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Benchmarking University of Minnesota Capacity to Support High Quality Online and Blended Programs

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Benchmarking University of Minnesota Capacity to Support High Quality Online Programs

Minnesota eLearning Summit
July 29, 2015

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Today's Panel

- **Paul Ceelen**, Academic Technologist, Center for Allied Health Programs
- **Larry Coyle**, eLearning Specialist, Center for Educational Innovation
- **Peggy Martin**, Program Director, Occupational Therapy
- **Bob Rubinyi**, Senior Analyst for Online Learning, Center for Educational Innovation
- **Stephen Wiesner**, Ph.D., MT, MLT (ASCP), Medical Lab Sciences

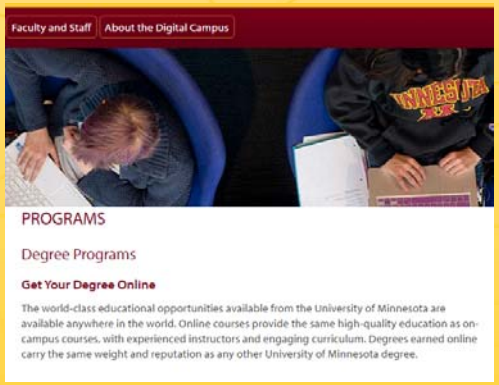
Today's session

- U of M benchmarking project overview
- A case study: Occupational Therapy
- Short activity: Try out the Quality Scorecard with your program
- Questions

U of M benchmarking project

- Snapshot of current state of support for online and blended programs
- Completed Jan – Jul 2015 by Center for Educational Innovation

Supports U of M emphasis on quality and continuous improvement



- Program level (compliments quality course initiatives (e.g., Quality Matters)
- Oversight: Digital Campus Steering Committee

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Stages


Snapshot of online and blended programs – ID strengths / opportunities
DC Advisory Committee IDs highest priorities for strategic investment
Engage Provost's Office, CEI, and partners, academic units to implement

Methodology

- Used OLC (Sloan) Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs
- Added 4 marketing related indicators
- Decentralized institutional challenge
- “Shallow” vs. “deep” option for units
- Virtually 100% participation – 8 academic + 3 central units

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Handbook

1. **The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to online education.**

Academic governance is a regulatory term that clarifies how institutions are organized and how responsibilities are divided and assessed. Common across both public and private institutions, governance structures ensure orderly and continuous operation. This quality indicator examines the governance of online education to ensure its orderly and continuous operation and clear decision making process.

During the emergence of online education in higher education, institutions often structured online education as an auxiliary service or temporary entity. These early programs were often seen as tangential, rather than as integral parts of the institution's mission and strategic plan. As a result, governance structures for online education were haphazard and institutional decision making regarding online education was neither effective nor comprehensive. However, with rapid growth and acceptance, online education quickly became a core educational service. Continued growth over the past two decades has demonstrated that online education has entered the mainstream (Allen & Seaman, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014). Consequently, online programs require attentive planning and structuring that reflects the core educational role online education now plays in higher education.

Accreditors have also increased scrutiny of institutional governance structures of online education. For example, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) specifically addresses distance education governance in several areas, most notably in Comprehensive Standard 3.2.7, which lists the following expectation: Administrative responsibility for all educational programs, including the offering of distance education courses and programs should be reflected in the organizational structure of the institution.

This quality indicator makes no prescription about the nature of the governance structure. Institutions enjoy the liberty to organize online education governance structures differently based on size, mission, and role; however an institution must demonstrate that strategic decision making regarding online education is appropriately made at the institution level.

Recommendations

- Adopt an institutional approach toward the governance and organization of online and blended education programs.
- Include all institutional divisions that are likely to be involved in and/or affected by the decision making process for online education in the governance framework.
- Clarify responsibilities for all authorities over online education programs and communicate that clearly to stakeholders.
- Develop policies and practices for governance via a steering committee with representatives from all divisions impacted by the delivery of online education.

Extensive explanation and recommendations

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Rubric

Quality Scorecard 2014

Criteria for Excellence in the Administration of Online Programs

Institutional Support (27 points)

		0 = Deficient	1 = Developing	2 = Accomplished	3 = Exemplary
1	**The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to online education.**	The institution has had no discussions about the online governance structure and decision making authority.	Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of online operations is haphazard and it is not always clear which unit is taking the lead.	Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of online operations is somewhat amorphous with multiple units having specific responsibilities.	Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of online operations is deliberate and clear; lines of authority for supporting units are delineated (e.g., in a shared services agreement).

Scale

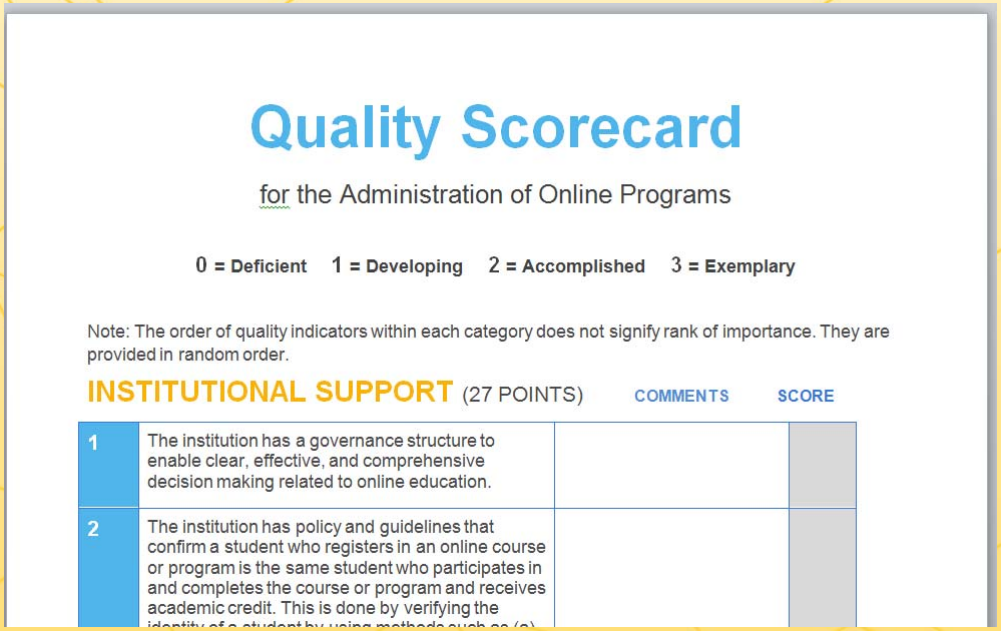
0 points = Deficient. The administrator does not observe any indications of the quality standard in place.

1 point = Developing. The administrator has found a slight existence of the quality standard but difficult to substantiate. Much improvement is still needed in this area.

2 points = Accomplished. The administrator has found there to be moderate use and can substantiate the quality **s**tandard. Some improvement is still needed in this area.

3 points = Exemplary. The administrator has found that the quality standard is being fully implemented, can be fully substantiated, and there is little to no need for improvement in this area.

Score + Rationale/Comments



Quality Scorecard

for the Administration of Online Programs

0 = Deficient 1 = Developing 2 = Accomplished 3 = Exemplary

Note: The order of quality indicators within each category does not signify rank of importance. They are provided in random order.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (27 POINTS) COMMENTS SCORE

1	The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to online education.		
2	The institution has policy and guidelines that confirm a student who registers in an online course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. This is done by verifying the		

- Aggregated results
- Shared with Digital Campus Steering Committee
- Committee ranked strategic priorities

General U of M findings

Higher	Lower
Technology support	Institutional support
Course structure	Faculty support
Student support	Evaluation and assessment

Analysis

- Major differences among units
- Differences as to what services are available vs. what faculty/staff believe are available
- Some standards / training in place but faculty do not necessarily engage
- Identified gaps in service (e.g., marketing)
- Need for additional faculty development

Initial thoughts re: opportunities

- DC Steering Comm. ranking strategic priorities
- Ongoing continuous improvement approach
- Share best practices for program administration
- Communication about services available
- Best mix of academic unit and central resources
- Key policies affecting online including budget
- Faculty development needs | Accessibility

Center for Allied Health Programs (OT & MLS)
Case Study of Quality Scorecard

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Why: Quality Scorecard in CAHP

- Already invested in Quality Matters© (QM)
- Nationally accredited programs driven by standards evaluated by rubrics
- Desire to contribute to larger University discussion about infrastructure for online learning
- Desire to better support faculty teaching in these hybrid curricula using flipped classroom pedagogy.

What we hoped to learn

- Gap assessment – current to best-practice
- CAHP tactics for strategic planning
- Tactics for OT & MLS strategic plans
- Recommendations for administration

Who was involved

Occupational Therapy

- Student survey
- Faculty survey
- CAHP tech support
- Program director compiled findings

Medical Laboratory Sciences

- Student survey
- Faculty survey
- Program director compiled findings

Key findings – Faculty Support

- MLS generally lower than OT in ratings
- Most items similar relative to other items
- Most disparity between programs on training and support in course development and online teaching (MLS – 0.5, OT – 2.0)
- May reflect differing needs or awareness of available services

Key findings - Students

- Students felt well supported
- Need more focus on usability and accessibility standards
- Course evaluation needs to evaluate hybrid & online teaching specifically
- Training recommended in areas such as learner interaction, faculty online presence, and feedback.

Key findings - General

- Need to regularly & formally evaluate services for faculty
- Need more education about emerging instructional technologies.
- Lack clear ongoing budgetary support for online learning.
- Need clear understanding of program vs institutional support

Recommendations

- Add a certificate in online teaching at U of MN
- Develop student survey specifically evaluating online/hybrid instruction
- Perform annual faculty satisfaction survey regarding instructional needs and support
- Embed QM standards in all online course sites

Recommendations - Technology

- Ensure QM standards for accessibility and usability in all online course sites
- Host regular hands-on, technology-focused workshops with faculty
- Disseminate technology news from institutional level to program
- Adopt emerging technologies into the program
- Stay involved with student technology issues

Participant exercise & discussion

1. Use the sample from the Scorecard to rate your own program or one you're familiar with on at least 5 of the 10 sections (3-4 min)
2. Turn to the person next to you when you are done and share your ratings and rationale (3-4 min)

Discussion and questions

Contacts

Panelists

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Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard

http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/