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How E-Learning Services Are Provided and Organized

For the past 15 years, Marist College has used a centralized support model. Primary support, help desk support, instructional design support, faculty training, and student orientation for online courses are all provided by the office of Academic Technology and eLearning.

How E-Learning Is Incorporated into the Business Model

We instituted the first online accredited MBA program in New York state in 1998, so our online business model has been in place for some time. We want the same learning experience and learning outcomes for both our face-to-face and online courses, so we think tuition charges should be the same. Our online courses, though, often have more students. For every extra 25 students in these large courses, the college provides an additional teaching assistant. This model allows us to scale our online courses in a cost-effective manner. Many institutions view Marist as being experienced in online and distance course offerings, and we have been approached by various institutions to partner in providing services for them.

How We Support Faculty Transitioning into E-Learning

Faculty at Marist are generally open to distance and online education, although there are still some faculty who do not want to be engaged. The challenge is moving faculty to the next level of e-learning regardless of their current level. Providing training for faculty, encouraging them to adopt certain methods for teaching online courses, and persuading them to work with teams in course design are models that are being tested in various programs but have yet to be adopted across the institution. To aid in the transition, Academic Technology provides course design support, pedagogical training, and help desk support for faculty. Our support staff go to faculty offices rather than expecting faculty to come to us.

How the Educational Impact of E-Learning Is Assessed

Our proactive assessment processes look at the design and development of online courses to ensure they meet quality standards. A faculty online and distance education committee decided to adopt Quality Matters as the standard for online teaching, and we tailor those standards to meet local needs. Online course evaluations assess the effectiveness of the course. In the past two years, we have gotten heavily engaged in learning analytics. We have a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant for which the goal is to create a complete open-source solution for learning analytics, including LMS and business intelligence tools. We built a predictive model to create an early alert system for the first two to three weeks of a course. We have also investigated intervention strategies for at-risk students. We have tested this model at a number

of community colleges, and the overall model has been shown to work in these different contexts to result in improvement of course grades.

The Future of E-Learning at Marist College

We are strategically focused on growing our distance programs. We foresee that all graduate and adult programs at Marist will move to at least a hybrid format, which matches our student preferences. We also predict that our traditional students will still want to live away from home in residence at campus, but e-learning will offer a different educational experience that may see these students traveling to and living at different branch campuses around the globe.

Wish List for E-Learning

- More faculty involvement in training
- Greater recognition for faculty experimentation with e-learning technology
- More widespread use of student orientations