OFFICE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND ELEARNING

Strategic Distance Programs

Project Manager: Robert Griffiths

Project Sponsors: Colleges seeking approval for a strategic program

OVERVIEW

A confluence of pressures exist in higher education: reduced state funding, slowed tuition growth, increased number of students starting with substantial college credit, a globally competitive marketplace, blurred lines of credit providers, expanding student debt, and more. Creating five strategic DE programs affords OSU opportunities to attract new students and compete with its aspirational peers.

RATIONALE

Advancing distance education is one of Provost Steinmetz' six key priorities for moving OSU forward. The goal of creating strategic distance programs is to increase enrollment while leveraging an already robust education technology infrastructure, without further taxing an already strained physical infrastructure.

RESULTS

End results

At the conclusion of FY15, five strategic distance education programs will have been approved the Council of Academic Affairs (CAA). These programs will continue in their approval process to University Senate and then the Board of Trustees. If approved, these programs will go to Board of Regents for a final commenting period and the Chancellor's decision. It is estimated these FY15 programs will be eligible to enroll students starting FY16 and see the budget roll-on occur in FY17.

The FY15 five strategic programs will generate increased revenue per credit hour for colleges to support instructional and research initiatives otherwise underfunded. Further, these strategic programs will contribute to the revenue total from all programs for ODEE and key student services stakeholders to become self-sustaining.

Milestones

Programs hit several milestones prior to CAA approval. This includes departmental and college curricular approvals, an ODEE MOU, and graduate studies committee approval (if necessary). The program approval process can take four to 14 months before a CAA decision, based on several variables.

RESOURCES

People and their roles

For FY15, OAA has supported ODEE via funding (\$2 million) for coordination, support, and development of the five strategic programs. This includes a Senior Director, an Associate Director, and six instructional designers, as well as ODEE support through marketing and communication, state authorization, technology infrastructure team, and more.

Further, since program approvals adhere to the same process as on campus delivery, all stakeholders who support the academic mission of the university play a role in supporting program approvals and a smooth experience for the university's distance education students.

Other resources

For this FY15 goal to be successful, faculty need to be inspired and incentivized to propose a distance education program, drive it through the approval process, and ultimately, deliver high quality courses.

Program Approval Process



The program approval process at Ohio State, including ODEE's role from initial development to launch of an online program.

DISTANCE EDUCATION DEFINITIONS

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As defined by the Higher Learning Commission:

- Distance course: 75+% of instruction is offered by distance
- Distance program: 50+% of the courses offered in a program are distance
- Note: OSU interprets instruction as formalized instruction.

RISKS

There are multiple risks, risks of not proposing a distance education program, as well as risks from proposing a distance education program.

Not proposing a distance education program represents compounding missed opportunities, such as:

- 1. New revenue,
- 2. Program rankings, and
- 3. Increased student and alumni-base.

Risks of participating in distance education include:

- 1. Increased reporting requirements,
- 2. Increased compliance scrutiny, and
- Increased expectations for course and program outcomes.

RUN

Building on the success of FY14 (with four new programs) and continuing progress of ODEE Strategic plan, the necessary work is to support colleges expressing interest in developing new programs FY15 and encourage more to seek approval. At the start of FY15, the programs are started the approval process:

Education Human Ecology (2)

- Associates Degree (Early Childhood Education)— Verifying program eligibility
- Master Degree (Learning Technology)—At Graduate School

Arts and Sciences (1)

 Master Degree (Art Education)—At College College To Be Identified College To Be Identified

Robert Griffiths coordinates the distance education initiative, with owners Mike Hofherr, Jennifer Cowley, Carol Dietrich, and Tim Gerber.

Program approval updates occur at the ODEE leadership meetings, as well as regularly scheduled project sponsors meetings (e.g., DE Steering Committee, APAC).

REVIEW

Project wrap-up and review: (FY15)

At the end of FY15, we anticipate five strategic programs approved by CAA. We also anticipate starting the approval process for additional programs for FY16. The distance education team members subscribe to continual improvement and readily seeks feedback and quickly responds to refining processes and documents throughout the program approval and development process.

Results review: (Annually)

Each year a progress report and analysis is provided to university leadership on the progress of newly approved distance education programs.

