



Inclusive Syllabi Open Learning to All

Paving the DEI way with syllabi for every student

A Need for Inclusivity

Pasadena City College (PCC) was one of the first junior colleges in the southwest United States and enrolled just 267 students at its inception in 1924. Almost 100 years to the present and PCC is on a mission to serve each of its nearly 30,000 students with a welcoming and dynamic learning community. They discovered, however, that the most meaningful document on campus – the course syllabus – had not evolved with the institution's initiatives or social advancements. Syllabi needed a complete overhaul to better set the expectations and tone for the student experience at PCC.

Admired as a leader in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), it was clear that PCC needed to adopt a new tone and inclusive language on all institution documents. A trailblazing institution that, for decades, created conditions for empowerment, critical thinking, and informed civic engagement felt that it wasn't meeting students' needs on

a very basic level. While they took steps to increase transparency, open important dialogues about inclusion and diversity, and allocate resources to bolster sustained efforts focusing on equitable learning and working environments, these powerful, mission-driven goals were hindered by long-outdated syllabi.

Setting a Better Tone

Syllabi remained an outlier in supporting DEI at PCC, so in 2016, they sought an online syllabus management platform that could bolster this vital resource. Efficient administration and consistent language across all syllabi were paramount to this endeavor as PCC continued to bolster equitable learning efforts across campus. In addition to creating student-focused syllabi, PCC wanted all faculty and students to easily reach their course syllabi through the learning management system (LMS) and move away from the outdated process of division offices receiving and reviewing hard copies of syllabi prior to the start of each semester.

Highlights

Established consistent, inclusive, and welcoming syllabus language to meet DEI initiatives

Created a centralized, online space to ensure consistent messaging for every student

Achieved accessibility guideline compliance

Integrated with Canvas to encourage usage and increase adoption



It Starts with a Syllabus

Finding an online home to help usher in a new age of more inviting, equitable, and consistent language across all syllabi led PCC to Concourse. Its templates, reporting, and seamless Canvas integration would open a new avenue for students to stay informed, stay connected, and stay focused on learning and career-readiness. Faculty, fully on-board and passionate about making syllabi more welcoming to their students, needed to decide whether to use syllabus templates or create and edit their own language to support the overarching goal. Regardless of the approach, PCC faculty wanted to create an inclusive and welcoming course experience for their students.

Ready. Set. Grow Inclusively.

As they began to address the desired shifts in language and tone, PCC also discovered numerous additional benefits in their new syllabus platform. Technical aspects of the initiative included integration with Canvas, lifting any barriers to connecting with syllabi online. Faculty and staff could access Concourse directly through their staff services site, where they could manage their own syllabi and make real-time edits. This meant no more turning in paper copies of syllabi to the division office each term.

About us

Since 2007, we have been focused on one thing: helping our clients improve syllabus management. We know what it takes to make the syllabus management process smooth and seamless, and we are ready to help you put this powerful tool to work for your institution.

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In addition, the centralized and searchable Concourse platform now meant faculty could offer a public view of their current syllabi, which further supported transparency across the institution. Training for hundreds of faculty and staff didn't happen overnight. With a dedicated team of professionals, training was swiftly organized and offered in-house to the campus community. Ongoing support and technical issues were, and are still, handled by the Distance Education Department. Faculty feedback, student usability testing data, and proper oversight ensured best practices were adhered to each semester.

A Future Open To All

The most meaningful document on campus is now aligned with DEI initiatives implemented in every facet of the institution. PCC is now sending a message to every student that walks their halls – you are welcome here, and you belong. With Concourse's support, course-related DEI initiatives will push forward as the college continues to sustain institutionalized transformation by identifying immediate and long-term expected outcomes. Just as they have since 1924, PCC will look to their community to foster an institution that embodies a sense of inclusion for all.

About Pasadena City College

Pasadena City College (PCC) has served the San Gabriel Valley community since 1924 when its doors opened to an enrollment of just 267 students. It has grown tremendously over the years and now serves over 30,000 students, including students from 76 different countries. Its academic programs consist of a variety of degrees, transfer programs, certificates of achievement, and occupational skills certificates. Widely recognized as a transfer leader, PCC is one of California's top schools for transfers to local universities.

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