



Institutional Effectiveness Plan

Success Story

Improving Student Success

The Biology Department

October 2016



About the Biology Department:

The Biology Department serves South Texas College by preparing students for future academic and career opportunities in the biological sciences. The main Institutional Effectiveness (IE) goal of the Biology department was to positively impact student success. In pursuit of this goal, the Biology Department sought ways to improve online and hybrid student success in a way that would bridge the gap between traditional students and distance education students. Strategies to accomplish this goal resulted in increases in online course pass rates.

Featured Goal:

- **Improve Student Success** – the Biology Department will provide students with the tools and opportunities for success.

Strategies:

Blackboard Collaborate was utilized as a tool to improve the online learning experience of Biology courses by:

- Efficiently delivering online course materials to students
- Partnering with Biology textbook publishers to seamlessly integrate supplemental course materials into Blackboard Collaborate
- Allowing instructors to record their lectures and upload them into Blackboard
- Working in conjunction with the Distance Education Department for their recording equipment needs



In addition, Blackboard also has a tutoring feature that lets students view the instructor's computer screen which facilitates a more personal learning experience.



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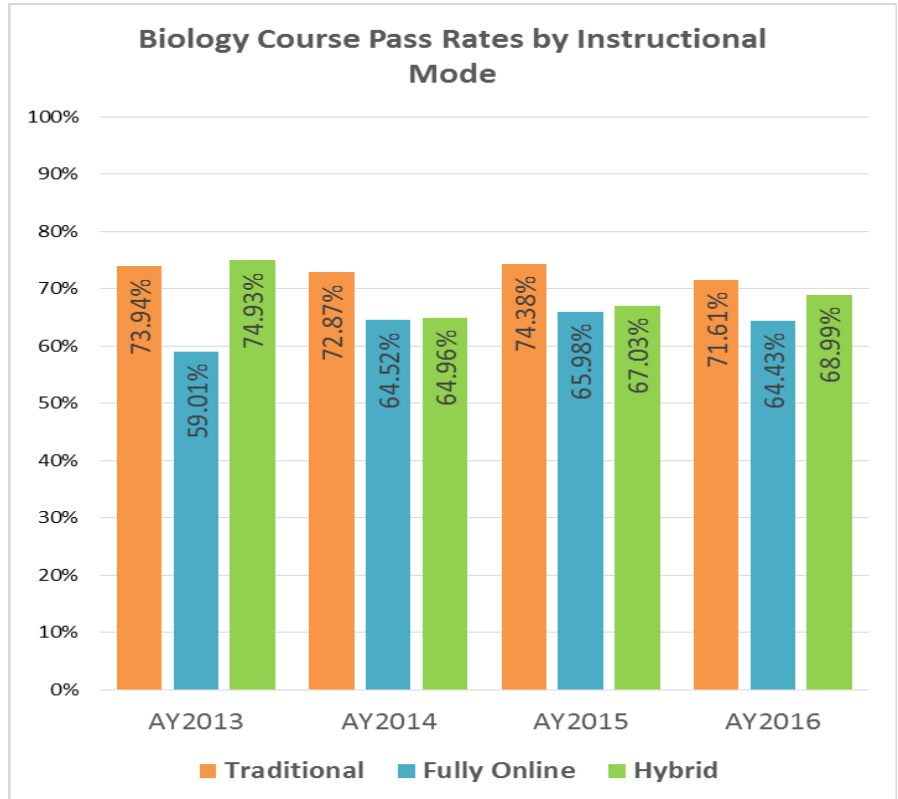
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Results:

- Through the implementation of the Blackboard Collaborate tools and the acquisition of new textbook supplements, the difference between the pass rates between traditional course sections and distance education course sections has decreased to only 4%.
- Pass rates for hybrid courses even exceeded the pass rates for traditional courses during Academic Year 2013.
- Pass rates for fully online courses rose steadily from 59% in Academic Year 2013 to 64% in academic Year 2016.



Recommendations:

- Biology faculty are now moving forward with addressing some of the less technical yet more difficult challenges such as maintaining the academic rigor for online courses.
- Advising is provided to students regarding the self-discipline necessary to succeed when taking online courses.

