A CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC DISTANCE LEARNING READINESS PLAN

Megan Linos, Vicki Bierley, Julie Bordelon, Laura Suero, University of Southern Indiana

USI’s Distance Learning Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015

Faculty Development
- Have our faculty been trained and prepared in effectively delivery techniques for distance learning?

Student Readiness
- Are our students prepared and aware of the challenges and commitments associated with distance learning?

Technology Alignment
- Do we have the sustainable & scalable tech. solutions available to help our faculty and students be successful in distance learning?

Institutional Planning
- Does USI have clear and well communicated strategic goals delivering campus-wide DE initiatives? Has USI allocated adequate budget and resources to promote new DE initiatives?
  - Are the current DE policy and guidelines up-to-date and aligned with the demand of the current industry?

Faculty Development
- The Innovative Distance Education Academy (IDEA)
- Faculty Peer Support Network for Quality Online Teaching
- Online Teaching Innovations Showcase Seminars
- The 12-week Online Course Development Program
- The Hybrid Teaching Workshops

Student Readiness
- The Online Student Readiness Assessment (SmarterMeasure)
- GENS 199 Course – Surviving and Thriving in Distance Learning
- Exam Proctoring Services
- Proctor Screening Services

Technology Alignment
- The Lecture Recording Solutions
- The Web Conferencing Platforms
- The Learning Management System

Institutional Planning
- The Revised Distance Learning Course Approval Process
- The Online Core 39 Completion Roadmap
- The Online MBA Program

Facts, Highlights, and Success Measure (2012 – 2014)
- **116** more faculty members taught at least one online course in the AY 2012 – 2013, which is a **30%** increase from the previous year
- Comparing enrollment data between AY 2013 -2014 and 2011- 2012, USI offers
  - **185** additional Distance Learning courses/sections
  - **1,873** additional Distance Learning enrollments (**5,805** credit hours)
  - Equivalent to **$1,230,253.65** tuition revenue (based on $211.93/hr.)
- **75** USI faculty and admin. attended Quality Matters (QM) workshops and **15** of them are now QM Certified peer reviewers in AY 2012 - 2013
- **1,212** online student readiness assessments completed since March 11th, 2013

**Data collected on 4/14/2014**

Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana (USI) is located in Evansville, IN. Consisting of 4 academic colleges, USI offers more than 80 different majors to approximately 10,000 students, including 15% out-of-state/international students and 25% adult learners. Currently, USI offers 6 online programs and 3 additional will be launched in the next 2 years.

USI is an engaged learning community advancing education and knowledge, enhancing civic and cultural awareness, and fostering partnerships through comprehensive outreach programs. We prepare individuals to live wisely in a diverse and global community. To fulfill this vision, USI’s Distance Learning department is devoted to providing quality online education programs that embrace teaching innovations and learning collaborations. Not only have USI’s online MSN students achieved a 100% board certification passing rate, but its MHA program has been recognized as one of the 2014 Best Online Masters in Healthcare Degree Programs by BestOnlineColleges.org.

USI recognizes the increased demand in Distance Learning and has developed a 3 year (2012- 2015) strategic plan that focuses on the readiness of faculty development, student readiness, technology alignment, and institutional planning. Since 2012, the perspective and acceptance of Distance Learning has transformed positively campus-wide.