A Strategic Framework for Online Learning: Insights for Developing a Masterplan for Online Learning at Your Institution

by

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Session Description:

What framework do leaders use to develop a masterplan for online learning at their institutions? Join us to discuss a strategic framework for online learning that provides a step-by-step process for making key decisions; including examples of best practices, current trends, and lessons learned; and opportunities to share your own.

Relevance to Online Learning Community

How do Higher Education leaders (e.g., University Provosts, Associate Provosts, Deans and Directors of Online Learning) develop a master plan for online learning at their institution? What framework or best practices do they draw on to guide their decisions? Are there examples of guidelines, roadmaps, blueprints or master plans available for such aims? How do these leaders easily get practical (step-by-step) help and examples from respected experts to gauge their efforts, progress, and achievements? This presentation will reveal a strategic framework for online learning that leaders may use to develop a master plan for online learning at their institutions.

A major aim of university leaders is to develop and grow online learning at their institutions that will lead to increased revenue without sacrificing quality. However, to do so, these leaders need to be able to make sound decisions. In recent years, some university leaders have been turning to the expertise of online program management companies (OPMs) who propose revenue share arrangements that could, for example,
allow the OPMs to develop, market, and launch the universities’ online programs while providing advantages such as increased enrollment and revenue. These packages are attractive to leaders who recognise that there are many pieces to the puzzle of leading online initiatives and they conclude that the OPMs seem to have the puzzle figured out better than they do. In contrast, other leaders have been negotiating their way out of OPM contracts and are trying to fit the pieces of the puzzle together themselves by developing in-house systems to lead their online initiatives. Another recent trend for increasing student enrollment has been through corporate partnerships. For example, Arizona State, a university with one of the largest online enrollment in the United States, has formed corporate partnerships to increase their enrollment, the most famous being with Starbucks.

How do leaders find out about what works with traditional and recent trends for developing worthwhile online initiatives? Join us in this presentation to discuss a strategic framework for online learning that is grounded in research, best practices, and established models such as the Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs, the Quality Matters Online Program Certification, and the UPCEA Hallmarks of Excellence in Online Leadership.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to do the following:

- Distinguish between a strategic framework for online learning and a masterplan for online learning.

- Explain the different sections of the strategic framework for online learning.

- Discuss practical examples of best practices that are associated with certain sections of the strategic framework for online learning.

- Identify specific sections of the framework with supporting examples that may be used to develop a masterplan for online learning at their institution.

- Share strategies that have worked for them while developing online initiatives at their institution.
Presentation Outline:

After introductions, the presenters will explain what is a master plan for online learning. They will then discuss the relevance of a masterplan, and ask participants to share whether or not they have a masterplan for online learning at their institution.

Next, the presenters will explain what is a strategic framework for online learning and the development and relevance of the current strategic framework, including the established online learning models that informed the framework. They will also explain the major sections of the framework, including several practical steps that leaders may use to make informed decisions to develop worthwhile online learning initiatives at their institutions. These key decisions may be related, but are not limited, to the following.

1. Assure that online learning is in the university mission
2. Determine the purpose for offering online learning at institution
3. Determine demand for online learning
4. Develop online learning policies
5. Establish course design policies
6. Establish online teaching process
7. Develop human resource
8. Develop online degree program
9. Establish online learning visibility
10. Evaluate masterplan for online learning
11. Implement Improvements

The presenters will also share some practical examples of best practices and trends that are specific to various sections of the strategic framework for online learning.

Next, the session participants will be invited to do the following activities in groups, and report back to the entire group.

- Discuss challenges they have faced while developing or helping to develop and launch online learning initiatives at their institutions.
- Identify sections of the framework that may be used to develop a masterplan for online learning at their institution
- Articulate current trends for growing online learning at universities
● Share strategies that have worked for them in the process of developing online initiatives at your institution

The participants will also be invited to ask questions, including those related to the development and application of the strategic framework for online learning.

The presenters will end the session by offering a challenge and an encouragement to the participants, and pointing them to additional resources that could help them develop a masterplan for online learning at their institution.