Developing Thriving Online Graduate Programs: Growth & Infrastructure

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Overview of Indiana State University

- Comprehensive state PUI – 5 Colleges
- Doctoral Research University (Carnegie)
- 14,000 total students
- 2,300 are graduate students
- About half of these students are online
- 39 online graduate programs (Master’s, Doctoral, Certificate & License)
- Estimate of online courses, hybrid and how many on campus programs offer online programs
Online initiative

• ISU Pioneer in distance education (1997)
  • Synchronous (point TV)
  • Satellite sites
  • Growth slowed, lack of focus
• 2009 – Online, Distance – became part of strategic plan
• State of online education: Many courses, few programs
Growth in Online Programs (2010-2016)

- Strategic Plan mandated growth
- Office of Distance Education formed w/Dean
- Infrastructure lacking
  - DE Dean redirected funds for very technical staff to funds for Instructional Designers with Pedagogical training
  - Online course for instructors
    - 3 hour course, DE pays for it and pays $2000 to instructors, 3x a year
Online program growth

• Focus was changed from course development to online program development
  • Initially instructors were paid a stipend to develop course but lack of focus
  • Also funds for Foundational Studies Course development
“Use more Carrots than Sticks”

- Incentive for Online Program Growth
  - Formula: 30% overhead to university and remaining 70% of tuition split between program and Distance Education
- Incentive to Programs for Recruitment
  - At 16 students, they broke even
  - At 24 students, they profited
Online Program Growth

• New programs have to go through state board but programs converted to online do not
• Online certificates and Post Master’s certificates have not been very popular
• Some licenses for K-12, gifted & talented students, and visually impaired
• Early Programs: Sports & Recreation, Safety Management, Ed. Leadership, M.Ed.
Tools & Support

• Infrastructure:
  • Tutoring Online through Math and Writing Center

• Market Analysis

• Enrollment Management by Distance Ed
  • Consultant – study where we lose students from Inquiry to Enrollment process, leaky sieve

• Hired Recruiters, Admissions Counselors*
  • (surpassed the Graduate College)
Current Goals of Distance Education

• Double enrollment by 2022
  • Enhance distance education offerings
  • Marketing
  • Creating capacity
  • Creating new programs
Changes in Graduate Students & Programs

• Nature of graduate students changed
  • Full time employment
  • Take courses at night and summer
  • More mature group of students
  • Less traditional

• Nature of programs changed
  • To complement their employment
  • Final Projects applied to work
Changes needed in the Graduate College

• Procedures
  • Half of graduate students in online programs
  • Procedures created for on campus students
  • Confusion among online students and programs about procedures in the CGPS (faxing, pdfs, scans)

• Files and forms
  • Student files were hardcopy
  • Hardcopy forms delivered by U.S. Mail
  • needing many signatures
  • Forms lost, not on campus to walk to offices

• Hours
  • 8 am -4:30 pm
Challenges to the Graduate College

• Serving the new population
• Procedures – making instructions clear
• Electronic application for admission
• Student Success Series – Online synchronous & asynchronous
• Graduate faculty status for online adjuncts
• Theses & dissertation submission (ETD – Proquest)
Collaboration Graduate College with Distance Education

- Html automated emails that go out to inquiries and admitted students from our CRM (Talisma)
- Collaborated in using Hanover Research to survey CGS deans on admissions structures
- Collaborated on how to create data for regular yield reports
- Graduate College using Distance Education as a model for recruitment/admissions
Graduate Recruitment & Admissions

• Still in progress
• Distance Education developed staff to recruit and enroll students
  • Phone calls
  • Yield: Inquiries, Applications, admissions, enrolled
• Graduate and Online programs starting to adopt recruitment strategies like undergraduate first-time full-time first year students
Online grad application & check out

1. Student applies for graduation in portal
2. Student receives notification of review by program
3. Program Precheck for graduation
4. Student receives notification of remaining requirements
5. Program does post check out end of semester
6. Associate Dean of Graduate School check
7. Registrar Check
8. Student graduates
   - YES
   - NO
9. Student reapply next semester
   - YES
   - NO
10. Student receives notification of review by program
International Students

• Limits on online courses when in U.S.
• Regulations:
  • students from most countries cannot take from abroad (Canada)
  • Some U.S. states have restrictions
Conclusion

• Growth in online programs is good for enrollment growth

• Needs infrastructure to back it up
  – Instructional designers
  – Graduate College Processes (or Admissions, Registrars)