Faculty Reflections: Highly Effective On-line Programming in Business

In this issue, we feature excerpts from a Q & A process with Jeanne Enders, Executive Director, SBA online programs at PSU

What were the greatest achievements/accomplishments you (your program) made in helping students be successful and engaged?

Jeanne Enders: Google hangout video sessions scheduled four times a term for every student with a small group and their professor seemed hard to implement at first, but students and faculty rave about how this synchronous interaction improves learning, connections and success in the class. We also had a wonderful, dedicated academic advisor for our online students. She reached out to students who were struggling and kept close contact with students and faculty in the program to insure they had what they needed to be successful.

We put a lot of energy into quality course design. I think the assignments are often especially valued by students because they often relate to their work. Students report being able to apply course material immediately in their jobs.

What were some unexpected challenges your students (your program) encountered this year, if any?

Our program struggled with attracting new students because we had no access to marketing funds. Students still showed up but mostly by word of mouth. Each term the cohort size has grown but we think it would have been easier with marketing support. Students find the courses rigorous and sometimes struggle with time management but most students usually do well if they take the course work seriously. We tried to attract out of state students but faced some administrative obstacles in offering a flat rate tuition.

We spent a great deal of time "educating" students who filled in the class when our cohort size wasn’t large enough to fill a section. Our cohort students are on-boarded well and have fewer problems with technology or understanding how the courses work. However, the bulk of our teaching and advising time is spent trouble-shooting for one-time online students.

How did your students (you and your program) face these challenges?

We began talks with local and regional companies to create student pipelines. We worked with community colleges to market our programs. We kept our standards high and now and again students would leave the program if they found the coursework to be too difficult. However we helped them as much as we could to meet the expectations of course rigor. We want to be sure that "online" doesn't mean "less rigorous".

We discussed with the provost and financial specialists the constraints put on out-of-state populations and we hope that in the future there will be more flexibility regarding mixing out of state and in state students in online coursework. Ideally we would have enough cohort students to fill each section with students going through a sequence who also get to know the ins and outs of our course design.

What suggestions do you have for others (students, faculty or staff) who might encounter similar challenges?

Be brave, be patient, keep the students in the front of your mind in all decision-making - in fact, bring them in and talk about their ideas for program priorities/characteristics - and collaborate with the university while remaining as independent as possible in order to innovate into your vision!
Integrative Learning and ePortfolios

The Provost Challenge team behind reThink project #169 introduces the selection of PebblePad as PSU’s institutional ePortfolio platform. The University has created a stewardship team to support PebblePad implementation and effective use of ePortfolios across campus.

Learning in the 21st century is complicated. Not only are students expected to acquire disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) knowledge, skills and abilities, they also need to reflect on and to integrate their learning in different situations to demonstrate their capacities for future careers. Electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) provide learners with opportunities to make connections between their learning in different contexts (academic, workplace, and community) and to document their learning over time. This allows them to develop their digital identities and encourages them to reflect on how their learning experiences can be integrated in their personal, professional and civic lives. At the same time, ePortfolio implementation provides opportunities for innovation and engagement in teaching and learning.

This month’s Carnegie Conversation highlighted the ways that collaborative partnerships and interdisciplinary learning opportunities afforded by ePortfolios provide opportunities for learners and instructors to engage in flexible and lifelong learning, as well as student-centered teaching and assessment practices that facilitate 21st century learning.

For updates on PebblePad implementation progress, please visit the OAI blog http://www.pdx.edu/oai/blog-entries

For updates on opportunities for Innovation and Engagement https://goo.gl/DDkGrM

Student Reflections: Highlighting PSU’s Positive Impact on Student’s Lives

In this article, we will feature excerpts from Abdi Hamid, majoring in Health Studies/Community Health about his positive and his positive and rewarding experiences with ACS.

“The Academic and Career Services (ACS) helped me in two major ways: during my first term at PSU (fall of 2012), it was hard for me to focus on my studying without a job that works with my school schedule. ACS team helped me organize and update my resume, create the Career-Connect log in account, upload my resume on the Career-Connect website, and, to find on-campus work-study Job.

Since then, I have been working at the Senior Adult Learning Center at the Institute on Aging. Second, the ACS has helped me achieve my academic goals. Before coming to the ACS, although I was still passionate about getting a four year degree and beyond, but like many students, I was undecided about my major and considered changing it many times.

However, after many in depth conversations with my academic and career adviser, I found my passion and declared a “Public Health” major. My ACS adviser became my best mentor whom I share with my concerns and success about my academic goals.”

“Because of my ACS advisor’s commitment to my success and their quality mentorship, I got accepted to the 2014-2015 McNair Scholars Program. In addition, I will be graduating in the spring of 2015 with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health. None of my academic goals would have been possible without the support and guidance of my ACS advisor, ACS’ limitless opportunities, and warm welcome. It’s the quality of mentorship that make me come back whenever I have concerns or questions about my academic journey. These are the reasons I have had a positive and rewarding experiences with the ACS.”

Meet An IAC Member...

Leslee Peterson – Assessment and Partnership Coordinator

Leslee Peterson works with all GSE degree and licensure programs to develop plans for evidence-based continuous improvement and accreditation. She also supports the Portland Metro Education Partnership (PMEP) which collaboratively addresses issues of teacher preparation and professional development.