Develop an Online Enrollment Management Approach: Opportunities and Pitfalls of Online Learning (W2.4)

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Dr. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it.

The conductor said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it."

Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one."

Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too, know who I am."

“What I don't know is where I'm going."
About OHIO

• 4 year public institution in Southeast Ohio- founded in 1804
• First institution in the Northwest Territory, first in Ohio and first University chartered through an act of congress (1787).
• Carnegie Classification as a Research University with High Research Activity
• Approximately 35,000 students
  – 21,500+ students at our main Athens, Ohio Campus
  – ~8,000 fully dedicated online eLearning- Largest Public in the State for Online enrollments
  – 6,000 students at 5 regional campuses.
• Very “traditional” with 8,000+ students in our residence halls
• Largest provider of publics in the state with fully online learning (as well as expanded medical and health campuses in Columbus and Cleveland)
• Second Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 2017-2023 (SEMP).
This document argues that innovation in enrollment management will be necessary as these pressures affect a university with a proud history of success as a traditional institution of higher learning. This approach, as outlined in this document will include:

– A **sustained commitment to our core** educational values and historical presence as a premier educational institution;

– A **continued investment in efforts to enhance our educational offerings** to different venues (Dublin, Cleveland, Beavercreek, Regionals), different constituencies (international students, adult learners), different campuses (Athens and Regional Higher Education), and different modalities (traditional, hybrid, online); and,

– A recognition of the critical need to further **invest in the institutional capacity** to successfully lead our marketing, recruitment and student success efforts as we navigate the known and unknown challenges that will occur over the life of this document.
Online Student Enrollments, Fall 2018*

*Unduplicated Final Fall Headcount
A word on the presentation approach taken here as we have been a bit of a “Poster Child” on all the differing models that may be considered
Build Core Online Outside of Center Operations

Move Operations to the Center but Independent

Integrate Operations – “Put Work Where Work is Done”

Mature Operations and New Inflection Points Emerging
Round 1 (2007-2010):
Build up an organization outside core of institution, but under University brand, to “prove the concept” of online delivery.
2007-08

- Vice Provost position created from former executive of our Regional Campus System
- Lifelong and Distance Learning in existence but at a limited focus—mostly correspondence programming with a few hundred students a year
- Desire was to provide a broader role for outreach

**Concept:** Use internal executive with mandate to build unit outside current central core of institution to break log jam with a vendor-based OPM model

**Opportunity:** “Prove the Concept”;
- Allowed for ease of ramping up or down-sizing staff if needed
- Outside the center allows for more nimbleness a

**Potential Pitfall:**
- Outside of the core so resource needs start to overshadow growth
- Carefully consider the right partner, contract length, delineation of responsibilities, etc. with the companies you want to work with.
- Can run independently for awhile but immediately need to begin to
2008-09

- Outreach with 6 community colleges begins with intentional desire to grow first outreach non-print based program
- Additional program launches beyond Nursing
- Dean and Vice Provost sign with partner to develop the RN-2-BSN program
- Begin to hire temp staff for application processing, marketing, etc.
- Begin to hire CPM (regional recruitment) staff

Opportunity: “Prove the Concept”
- Found low-hanging fruit, in a program that we had competency for with a fast growth trajectory
- Capitalize on current nascent efforts in the space by focusing existing staff quickly.

Potential Pitfall
- Desire for a quick launch, knowledge of our lack of infrastructure (and more importantly, working relationships) with everything from student enrollment, marketing, course development and student success combined with the need for funding caused us to sign a very long-term, tuition-sharing contract (OPM) with a vendor that may not have been in our best interest in the long run.
2009-10

- Continued to add community college partners and create new agreements across the state
- Kick off RN-2-BSN in Spring 2009 with 21 students
- Enrollment interest grows considerably in program, continue to staff up with temps

**Opportunity:** This was the first our “uh, oh” moment.
- Started to capitalize on pent-up demand and being first in state and region to take advantage of a vendor-based approach.

**Potential Pitfall:** “Uh, Oh”.
- Beginning of growth pains (cracks in the system) starting to manifest.
- Quickly started to see demand grow and had to put all resources into RN-2-BSN.
- Also created much tension as the creation of duplicative services pushing into existing central operations was starting to become an issue.
- Oh, and really bad marketing….
Community college partners (CCP) continue to grow
- CCP added to RN-2-BSN efforts
- Approx. 3,200 in Online Enrollments
- Hiring freeze at University
- PeopleSoft implementation
- Vice Provost Retires—“concept proven”
- Regional Campus Executive Dean takes on new role with additional title of Vice Provost for eLearning

Opportunity:
- First attempt to start to bring the operation in house.
- Desire was more about trying to find cost savings and alignment with recruitment operations at community colleges.

Potential Pitfall:
- Beginning to see cracks in the system
- Online operations are subject to overall university hiring freeze, so start to hire significant temp staff
Round 2 (2011-2013):

Begin to move operations to the center
Opportunity:
- You may be starting right here if you do not want to build an outside the center organizational approach to online learning.
- Second attempt to start to bring the operation in-house;
- Still issues about new program development as focus is mostly still on support of one program, remaining challenges with marketing operations staying with eCampus office.

Potential Pitfall:
- Admissions operations changes are substantial;
- Needed to move temp staff to permanent, costs, tie into CRM, ERP, phone systems, etc. as enrollment is approximately 4,300 by this point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011-12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• PeopleSoft implementation</td>
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<td>• RHE Executive Dean Retires; Begin to relook at overall approach and oversight</td>
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<td>• Oversight by COB Dean</td>
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<td>• Applications stacked to ceiling (yes they were in paper!) unanswered phone calls – too many to count</td>
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<td>• Approach VP for Enrollment regarding a new centralized approach</td>
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<td>• Provost approves a redesign with centralizing recruitment (CPM staff) and processing operations in Undergraduate Admissions;</td>
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<td>• Staff realignments to Student Financial Aid, The Registrar’s and Bursar’s Offices</td>
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2012-13

- Vice Provost for eLearning and Strategic Partnerships position hired.
- Admissions takes over fully for application processing and student application support
- New Staff in Undergraduate Admissions trained, systems aligned, backlog caught up
- Expanded community college partnerships signed
- Elimination of vendor contract
- Vice Provost begins work with Deans and Provost on strategic planning for online growth

Pro; Opportunity:
- Senior position inside Provost office with direct connection to Academic Leadership
- Work to eliminate contract and large revenue loss due to vendor.

Con; Potential Pitfall:
- Significant backlog with applications, student marketing and support not in place fully when contract eliminated.
- eCampus finance model still being developed as University moving to RCM.
- Marketing disconnect
“Put the Work Where the Work is Being Done”
2013-15

• Sr. Vice Provost (SVP) – Instruction and Innovation hired; Vice Provost position eliminated

• All marketing and enrollment functions moved to central Enrollment Management operations

• Deans share concerns with having to pay out ½ revenues to outside vendors in OPM model

• Strategic Planning committee created- do this or not; How to handle with Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) approach at institution

Opportunity:
• Aligning overall instructional innovation with eLearning
• Clear decision to let eLearning be a modality and not an end in itself for select programs.
• Gives control and cost to academic departments fully in RCM.

Potential Pitfall:
• Clear need to decide if we, as an institution want to really do this.
• Unclear as to overall cost structure needed
Round 3

**SEM**
All recruitment, marketing and application processing through orientation

**Instruction and Innovation**
Course design, project management, student support and advising

**Colleges and Departments**
Instruction, funding
2015-16

• Open position hiring for support and communications; positions filtered throughout Admissions org chart; not completely separate, re-task all websites

• eLearning “flip” in budget model to make it a cost center as apposed to a revenue source

• Need to set funding aside for unknowns (student support, student services, etc.)

• Role of online graduate programs start to manifest as an opportunity

Opportunity:
• Efficiency of scale by aligning staff, technologies and infrastructures to existing functions
• Holistic enrollment management approach to look at all modalities in planning and coordination

Potential Pitfall:
• Diffusion of core work to be done on traditional enrollments (when there is a budget cut, what gets cut in a combined operation)
• Accounting for unexpected costs
2016-17 – Undergraduate Programs

• Begin to fully move toward an integrated model
  ✓ RFP for marketing vendors, chose 4 (undergrad, grad, specialized, revenue share)
  ✓ Develop undergraduate general marketing campaign (high tide lifts all boats)
  ✓ Specialized “kicker” campaigns for select programs
  ✓ Bill all colleges for portion of general and their specific kicker as appropriate
  ✓ Invest approximately $1M to create or modify 12 positions in admissions to support ongoing operational needs to create a more comprehensive approach

Functional Area Growth:

• Articulation Management and Development
• Partnership Management
• Communication Development
• Digital Enrollment Marketing
• Recruitment Operations
• Admissions Operations
• Admissions Advising
• Admin. Support
• Transfer Credit Evaluation
**2017-18 – Graduate Programs**

- Begin to fully move toward an integrated model
  - Develop process plan for onboarding of graduate programs out of instructional innovation office
  - Begin to socialize a go, no-go market analysis for each program at the earliest stages
  - Develop a marketing budget and pay-back model for colleges that do not have funds for marketing over a 5 year period with a 3 year ROI decision on teach out or not
  - Re-negotiated multiple contracts with vendor that will save approximately $3M over next few years
  - Developing a MOU-based graduate model with College of Arts and Sciences

**MOU- Based Model for Program Delivery:**
- Time for Graduate Enrollment online efforts
- Marketing – SVP, Enrollment signs off on marketing with college approval
- Quad based delineation of responsibilities:
  - Enrollment/Grad College/Arts and Sciences/Instructional Innovation
- Develops an independence for the need to rely on vendors for smaller programs
Currently (again) evaluating our model due to:

- Increased competition
- Cost of expanded marketing to reach new locations
- Strategic investment and dis-investment of programs based on market analysis as opposed to building and maintaining programs due to a faculty or Deans desire only
- Cluster programming (health programs, business programs, etc.)
- Lack of large marketing budget and risk/reward tolerance as a public institution
- How to work toward a more mature graduate operation that tends to be faculty-driven
- Etc…
Questions/Discussion
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