningful and lasting change is more likely to come from an approach such as this that addresses every aspect of the student experience, crossing departments, divisions, and systems, in an integrated fashion. This proposal offers an opportunity to make integrated and coordinated change across instructional practices, support systems, technology platforms, funding structures, and more.

Our vision for the future is clear: Universal public access to higher education through the California Community Colleges and innovative teaching and learning that responds to each student’s unique learning style by offering multiple options for class schedules and locations. Students feel personally engaged in their education through sophisticated online tools based on analytics and behavioral patterns and are provided with many levels of support from the time they consider entering a CCC to successful completion of their CCC education. Continuous improvement ensures that the California Community Colleges system continues its pioneering leadership in public school education.

**6.2 Funding Priority Needs**
This proposal is designed with a carefully considered philosophy that the California Virtual Campus (CVC), as a project funded to support all colleges, should operate to develop, construct, and maintain core services and relationships that support and enable distance education efforts at all CCCs and for all current and prospective CCC students.

OEI Partners’ response to the Online Education Initiative will be strategically and carefully structured to integrate and expand upon several initiatives that are currently in operation including relevant existing
services from the TTIP program: CVC DE catalog, the @One Program and CCC Confer (professional development), portions of video conferencing services, and Edustream/3CMedia Solutions (video hosting and streaming service).

Building upon the significant work to date from the Telecommunications and Technology Advisory Committee (TTAC) and others, the Online Education Ecosystem (OEE) will address the following needs:

**Need 1. Increase the number of college associate degree graduates and transfers to four-year colleges**

Deep cuts in state funding have forced CCCs to significantly reduce the number of course sections offered, causing CCC enrollments to shrink by 17 percent (485,000 students) since fall 2008. In 2009-10, almost one-half of CCC students indicated that they sought transfer to a four-year institution or sought an associate’s degree or certificate⁴; however, in California 47 percent of CCC students are unable enroll in classes, compared to 28 percent nationwide.⁵

These constraints come just as CCCs face an unprecedented demand from high school graduates, unemployed workers, and returning veterans. Undergraduate demand for the three public systems of higher education in California is expected to grow by 387,000 students by 2019. In addition, the Public Policy Institute of California estimates that by 2025, California will face a shortage of one million college degree and certificate holders who are needed to fuel its workforce. In addition, nearly 50 percent of all California veterans receiving GI educational benefits attend a California community college for workforce training, to earn an associate degree, or for transfer to a four-year university.⁶

As a result, a significant number of students risk the loss of timely completion of general education, transfer, and discipline requirements at CCCs, the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) that are needed to meet workforce demand.

As of 2013, distance education (DE) represented 12 percent of all education sections offered in CCCs, more than doubling the offerings six years earlier. ⁷ This growth is due, in large part, to the significant shift from televised instruction to Internet-based communication tools. Today, new technologies are emerging with the potential to transform the world of DE, realizing exponential growth in functionality and usage.

**The OEI Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need⁸:**

- FHDA was the first CCC district to develop DE courses.

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⁴ The 2011-12 Budget: Prioritizing Course Enrollment at the Community College, Legislative Analyst Office Policy Brief, January 2011, Page 1
⁶ Impact of Budget Cuts on the California Community Colleges and Value of the System to California, Key Facts, CCCCCO Office of Communications, September 2013, Pages 2-3
⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all Foothill statistics were obtained from the Dean of Foothill Global Access, Judy Baker.
• Foothill College has the highest number of FTES for annual delayed interaction - Internet based DE among CCCs, with 28 percent of total FTES delivered as DE in 2012-2013\(^9\). This year, 8,983 are enrolled in fully online courses representing 10,341 enrollments (31 percent of all Foothill College course enrollments), a 13 percent increase from last year. There are 289 fully online course sections (25 percent of all sections) and 91 percent of those online sections use open source learning management systems. In addition, there are 105 hybrid course sections (representing an additional 9 percent of all sections).

• Foothill College now offers 20 online degrees including three Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs). Eight of these degrees were added within the last year.

• Foothill College’s Substantive Change Proposal was approved by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) in May 2013 for 12 new degrees that have “50% or more via distance education or electronic delivery.” The commission praised the college’s thorough planning and implementation process.

• Butte and FHDA have strong working relationships with CCC Confer, @ONE and their professional development and certification services as well as the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) for credit for prior learning.

• FHDA is located in the heart of Silicon Valley with connections to a wealth of companies with innovative approaches to course development such as Google, Khan Academy, Coursera and Udacity.

The OEI proposal will provide an extensive range of quality courses that are aligned with students’ matriculation path, with an initial emphasis on courses that experience high demand and waitlists. For additional information, please refer to Section 7: Work Plan, Objectives Addressing Funding Priorities.

Need 2. Improve retention and success of students enrolled in Exchange courses
As noted in the RFA, current DE solutions within the CCC system have been challenged by low retention and high dropout rates relative to their face-to-face counterparts, a differential of 7 percent and 9 percent respectively. Characteristics of current offerings that are believed to be limiting factors include difficulty finding online courses, quality of online course offerings, lack of student support systems, lack of uniformity among CCC offerings, and the significant funding required for CCCs to provide high performance, always-available online access and support.

Due to budget and staff reductions faced by many CCCs, virtual student services and technology support services have declined in the past few years. However, accreditors increasingly expect online student services to be equivalent or superior to the colleges’ face-to-face, on-campus offerings.\(^{10}\) These limitations are aggravated by the isolated nature of each college solution.

Many of the greatest challenges noted in a 2012 distance education survey of administrators can be addressed with DE, including the top three challenges: adequate student services, adequate assessment, and support staff needed for training and technical assistance.\(^{11}\) Additionally, a review of the DE report

\(^9\) California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Data Mart, 2012-2013 school year.

\(^{10}\) 2012 Distance Education Survey Results, Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges, Instructional Technology Council, April 2013, Page 25

\(^{11}\) 2012 Distance Education Survey Results, Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges, Instructional Technology Council, April 2013, Page 11
reveals that the student services most lacking for online students in the CCCs are personal counseling and remediation services which are also a focus of this Initiative.

The OEI Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need:

- Butte is the **highly respected provider of the CVC** and a thought leader on **statewide education systems architecture**.

- The CCC Technology Center at Butte has built a **technical infrastructure** that already delivers critical elements of the online student experience—a college application, electronic transcript, and electronic portfolio—to millions of CCC students each year.

- De Anza College is the home of the **High Tech Center Training Unit** supporting High Tech Center programs at 114 community colleges and satellite centers. More than 10,000 students with disabilities are enrolled in High Tech Center programs statewide.

- Foothill DE is **acclaimed for its results with 69 percent success rates and 15 percent drop rate** in 2011-12 fully online courses.

- FHDA **Chancellor Linda Thor is highly recognized** for her contributions to DE throughout the state and nation.

- FHDA is a leader in the use of **open education resources**, receiving the 2010 WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award for its College Open Textbooks Collaborative project and the 2008 Technology Focus Award from the CCCOER.

- FHDA’s Institutional Research and Planning Department is working in partnership with the **Stanford Graduate School of Education** to examine issues related to student success online that will give us new insights into helping more students succeed.

- Both Butte and FHDA have **strong working relationships** with CCC Confer, @ONE and their professional development & certification services.

The OEI proposal will vastly improve student retention and success by providing a coordinated environment that projects a consistent statewide student experience while allowing customization to fit each CCC. For additional information, please refer to Section 7: Work Plan, Objectives Addressing Funding Priorities.

**Need 3. Increase CCC education for the underserved and underrepresented including individuals with disabilities and those with basic skills needs**

Students with limited financial means are constrained by work schedules and rising cost of face-to-face courses. Additionally, financial aid options are not easily understood. Forty percent of part-time students take evening classes, as compared with 13 percent of full-time students. Of those who work and are full-time students, 19 percent work close to full time, or more than 30 hours per week. As a result, these students have fewer options for certain kinds of interventions that strengthen engagement.\(^\text{12}\)

\[^{12}\text{Matter of Degrees, Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012, p.6}^\]
Over 75 percent of the students entering CCCs lack appropriate preparation in reading, writing, and mathematics and are often directed to a series of basic skills courses that delay student matriculation. Only 41 percent of these students progress past basic skills courses to achieve a certificate, degree, or transfer preparation.\textsuperscript{13}

Students with disabilities and other limitations often benefit from online opportunities due to increased access; however, challenges exist in that distance education courses must be adapted to accommodate disabled distance education learners. In the 2012 ITC survey, only 52 percent of administrators believed they are completely or mostly compliant with Section 504.34 and Section 508.25 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and few administrators are confident that their online courses are compliant.\textsuperscript{14}

Accreditation guidelines require that all services available to on-ground students be equally accessible to online students when a program exceeds 50 percent of its courses available online.\textsuperscript{15} According to the distance education report for 2013 from the CCC Chancellor’s Office, “The Instructional Technology Council, a council of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), in its annual survey of its 375 member institutions about distance education reported college administrators ranked ‘adequate student services for distance-education students’ as their greatest challenge, raising it two spots from No. 3 in the previous year’s survey.”

The OEI Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need:

- FHDA has many years of experience and a demonstrated commitment to the underserved and underrepresented.

- De Anza College houses the High Tech Center Training Unit (HTCTU), an acclaimed leader in accessibility training and support for community college faculty and staff wishing to acquire or improve teaching skills, methodologies, and pedagogy in Assistive Computer Technology, Alternate Media and Web Accessibility. The HTCTU supports programs at 114 community colleges and satellite centers and more than 10,000 students with disabilities statewide.

- Butte is a leader on Web and technological standards that facilitate delivery of Universal Design.

- Both Butte and FHDA have strong working relationships with CCC Confer, @ONE and the HTCTU.

The OEI proposal will present a user experience tailored to the unique profile of each student, including support tailored to the needs of underrepresented students, access to appropriate financial aid information, and a wealth of support services. For additional information, please refer to Section 7: Work Plan, Objectives Addressing Funding Priorities.

**Need 4. Increase ease of use and convenience of the online experience**

A key requirement of this RFA is to provide DE in a uniform, easily navigated, online environment with a full complement of support and tools (RFA pages 14, 17) for both students and faculty (RFA page 21). According to the 2012 ITC distance education survey, despite migration fatigue, nearly one third of 114.

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\textsuperscript{13} Advancing Student Success in California Community Colleges, CCC Student Success Task Force, January 2012, p.2
\textsuperscript{14} 2012 Distance Education Survey Results, Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges, Instructional Technology Council, April 2013, Page 13
campuses report that they intend to change their learning management system (LMS) in the next two years\textsuperscript{16}, a strong indicator of the need for new solutions and the opportunity for OEI to have deep impact.

The OEI Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need:

- FHDA’s \textit{experience in online course development and leveraging an open source LMS} makes it uniquely qualified to lead conversations among constituents that are centered around maximizing functionality and ease of migration.

- The CCC Technology Center at Butte has built a \textit{technical infrastructure} that already delivers critical elements of the online student experience—a college application, electronic transcript, and electronic portfolio—statewide to millions of CCC students each year.

- The CCC Technology Center infrastructure already has a data center and the network bandwidth that can \textit{deliver the statewide scale} of courses and services called for by the OEI in a secure and standards-based environment.

- The Butte technical team has a proven, successful tradition of working with the variety of technical landscapes present in our 72 districts and 112 colleges, providing \textit{extensive experience for transitioning and integrating colleges and districts into the statewide infrastructure}.

- Butte and FHDA have successful experience \textit{working with key partners} such as 3CMedia Solutions and experience with seamlessly incorporating partner products such as CCC Confer.

The OEI proposal will provide an easy-to-use online experience with a single point of entry for college planning; basic skills and assessment support; and online course selection, registration, and course administration. For additional information, please refer to Section 7: Work Plan, Objectives Addressing Funding Priorities.

\textbf{Need 5. Decrease the cost of student education}

At this time, CCCs have silos of development for most areas of distance education (DE). A common statewide DE hosting and course management system does not currently exist, nor does a common 24/7 support center for tutoring, proctoring, registration, and other academic and student services. It is anticipated that there will be great cost savings in providing a statewide Online Education Ecosystem.

The OEI Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need:

- Butte’s leadership in providing a \textit{common statewide architecture that allows for flexibility}

- Butte’s experience in \textit{vendor negotiations and scaling} of products/services

- FHDA’s experience in \textit{swiftly expanding its catalog of quality online courses}

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\textsuperscript{16} 2012 Distance Education Survey Results, Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges, Instructional Technology Council, April 2013, Page 25
The OEI proposal will realize efficiencies by addressing overlap, taking advantage of economies of scale, and decreasing systems complexity. In the longer term, the flexibility of the architecture will allow for new technologies with greater capacity and/or lower costs. For additional information, please refer to Section 7: Work Plan, Objectives Addressing Funding Priorities.

**Need 6. Significantly increase demand for online course delivery**

The ultimate success of the Initiative will hinge on the extent to which students embrace the Online Education Ecosystem as an important resource for a quality CCC education.

There is a pressing need to assess the quality of distance education courses; this was ranked in the top three challenges since 2009 by CCC administrators. Most DE administrators lack the authority to select faculty, courses and their contents; schedule course offerings; and evaluate courses.\(^\text{17}\) No specific effort is being made surrounding the creation of statewide ADT pathways through DE at this time.

In addition, DE has been constrained by lack of confidence that DE course credit will be recognized when students transfer within CCCs and matriculate to CSUs/UCs.

**The OEI Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need:**

- Butte has nearly 15 years of experience in leading and supporting the governance of statewide technology efforts of the CCC system, including communications and an extensive statewide outreach network with access to more than 60,000 key members of the CCC community.

- Butte has a successful track record and proven process of recruiting CCC districts into voluntary statewide technology partnerships, such as CCCApply, an electronic online application offered by the CCC Chancellor’s Office and used by 109 of the 112 colleges.

- Both Butte and FHDA have strong, long-term professional working relationships with CCC thought leaders and influencers statewide, ensuring strong credibility as they seek consortium agreements.

- FHDA has an extensive history of rapid growth in local development and delivery of DE with very positive feedback.

- The existing CVC DE catalog has more than 110,000 visitors annually, including more than 19,000 courses and 1,200 degrees available online to California’s students.

- Butte has a strong history of successfully incorporating new technologies into applications and tools and delivering them to the CCC system statewide.

\(^{17}\) 2012 Distance Education Survey Results, Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges, Instructional Technology Technology Council, April 2013, Page 10