

Administering Diverse Instructional Formats

Instructional formats, technology, and delivery systems are changing rapidly and challenging universities and their outreach programs to take advantage of new opportunities to serve the educational needs of a traditional or a new clientele. Three programs were presented from three universities to illustrate these challenges and generalize what they learned about administering new instructional formats.

California Polytechnic Partnership with the Republic of Vietnam

Responding to the global economy and the needs of its students in this new economy, California State Polytechnic in Pomona decided to internationalize. Student exchanges, Fulbrights and the like had existed, but Cal Poly's exchange programs were limited. Van Garner described in detail one program with the Republic of Vietnam.

Any decision on format comes from deciding what you want to do and then compromising that vision with the limitations imposed by costs and the needs of the clientele to be served. The original plan had been to use distance education over the Internet as had been successful in other programs serving Mexico and China and some rural schools within California. However, the Vietnamese government was not open to expanding the use of the Internet to its people, and Cal Poly could not afford the use of satellites for telecourses. By way of compromise, they developed a one-week model.

Participating faculty agreed to work within their current schedules and not use release time. They flew as a team to Vietnam over one weekend, taught for five consecutive weekdays, then flew back home the following weekend. The program gave faculty significant international experience and served some 4,000 students in Vietnam.

Garner suggested the following caveats for any institution deciding on a similar instructional format:

- Pay attention to the larger strategic issues: Can you and should you do it all? Too often a university simply reacts to opportunities without judging them within an institutional context of mission, needs, and goals. The Cal Poly program did meet their goal of internationalizing.
- Do you have the capacity to successfully administer such a program? Cal Poly had many students and staff who spoke Vietnamese because of their local Vietnamese-American population, so the linguistic capacity was present.
- Set up and keep your objectives. The "razzle dazzle" of an international program can easily divert you. Outside forces can negatively influence the program. For instance, private companies seeking to profit, and local Vietnamese refugee and political groups within California, came with

Contact:

Robert Carter
Dean, College of
Lifelong Learning
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI 48202

Phone: 313/577-4675

Fax: 313/577-5466

E-mail: rcarter@
cms.cc.wayne.edu

Presenters:

California State
Polytechnic University-
Pomona

Van Gamer, Dean,
Continuing Education

Michigan State
University

Marilyn Rothert, Dean,
College of Nursing

University of
Cincinnati

Jeannette Taylor, Dean
College of Evening and
Continuing Education

their own agendas. Cal Poly had to keep both groups from interfering with the program.

- Gain institutional support as part of your management plan. Pre- and post-reports to faculty, staff, administration, and external stakeholders are necessary. Recruit faculty through an honest but positive expression of the advantages to be gained by participating. Indeed, Cal Poly's faculty have found that the experience has profoundly changed them and their families. Still, in the beginning, it is "a real sales job" to show faculty and students, who are not convinced they have to work in a global economy, that the challenges and opportunities are real.

- This kind of partnership is not done in a vacuum. Cal Poly has found partners for this program in Citibank, Georgetown University, Vietnamese universities, the Vietnamese government and Vietnamese companies. However, be cautious in whom you choose as a partner. Every choice will exclude other potential partners because of political, economic, or other conflicts. Cal Poly had to give up a possible partnership in this project with local Vietnamese-Americans in California because this would have prevented a partnership with the Vietnamese government, which was critical to the success of the program.

- Be flexible, as long as your objectives are being met.

- Preparation and attention to details are key. For example, pre-trip briefings, immunizations, evacuation insurance, orientation to local politics and culture, and carefully planned travel in groups were vital to preventing problems.

University of Cincinnati Partnerships

To build outreach programs, the university needs to focus on internal and external relationships, partnerships with other universities and with other organizations, and among university units and departments. According to Jeannette Taylor of the University of Cincinnati, institutional culture often encourages competition, especially among university departments. Furthermore, outreach education is often perceived as the function of the continuing education department alone. Nonetheless, outreach is expanding at the University of Cincinnati, at least in part because of a drop in student enrollment, because of community needs for problem solving, and because of new instructional technologies.

Cincinnati has developed a master's degree in human development in Kingston, Jamaica, offered at nontraditional locations and delivered on weekends by faculty hired specifically to teach there. Faculty taught one weekend of classes per month for three months to complete a module, with students working independently between meetings. Academic governance was through the Department of Psychology, fiscal administration through continuing education. Jamaican authorities

handled marketing and recruited students, while a local coordinator acted as liaison. Faculty were recruited nationally through the National Training Laboratory because Cincinnati faculty could not or would not travel to Jamaica. The National Training Laboratory handled staffing, while Cincinnati faculty designed the courses, evaluated the program, and served on the comprehensive examination committees. Nine of the original fourteen students graduated through this partnership.

A second outreach program partnered the University of Cincinnati with a local community, Lebanon. Cultural barriers precluded students from “going to the city,” and so the Continuing Education Department formed a partnership with a local community college and six university academic departments, all of whom were often in competition with each other. These formed a steering committee to coordinate the program. The local community formed an advisory council of local government, school, business, and community leaders.

The community provided space in the town hall rent free, advised when and where to provide classes, and helped the program gain legitimacy in the community. The university purchased as many resources as possible in the local community, sold books through local bookstores, provided financing and equipment to connect the local library to the Internet, and trained library staff in its use. They created a new organizational form: a university center with shared ownership, managed by the Continuing Education Department.

Taylor noted several suggestions which can enable the success of these kinds of programs: 1) the involvement of campus-based leadership at the provost or vice-presidential level; 2) partnering among units at the university to avoid needless duplication; 3) responsiveness to community needs and community ownership of the program; 4) the involvement of all major relevant stakeholders in the development of appropriate delivery systems; and 5) using multiple sources for resources so no one entity is overburdened.

Outreach can no longer be sufficiently addressed through one department, Taylor concluded. Effectiveness requires internal and external partnerships. Relevant stakeholders must be involved in both the design and the delivery of community-based programs.

Michigan State University Partnership with Gaylord, Michigan

MSU has redefined outreach as core to the mission of each academic unit, no longer a separate, autonomous program. It is no longer viewed as a “missionary activity” but as a two-way partnership between university and community. Degree programs have the same standards and the same requirements whether on or off campus. Faculty teach classes both on or off campus as part of their load, and thus gain a new perspective.

Marilyn Rothert, dean of the College of Nursing, reflecting on the MSU master's program in health care offered in an underserved area of the state, cited key challenges. One is to recognize and respect differences between the university and the local community: 1) Two different time schedules must be matched. 2) The community is focused on receiving services while the university is focused on scholarship and the dissemination and creation of knowledge. 3) Local politics and community needs provide pressures which can conflict with university scholarly pressures. 4) Communities expect a short-term payback on their investment, while, for faculty, education has a long-term return. 5) Communities see community needs where faculty focus on the needs of individual students.

Another challenge comes from the unique resources that each partner brings to the partnership. Curriculum development as a joint effort is controversial with faculty. Joint administration of the program with the local community is a new experience for universities.

Rothert concluded with some suggestions for making community-based education in partnership work: Get to know the local area, who the people are, what their needs and wants are, and what they have as resources that they can contribute. Promote local representation from the university, if possible by having a faculty member living in the community. Incorporate all "three legs" of the university mission (research, teaching, and service) into each distance education program. Wherever possible, use distance learning technologies. Try to get as much done locally as possible. Recognize that some university policies and procedures must change so that local university center students are not treated as second class. Attend to faculty needs and concerns by "listening, learning, and growing with them," and have incentives built into the system to encourage experimentation in new ways of reaching students. Finally, accept that control over the distance education program is not the same as in a campus program, nor should it be because of the partnership in the community.
