INDIANA UNIVERSITY

67 – Distributed Education Environments

Action Item Template Response

General Action Item Information

Lead Division/Office: LT
Action Item Number: 67
Action Item Short Name: Distributed Education Environments
Dependencies with other EP Action Items: See Action Item 66
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I. DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS ACTION.

The development of Oncourse and its success as both an online learning environment and as a model of open source software collaboration and development has formed an essential foundation for distributed education at Indiana University. The IUPUI School of Nursing, for example, uses Oncourse to help deliver a number of continuing education certificates and individual courses. The School of Dentistry's dental assisting program has recently begun a "hybrid" distance education program, where the program's curriculum is delivered in both traditional and online formats.

Using existing functional and development resources on an Oncourse Online/DE initiative, Indiana University intends to work towards Oncourse capabilities specifically tuned for courses being conducted entirely online. As noted, several schools have successfully used the current Oncourse to offer online courses; in addition, other schools have used vended applications to establish successful online programs. From these efforts we can learn how to better tune the current Oncourse specifically for distance education and build towards a new Oncourse (based upon the new forward-looking architecture and design of Sakai 3) that would give IU an innovation advantage in its distance education offerings. The Oncourse Functional Requirements Committee would establish a project in collaboration with various schools to learn what works best, what works pretty well, what doesn't quite work right, and what is flat-out missing for supporting online courses in Oncourse. The resulting functional requirements would inform some enhancements to the current Oncourse, but more importantly, inform IU's early work with the next generation of Sakai.

In their 2007 *EDUCAUSE Review* article, McGee and Diaz stated, "Given that higher education finally has some technologies actually designed for teaching and learning, institutions and faculty members alike need to determine the value of these tools and how they can best support learning. It is vital that the institution provide services and resources while also supporting the range of faculty members' skill, expertise, capability, interest, and motivation." (p. 32-34) This quote underscores the need for an even greater commitment to supporting faculty in their use of instructional technology. Teaching center staff are able to stay abreast of rapid changes in technology and can, in turn, enable innovation by empowering faculty to learn these new technologies and their effective use for teaching and learning, whether the format of the course is face-to-face, blended, or fully online. Good practice in online learning is not just "more text," but is participative and interactive and center staff provide a critical role in supporting faculty as they prepare to teach in these different contexts.

To that end, and modeled after the successful IUPUI Jump Start program, we propose to expand our support for distance education courses at IUB, providing comprehensive instructional design, instructional technology, and media design and production services to faculty who want to develop online courses. Partnerships with IUB campus leaders and academic units are being cultivated to provide incentives for IUB faculty to develop online and hybrid courses. We piloted an IUB-based model of Jump Start in summer 2009 with faculty from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA).

In addition, resources are needed to support instructional and multimedia development for the creation of new online courses at both IU Bloomington and IUPUI through the expanded Jump Start program. We propose to pair instructional designers and instructional technologists from the Teaching and Learning Technologies Centers (TLTC) and Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) with multimedia developers from Media Design and Production (MDP). The goal is to leverage the power of tools like Raptivity and MyRaptivity to provide a greater level of support for the creation of interactive eLearning content than was possible even just a few years ago. In addition, there is growing interest in the pedagogical application of online services/technologies such as YouTube and the Flip video camera. As these technologies and approaches become more prevalent, there is a real opportunity to leverage their ease of use (and relatively inexpensive cost) with a larger model for instructional design and multimedia development. There is a clear acceptance within the educational community of "good, but perhaps not quite 'perfect'" multimedia. Rather, the use of YouTube, Flip cameras and other services/technologies is helping to enable one of the most important, early promises of the Web: make it easy to create content and quickly publish/share that content. Again, the acceptance of "good enough" multimedia quality is an accepted trade-off for either not having the technical expertise to produce such content, or the funds that are often required in conjunction with that expertise. By embracing this more utilitarian approach, we propose that a larger number of instructional design needs can be met. Moreover, by encouraging the use of these tools by faculty, a more productive and efficient (in terms of both time and cost) collaboration can be established between the faculty and the instructional design expertise of the IUB/IUPUI teaching centers and Media Design and Production. As a result, faculty interest in technology-enhanced pedagogies (not just online course development) can be served at a much wider level.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We have expanded our support for distance education courses at IUB to provide comprehensive instructional design, instructional technology, and media design and production services to faculty who want to develop online courses. An instructional designer was hired in fall 2011 to assist with these ongoing efforts.

II. WHAT ARE THE POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR PLANS?

1.   New online tools for collaboration and communication (including high-definition video conferencing) will be required to meet the expanding teaching and learning requirements.

2.   As online and distance education offerings grow, an equal amount of support (24x7x365) will be required, and support will need to be provided in both a traditional (phone) and online "live chat" method.

3.   Extended faculty development will be required in order to train faculty to most effectively realize the technological and pedagogical benefits of teaching in an online environment.

4.   The university platform (Oncourse CL) for delivering online and distance education programs and

courses will need to offer the ability to seamlessly integrate with other online tools, both internal and external to the university, support easy structuring and interlinking of instructional content and activities, and deliver content in a method that is friendly to a variety of devices (not just desktop or laptop computers).

III. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS.

Faculty, students, staff, and academic administration.