WHAT DOES A QUALITY ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

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Introduction

- ☐ Online education – first courses, then entire programs
  - ☐ Forever changed higher education!

- ☐ Growth of online education in higher education far outpaces that of traditional (Allen & Seaman, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2008).

- ☐ From the beginning, quality was questioned yet growth continues.

Quality Assessment in Higher Education

□ Rankings in *US News and World Report*

□ National Survey of Student Engagement (*NSSE)*

□ Regional and discipline specific accreditation

□ 88% of all colleges and universities in 2003 affirmed they were engaged in some type of continuous improvement strategy.

Quality Assurance

□ Quality Assurance is still one of the greatest challenges in higher education (Bates & Poole, 2003; Meyer, 2004; Sallis, 1996).
  ■ Increase in public accountability
  ■ Increase in competition for students
  ■ Supports faculty buy-in (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005)

□ Higher education is turning to quality assurance initiatives used in business such as the Balanced Scorecard and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (Alstete, 2007).

Quality Assurance

- ☐ **Standards must be clearly defined** (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998, 2000; Khan, 2005; Lee & Dziuban, 2002; Leh & Jobin, 2002; Meyer, 2002; Onay, 2002; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005; Stella & Gnanam, 2004; Suryanarayanaravu, Srinivasacharyulu, & Mohanraj, 1995).

- ☐ **Need for an evaluation instrument** (Balanko, 2002; Claus & Dooley, 2005;)

- ☐ Quality Course Standards are in place – Quality Matters, Blackboard Exemplary Course rubric, etc.

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

Kaplan and Norton

Literature Overview

- □ Quality Online Education
  - ■ Difficult to define and complex (Meyer, 2002)
    - ■ Not an excuse to ignore assessment
    - ■ Many advertise "quality" online programs

- □ Various approaches for quality assessment
  - ■ Regional accrediting guidelines
  - ■ Student and/or faculty satisfaction rates
  - ■ Student achievement

Pursuing quality is all about performing to the highest standards…

Sallis, 1996

Standards in the Literature

- 14 studies recommended standards
  - WCET (2001) *Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs*—institutional context and commitment, curriculum and instruction, faculty support, student support, and evaluation and assessment.
  - CHEA (2002) – Institutional mission, Institutional organizational structure, Institutional resources, Curriculum and instruction, Faculty support, Student support and Student learning outcomes.
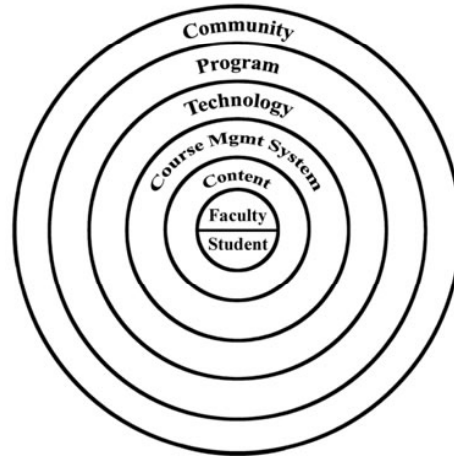
Standards in the Literature

- Bates' ACTION Model (2000) – Access and flexibility, Costs, Teaching and Learning, Interactivity and user friendliness, Organizational issues, Novelty, and Speed.

- Sloan Consortium Five Pillars (2002) – Learning Effectiveness, Faculty Satisfaction, Student Satisfaction, Scale and Access

Standards in the Literature

- ☐ Osika's Concentric Model (2004) — Faculty support, Student support, Content support, Course management system support, Technology support, Program support and Community support.

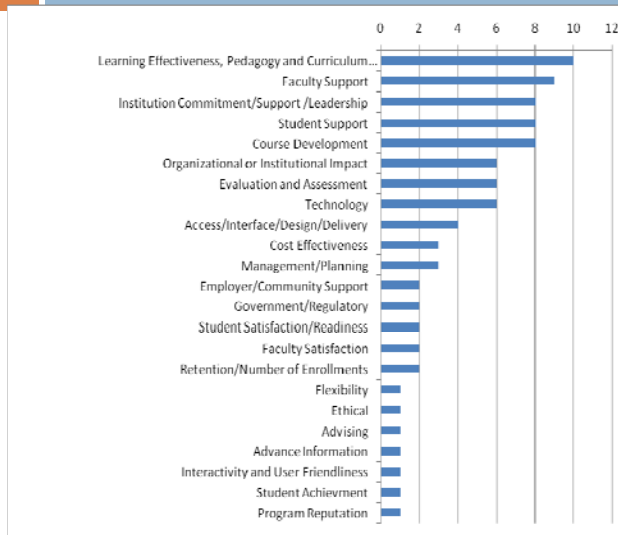| Badrul Khan's E-Learning Framework (2001)	
INSTITUTIONAL • Administrative Affairs • Academic affairs • Student services	**ETHICAL** • Social and Political Influence • Cultural Diversity • Bias • Geographical diversity • Learner diversity • Digital Divide • Etiquette • Legal issues
MANAGEMENT • E-Learning Content Development • E-Learning Maintenance	**INTERFACE DESIGN** • Page and site design • Content design • Navigation • Accessibility • Usability testing
TECHNOLOGICAL • Infrastructure planning • Hardware • Software	**RESOURCE SUPPORT** • Online support • Resources
PEDAGOGICAL • Content Analysis • Audience Analysis • Goal Analysis • Medium Analysis • Design approach • Organization • Methods and Strategies	**EVALUATION** • Assessment of learner • Evaluation of the instruction/learning environment

IHEP's Quality on the Line

- IHEP 24 Benchmarks for Success in Internet Based Distance Education (2000)
  - Seven Themes
    - Institutional support
    - Course development
    - Teaching and learning
    - Course structure
    - Student support
    - Faculty support
    - Evaluation and assessment

Various Approaches

- 23 themes were common
  - Most common was Learning Effectiveness/Pedagogy/ Curriculum.
  - Faculty Support was second.
  - Technology Support and Evaluation and Assessment were listed in only 6 of the 14 studies.
  - Student Retention was only listed in two of the 14 studies.

Quality Themes

	0	2	4	6	8	10	12
Learning Effectiveness, Pedagogy and Curriculum...							
Faculty Support							
Institution Commitment/Support /Leadership							
Student Support							
Course Development							
Organizational or Institutional Impact							
Evaluation and Assessment							
Technology							
Access/Interface/Design/Delivery							
Cost Effectiveness							
Management/Planning							
Employer/Community Support							
Government/Regulatory							
Student Satisfaction/Readiness							
Faculty Satisfaction							
Retention/Number of Enrollments							
Flexibility							
Ethical							
Advising							
Advance Information							
Interactivity and User Friendliness							
Student Achievment							
Program Reputation							

Based on the following studies from :
Bates, 2000;
Chaney, Eddy, Droman, Glessner, Green and Lara-Alecio, 2009;
CHEA , 2002; Frydenberg , 2002;
Haroff & Valentine, 2006;
IHEP 2000;
Khan, 2001;
Lee & Dziuban, 2002;
Lockhart & Lacy, 2002;
Mariasingham, 2005;
Moore & Kearsley, 2005;
Osika, 2004;
Sloan Consortium, 2002;
WCET, 2001.

Newest Requirements from SACS

- Distance learning should be included in the institutional mission
- Organization structure should reveal administrative responsibility
- Purpose and program outcomes identified
  - Student learning competencies should be identified and achievement assessed for distance education courses and programs.
- Faculty involvement in both program planning and course development

Newest Requirements from SACS

- Faculty should be evaluated
- Professional development must be provided
- Adequate technology available for faculty
- Technology must be current and upgraded
- Those who provide learning resources must assess their service to students
  - Library
  - Writing Center
  - Tutoring

Newest Requirements from SACS

- Demonstrate adequate funding
- The institution is expected to monitor the success of its distance education students to include consideration of drop out rates, failure rates, and completion rates.
- The institution is expected to provide distance education students with processes by which they can submit complaints.

What Are Your Processes for measuring quality?

The critical element is that institutions should plan, evaluate, and then revise programs based upon assessment results rather than just being another institution to deliver classes at a distance.

Lockhart and Lacy (2002)

Questions?

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