



We're For Strategic Planning

Goal Three:

Enhance Community Engagement

Initiative: 2 Initiative Name: Further Develop Distance Education

Introduction

The goal of the initiative is to expand distance education offerings to meet the needs of students and to support economic development. By providing high-quality, student-focused educational opportunities that are accessible to place-bound Hoosiers and provide flexibility for potential students who have work or family commitments, Indiana State University can expand the audience it serves and build a larger educated workforce needed for twenty-first century economic development. While ISU was an early leader in distance education, we had reached a plateau in our development. Initiative two has focused on building infrastructure to support online faculty and students, expanding the number and variety of programs available online and improving the quality of our online instruction.

Purpose

By developing a strategic view of, and more capacity for, online education, Indiana State University will be better positioned to grow enrollments, provide the flexible delivery systems needed to support student success, and serve the educational needs of more Hoosiers, particularly those in rural areas and place-bound working adults needing to update and expand their skills for today's economy. In addition to engaging our service area community directly by providing additional educational opportunities that are accessible by a wider audience, the expansion and enhancement of our distance education programming will provide new capacity to improve the educational attainment of Indiana's workforce, a top state priority. Additionally, the medium of distance education provides a vehicle to deliver distinctive graduate programs to a national and even international market. Expansion of online programs not only allows for enrollment growth without new physical plant investment, but provides more flexible scheduling options to assist our traditional students with on-time graduation.

Methods

- Design and develop an institutional infrastructure to support distance education to include:
 - Course development and design
 - Faculty training and support
 - Online student services including tutoring, proctoring, etc.
- Provide adequate foundational studies courses online to meet demand of online students and serve the summer session needs of on-campus students.
- Develop and deploy undergraduate degree completion programs to meet the needs of returning adults.
- Develop online undergraduate programs with high market demand.
- Develop new professional graduate programs to meet Hoosier needs.



Discussion

The past four years have brought significant changes to online education at Indiana State University. Student and faculty support services have grown significantly. We have created a student services concierge services to assist online students with navigating the university, overhauled our instructional design support to clearly focus on pedagogy and student success. In the past four years we have trained 125 faculty members on best practices in online teaching. We have also introduced tutoring services for online students and remote proctoring. Additionally, we have invested heavily in new technology and new capacity in distance origination classrooms. While these infrastructure enhancements are significant we continue to improve upon that foundation by expanding our customer services center and actively reaching out to inquiring students. In the past year we have initiated approximately 3500 outbound communications with potential online students through phone and email.

Another area of focus has been on growing the selection of degree programs available via online learning. During the past four years, we have added five new bachelor degrees and five new graduate degree programs including the first bachelor of applied science degree of any Indiana public institution. Two additional degrees are currently pending ICHE approval for online delivery and two more are in development.

Our newest focus is on improving our marketing, recruitment and initial advising efforts to better inform Hoosiers of the opportunities we offer, advise them on programs that can help them meet their educational goals and to shepherd them through the return-to-school process.

Summary

Much as been accomplished in the past four years with this initiative, yet much remains to be done. We continue to improve and refine infrastructure for support of both online students and faculty. Our inventory of new programs and others in the pipeline is providing additional capacity to grow our online student body. These efforts will continue along with new focus upon all aspects of enrollment marketing and management for online programs.

Initiative Chair(s) and Contact Information

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