

PROGRAM REVIEW:

The Business Lab

September 2005

I. OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

A. Mission and Vision of the College:

Maui Community College is a learning-centered institution that provides affordable, high-quality credit and non-credit educational opportunities to a diverse community of lifelong learners. We envision a world-class college that meets current and emerging Maui County education and training needs through innovative, high quality programs offered in stimulating learning environments. The College mission, goals, and actions will be guided by the Native Hawaiian reverence for the ahupua`a, a practice of sustaining and sharing diverse but finite resources for the benefit of all.

B. Mission and Vision of the Program:

1. Program Vision for the next five years

Mission

The mission of the Business Lab is to provide a clean, quiet, and comfortable study area, with adequate computer equipment, Internet access, and available computer assistance for students to complete their course work at Maui Community College.

Vision

The vision of the Business Lab is to provide a superior study environment that fully complements the learning experience by providing students with the best computer and computer-related equipment possible, as well as expert assistance in how best to utilize these resources in the completion of their studies, related course work and projects.

The Business Lab is committed to:

- Serving our student-clients with the highest quality computer equipment and assistance possible
- Treat all with respect and dignity
- Anticipate and respond to the needs of faculty with timely installation of required software in support of current academic programs
- Make valuable contributions in our areas of expertise to the college
- Pursue continuous improvement in all we do.

Description of the Business Lab's Operation

The Ka Lama 203 Business Lab is a supervised computer lab available free of charge to all MCC and UH system students. The Lab currently has 34 Windows 98 and Windows 2000 computers available on a daily basis for student use. Student lab technicians are available to provide personal assistance in the use of computer applications, email, MyUHPortal, WebCT, and the Internet at all times.

The student employees are selected for their knowledge of computer applications currently in use in the MCC credit and non-credit curriculum, their ability to learn new applications, and their communication skills. Further training is minimal and largely gained through on the job experience. There are as many as six students employed in the Lab with two on duty during the busiest hours. Lab hours vary from semester to semester but the facility is usually open 40 to 44 hours a week.

Administrative duties for the Business Lab are performed by the Lab Coordinator, who is responsible for hiring, payroll, supplies inventory and ordering, and day to day management issues. In addition, the Lab Coordinator is responsible for software and hardware maintenance of computer and printer equipment in the Lab and for the 125 computers in five other classrooms on the second floor of the Ka Lama building. During the 2004-05 academic year the Lab Coordinator position has been a casual hire position limited to 19 hours per week.

Computer Equipment

In the fall of 2004 the Business Lab had 34 personal computer (PC) workstations available with Windows 98 installed. These were aging machines with Celeron processors running at 366 MHz, 64 MB of memory, 4 GB hard drives and 15 inch monitors. During the course of the 2004-05 academic year, 24 of the 34 computers were replaced with newer, faster machines provided by Computing Services, and the operating systems have been upgraded to Windows 2000. All computers now have 17 inch monitors. The current inventory of computers in the Business Lab includes:

- 4 Pentium III 733MHz, 128MB RAM, 20GB hard drive, Windows 2000
- 5 Pentium III 550MHz, 128MB RAM, 14GB hard drive, Windows 2000
- 15 Pentium II 450MHz, 256MB RAM, 40GB hard drive, Windows 2000
- 10 Celeron 366MHz, 64 MB Ram, 4 GB hard drive, Windows 98

Web Site

The Business Lab Website (www.hawaii.edu/maui/buslab) contains information about Lab policies, staffing, and configuration, schedules for the Lab, TLC and the library, and links to MyUHPortal and WebCT.

Check In – Check Out System

This system is the sole source of data on the number of students using the Lab and the number of hours spent by students in the facility. The system consists of a database on a dedicated computer at the Lab entrance. At the beginning of each semester, students are requested to enter their student ID number, name and native language into the database and then to check in and out using their student ID number on each Lab visit.

Pharos Pay for Print System

The Pharos system was installed in spring 2004 to replace the previous policy of requiring students to donate a ream of printer paper each year in return for access to the Lab. With the Pharos Pay-for-Print system students pay \$0.10 per page to cover the cost of paper and toner for our laser printer. During the 2004-05 academic year the Business Lab generated \$1,265.50 in income for printing services.

UH Wireless Network Access

In the spring of 2005, a wireless access point was purchased and installed in the Lab to accommodate a growing number of students working from their own laptop computers and desiring access to the campus network.

2. Contribution of the program to the Mission and Vision of MCC

The Business Lab supports and contributes to the mission and vision of the college by providing a high-quality study environment and assistance that supplements and reinforces classroom instruction. Without the Business Lab to supplement their classroom instruction, many students would find it impossible to complete their course work. A large percentage of our students have no computers of their own at home or are unable to afford the required applications. Many students find that the demands of work and family obligations make it inconvenient, difficult, or impossible to travel to another location to use a computer. For these students, the Business Lab provides a vital alternative for computer and Internet access.

3. Goals of the Program (See Appendix A)

The Business Lab supports all of the College's goals and objectives and actively engages in endeavors that support the 2004-05 Action Strategies as relevant to our operation.

C. Business Lab's Relation to the MCC Strategic Plan

The Business Lab is actively involved in endeavors that support several specific Action Strategies. The following discusses how the Business Lab has contributed to the action strategies for 2004-05.

Provide full student support services, including advising, tutoring, counseling, and library services that increase student retention and success in a learning-centered environment. (1.1)

The Business Lab provides assistance that reinforces classroom instruction by a system of coaching and suggestion. Though our student assistants do not tutor or attempt to teach the student client, they discuss the situation with which the student is having difficulty and suggest methods by which the particular task can be accomplished, allowing the student to recall information from the instructor or textbook and make the best choice.

Acquire needed equipment to meet the on-going technological needs of the college campuses on the three islands. (2.2)

The Business Lab is constantly seeking to keep our computer equipment up to date through acquisition when funds can be found, and through regular maintenance. Needed software is acquired and installed prior to the beginning of each semester. Updates to operating systems and antivirus programs are applied on a monthly basis.

Encourage risk-taking, reward innovation, and invest in change to reduce costs and paperwork and generate resources. (5.2)

The Pharos Pay-for-print system was installed to reduce the cost of operating the Lab. Much of the income generated thus far has gone to pay for the cost of the system but it seems some excess is being produced and should be used to offset the cost of paper and toner.

D. Program Faculty and Professional Staff

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day management issues. In addition, the Lab Coordinator is responsible for software and hardware maintenance of computer and printer equipment in the Lab and for the 125 computers in five other classrooms on the second floor of the Ka Lama building. During the 2004-05 academic year the Lab Coordinator position has been a casual hire position limited to 19 hours per week.

This position is held by Jon Lightfoot, Lecturer, 3 years (MCC – ICS, MCC - CompTech), BMus, MCSE, A+, CCAI. Curriculum Lead for Cisco Academy IT Essentials.

II. CURRICULUM AND STUDENTS

There is no curriculum associated with the business Lab. Feedback in the form of student evaluations of the Lab, its equipment, and the assistance available are distributed and collected each semester and are used to plan future improvements. (See Appendix A)

V. ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM-TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. Program Summary

It is felt that the Business Lab has achieved considerable improvement in the last year, by replacing the majority of the computer equipment with faster computers, larger monitors, and by the addition of wireless access. Two CD-RW burner – DVD players have been acquired for student use and many computer desks have been replaced, to allow better spacing of equipment and more desktop space for users.

For now, most of our computers are sufficient to support most applications in use on the MCC campus with the exception of digital media software. With the constant rapid growth in technological evolution it is likely that most of the computers we are now using will be obsolete in two years. It remains imperative to continue upgrading the Lab with newer, faster computer equipment.

B. Plans for Next Year

Computer Equipment

An additional 10 replacement computers have been received but not yet deployed. These computers have Celeron 533MHz processors, 128 MB RAM and 10 GB hard drives and will have Windows 2000 installed. These computers will replace the oldest machines and are expected to be placed in service in fall 2005.

The process of upgrading the Lab will continue with hand downs from elsewhere at MCC. If funds become available, eventually all computers can be replaced with new equipment.

Website

The Website is badly in need of regular updates to reflect current schedules, staffing, and equipment. We plan to establish a schedule for regular updates.

Check in-out

The accuracy of data provided by the system is dependent on voluntary adherence to the check in – check out policy or on the vigilance of the student Lab assistants in enforcing the policy. Student assistants are often alone on duty, engaged in assisting clients and unable to strictly enforce check in - check out policy. In student evaluations, the system continually gets poor marks from students that use the Lab.

We plan to upgrade this system with student help to one which utilizes a card reader to input student ID numbers into the database, making compliance much easier and the collection of accurate data more certain.

Printing

Previously, the Lab had two black and white laser printers and one color printer available to students. The installation of Pharos required the retirement of all but one black and white laser printer in the Lab. Numerous requests have been received from faculty and students for the availability of color printing. Color printing within Pharos would likely require a software upgrade – cost unknown at this time. It is expected that funds can be found to purchase a suitable color ink jet printer that could be run outside the Pharos system at a per-page charge that would pay for the printer and ink cartridges and generate additional funds for other projects. This will also require planning for the initiation of cash transactions and the subsequent accounting tasks.

Wireless

Little seating and desk space is available in the Lab for more than a few students to utilize the wireless access at any given time. Access is available in the adjoining classroom, Ka Lama 201 and extends outside to the second floor lanai which has some seating and tables. Two more access points have been purchased for Ka Lama building to make access available throughout Ka Lama and the patio areas between Ka Lama and Kupa`a and between Ka Lama and the Science building. The additional access points will be installed in fall 2005.

Name Change

The name of the Business Lab dates from when it was created as an adjunct to the Business Education Department. The mission of the Lab has evolved to encompass services for all MCC students in all disciplines. Numerous

suggestions have been made regarding a change of name to reflect this evolution, but the name has remained unchanged mainly because it has always been called the Business Lab and a new name would result in confusion in references to the Lab.

It has been suggested that a campus-wide contest be held to rename the Lab with a prize given for the winning entry. Hopefully this would advertise the issue and eliminate confusion at the outset.

C. Budget for Next Year

The budget for student help and supplies and equipment remains unchanged from 2004-05.

Student help	\$13,196
Supplies and equipment	<u>3,500</u>
Total	\$16,696

For fall 2005 the Lab Coordinator position has temporarily been made full-time casual hire at 40 hours per week. The budgetary impact is unclear at this writing.

VI. REQUIRED APPENDICES

A. Goals of the Business Lab

The goals of the Business Lab for 2005-06 are:

- Continue to upgrade hardware and software to provide a more useful lab environment for students
- Develop a plan to procure and operate a color printer for the lab
- Work to increase the budget for student help so that hours of operation can be increased
- Develop a plan to improve the appearance of the lab
- Develop a project to replace the Check In – Check Out system
- Develop a schedule for updating the Web site

The following pages contain the data obtained from the Check In – Check Out system and from student evaluations. Data from the evaluations have been tabulated and analyzed for those items which lend themselves to statistical analysis. (See pages 11-12) Responses to requests for comment in the evaluations are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Things I like about the Business Lab

Comments in answer to this question included the computers, applications, hours of operation, friendly help, Internet access, and convenience. All evaluations received made some comment in answer to this statement.

Things I don't like about the Business Lab

A third of the respondents made no comment. Those who responded mentioned the slow Check In computer, slow workstation computers, old operating systems, small monitors, expense of printing, noise in the Lab, floppy disk failures.

My suggestions for improving the Business Lab are:

A third of the respondents made no suggestions. Those respondents that did make recommendations suggested changing the sign-in computer, more comfortable seating, upgrades to hardware and software, color printing, cheaper printing, CD-R burners, more hours, open on Monday nights. There were many suggestions for more computers, a bigger lab, or one large computer lab for MCC

Other Comments

Other comments on the evaluations indicate satisfaction with the level of staffing and with the help received from the lab assistants. Virtually all responses are very supportive of our mission and validate the goals set out for the Lab.