Leading the Charge to Implement Strategic Engagement Initiatives to Capture Enhanced Online Learning Opportunities

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Engagement-Bridging the Online Relationship Gap
Background

- More than 90% of our courses are online.
- We have over 400 Faculty, most are Adjuncts.
- 8,000 Students!
- Training Faculty to teach online courses had not existed.
- Introducing engagement activities to online courses began in August 2019.
Online courses are here to stay, and their use will expand greatly in the next few years. The question is...

“Are we, as educators, ready for this learning migration?”
The Most Important Factor with the Online Modality is Setting the Tone Early!
Objectives of This Session

- Discussion on Enhancing the Faculty-College Online Relationship.
- Discussion on the Student-Faculty Online Relationship.
- Results of Engagement Activities Pilots.
- Next Steps...
This next portion of the Presentation will focus on two main elements of Engagement Activities:

- The Faculty-COB Relationship
- The Student-Faculty Relationship
The COB Team Faculty Engagement Experience - The Faculty-COB Relationship

- Improved Online Learning starts with knowing the needs of our Faculty.
- The following is feedback from two surveys (November 2019 and September 2020) of Adjunct Faculty members.
- Key Issues brought up by Adjunct Faculty:
  - Improved Communications
  - Greater Involvement with their courses
  - Scheduling issues
  - Research
The COB Faculty Engagement Experience - The Faculty-COB Relationship

- Improved Communications-
  - Increase Town Halls to explain the direction the COB is taking.
  - Expand webinars on best practices and engagement activities.
  - Develop more training programs.
  - Keep Adjuncts informed.

- Suggested Recommended Action Plans-
  - Continue to conduct periodic COB Webinars, when appropriate, for training and COB Town Halls for Adjuncts for improved communications.
The COB Faculty Engagement Experience - The Faculty-COB Relationship

- Greater involvement in Courses-
  - More involvement in the development and redevelopment of courses.
  - Enhanced options to bring Adjuncts’ experiences into courses.
  - Opportunities to revise assignments based on current business events.
  - Increased ability to add value to courses.

- Suggested Recommended Action Plans-
  - Expand on eUnion Faculty Course Cohort Groups, so Adjuncts could see information on their courses as well and provide meaningful feedback on these courses.
  - Work with IDD and RCTLE on pilots of the Open Template Project in future semesters.
The COB Faculty Engagement Experience - The Faculty-COB Relationship

- **Scheduling**-
  - Advanced notice on courses to be taught.
  - Explain how course scheduling works.
  - Ability to teach more courses.

- **Suggested Recommended Action Plans**-
  - Use the COB Resources site and eUnion Faculty Engagement Group to clarify how scheduling works.
  - Continue to work on optimizing the teaching opportunities of our Super Adjuncts and other effective Faculty members.
The COB Faculty Engagement Experience - The Faculty-COB Relationship

- Expanded Research Opportunities
  - The November 2019 Adjunct Survey mentioned there were 85 Adjuncts doing research, publishing, and conducting presentations.
  - The Adjuncts could be a significant collaborative resource in those areas working with our Full-Time Faculty.

- Suggested Recommended Action Plans-
  - Create an active Research Collaboration Group on the eUnion as a pilot for all COB Faculty to review and to participate in.
Keeping the Engagement Activities
Flame Burning Brightly

- As the College Faculty Trainer, we have been mentoring both new Faculty and Faculty identified as needing to be more effective.
- We introduce these Faculty to the Engagement Activities covered in this presentation.
- We mentor them through the next course they teach to see how they use the Engagement Activities.
- 10/12 of the Faculty mentored in March and May actively used Engagement Activities in their courses.
- They have received higher Student evaluation scores and positive Student comments.
- In addition, these Faculty members have found a new way of making learning more enjoyable.
Our Message to Our Students

- We care, and we want STUDENTS to know that we care.

- We need to help remove obstacles to STUDENT success.

- We want to know our STUDENTS, why they are here, and how we can support them.

- And....what do STUDENTS think?
The COB Team Faculty Engagement Experience - The Student- Faculty Online Relationship

What do Students want from their Online Faculty:

- More interaction with their Instructor.
- Increased knowledge about their Classmates.
- Timely Feedback.
- Meaningful Feedback.
- Shared experiences of both Faculty and Students.
- More relevant and business-driven assignments.
The COB Faculty Engagement Experience:
The Student- Faculty- Online Relationship
Possible Action Steps

- More interaction with their Instructor
  - Possible Action Steps: Zoom sessions (individual and group) and Zoom Introductions.
- Increased knowledge about their Classmates
  - Possible Action Steps: Video introductory sessions and Zoom discussion sessions.
- Timely Feedback
  - Possible Action Steps: University policy is 7 days, which is too late. Try for 2 or 3 days.
The COB Faculty Engagement Experience -
The Student- Faculty- Online Relationship
Possible Action Steps (Continued)

► Meaningful Feedback
  ► Possible Action Steps- Give feedback on all assignments that helps the learning process.

► Shared experiences of both Faculty and Students
  ► Possible Action Steps- Self-created videos (Module or Chapter videos), Zoom sessions, incorporating Faculty experiences in feedback on assignments.

► More relevant and business-driven assignments
  ► Possible Action Steps- Pending Open Templates; optional assignments; ask Students for topics.
Timely Feedback on Assignments

- University Policy is seven days.
- That would represent the same date new assignments are due.
- This gap often prevents Students from seeing how they did on the prior assignments.
- Recommended timely feedback time is 48 hours after the assignment deadline.
Meaningful Feedback from Instructors on Students’ Assignments

- This is our #1 concern from Students- Not receiving meaningful feedback on their assignments.
- What does a grade of 85 or 92 mean when the only comment from the Instructor is “Good job!”.
- The “Babysitter” syndrome!
- Suggested Reply:
  - Part A- Explain how the Student did on an assignment
  - Part B- Allow the Faculty to respond to the assignment’ topic.
Engagement Activities We are Applying

- The Dashboard Data/ Zoom Introduction Pilot
  - Data (GPA, Programs, Number of Courses, etc.) on each Student up front.
  - 1/1 Zoom Sessions with each Student early in the semester. (83.5% Student Approval)
- Self-Created Videos on Course Material, instead of bringing in external videos. (4.77/5 Student Approval)
- Optional Zoom Discussion Assignments - Learning is the exchange of ideas. (4.72/5 Student Approval)
- Encouraging feedback on assignments to include Faculty member’s experience.
  - Part A - Explain how the Student did on an assignment
  - Part B - Allow the Faculty to respond to the assignment’ topic.
- In the recent Faculty Webinar it was suggested to bring one engagement activity into each Module. Go slow and reap the rewards!
- Other ideas???
Sample of Student Comments from the Zoom Introduction Sessions

- I felt it was valuable because speaking with someone live line via Zoom bridges the gap between online instruction and face-to-face instruction. I found the video conference refreshing and it made me feel more comfortable as a student.

- It was good to meet the instructor to get an idea of their background and I think it also adds a personal touch to a non-personal learning platform. More importantly, it offers an opportunity to ask the instructor about any questions regarding the course.

- The meeting was valuable to understand the professor’s expectations and what we will be learning in the class.

- It provided me with a deeper connection with the professor. It brought about humanizing the online course, which in my opinion has been missing with online classes. Additionally, it introduced a dynamic that presented itself in the form of mentorship. I got a focus on my life goals from the session, in which this class will help, but the actual advice and conversation were invaluable to me.

- I got to meet my professor, share my thoughts about the class. It felt very close and personal. It was fantastic.
Personally, I believe the Zoom sessions are a great way to create engagement for online students. Not to mention, the great interaction and opportunity for everyone to share experiences and learn from each other. Believe it or not this was the first time in almost 3 years at ERAU that I had this level of interaction with my fellow classmates.

To me, because it actually encourages interaction and sharing of experiences. Whereas, otherwise, I would just be checking off another assignment for the week.

I believe that having the option for Zoom discussions is rich. I understand that with scheduling conflicts not all students may be able to participate in the Zoom discussion, but I found it to enhance the course material. Additionally, I viewed it more than a discussion, but as a mini lecture as well because the instructor’s feedback was much more than a sentence or two, and much more relevant to the topic.
Major Zoom Introduction Challenges

- How to insert the Zoom Rollout into the courses?
  - We used three different channels of communication.

- How to schedule the Zoom sessions, especially with international Students?
  - We are trying several ways - Bookings, Microsoft Teams, etc.
“Dr. O’Reilly, when is our first lecture?”
My response made me feel guilty.
I decided to do short video lectures for each chapter.
The lectures include my experiences on the course material covered.
80% of the Class viewed these videos.
I continue to do weekly video lectures...My guilt is gone!
I also have a better knowledge of the course material.
Some Engagement Activities Developed by Faculty

https://myerauedu-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/oreillyp_erau_edu/EUtDmoD2kGdEi8RN-jjKezUBxjw8YN4GlVcRtthju9GroA?e=GKZsO1
Closing

- Engagement Activities can indeed make online courses more personal and improve the effectiveness of our Faculty.

- Questions???
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