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## How E-Learning Services Are Provided and Organized

The University of Minnesota currently offers more than 30 online programs, and we have used a distributed approach to e-learning. Academic units drive the initial decisions about which courses and programs to offer, and they provide the design, development, instructional delivery, and student support for academic offerings. In 2008, the university launched Digital Campus, which offered, for the first time, a single website for prospective and current students seeking information on e-learning opportunities. Students can also contact the Digital Campus Support Center by phone, e-mail, and video chat for answers to basic questions on U of M offerings. Referrals are provided to the appropriate academic unit, where students can continue the application process. In January 2013, the provost created the Office of eLearning, with the goal of providing more strategic direction for enhanced, blended, and online learning at the U of M. Over the past six months, there has been a joint commitment to better integrate the e-learning support offered by central units such as the Office of eLearning, IT, libraries, and the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide more seamless e-learning services for faculty and collegiate units.

## How E-Learning Is Incorporated into the Business Model

Out-of-state students who take *all* of their courses online are charged only the in-state tuition rate. Only a few of the U of M units assess a fee to help support services for online courses. The standard financial policy that currently exists allows for 75% of tuition dollars for online courses to flow back to the academic unit providing the course, whereas the other 25% is reserved for the unit to which the student is admitted. Units, in turn, pay a certain amount per student back to central administration to cover services it provides. Although the model generally works well, it can sometimes create some disincentives for investing and partnering in the development of new online courses and programs.

## How We Support Faculty Transitioning into E-Learning

As with most institutions, faculty hold diverse attitudes toward e-learning. The increased national visibility of MOOCs and other online offerings over the past year appears to have prompted more faculty to look seriously at blended and online teaching options. In the past six months the provost has funded an internal RFP process to promote the enhancement of undergraduate academic programs using digital technology and partnered with Coursera to offer a series of MOOCs. The Coursera project was the first major effort to bring together key central units using a unified team approach to support faculty. These units also provide a series of faculty development opportunities including a faculty fellows program and sponsorship of the Quality Matters programs.

## **How the Educational Impact of E-Learning Is Assessed**

The Office of eLearning tracks analytics and compiles statistics on online and blended learning at the university. For the 2011–12 academic year, the U of M offered more than 1,400 online courses, with 30,000 student enrollments in online courses annually system-wide. The Office of eLearning also provides leadership for specific area assessments such as the analysis of e-textbooks in 2012 in conjunction with EDUCAUSE and Internet2.

## **The Future of E-Learning at the University of Minnesota**

The provost has made e-learning one of her top priorities. She has adopted five major activities for future work in e-learning:

- Improving undergraduate teaching and learning through course redesign/enhancement
- Increasing graduation and retention through scheduling flexibility from online courses
- Providing alternative access for graduate/professional students needing online degree programs
- Improving access for continuing education students
- Exploring emerging technologies (including the five Coursera MOOCs, which are currently being rolled out)

Recently, the provost's office awarded nine grants under an RFP designed to enhance undergraduate academic programs using technology.

## **Wish List for E-Learning**

- New strategic investment in undergraduate curriculum initiatives
- More work with faculty and academic units to ensure quality and scalability in e-learning