



NCHEMS

**Year Three Evaluation Report
Oregon State University**

**Prepared for the
Fund for the Improvement of
Postsecondary Education Grant
(Application Number 053599908)**

D R A F T

November 2002

**National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
P.O. Box 9752 • Boulder, Colorado 80301-9752 • (303) 497-0301**

Oregon State University FIPSE Grant

Year Three Evaluation Report

Introduction

The Oregon State University (OSU) Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education grant began in October 1999. The grant was to have originally ended at the end of September 2002, but due to personnel turnover grant operations began near the end of the first funding year. Because of this delay in implementation, a no-cost extension was requested and has been granted for one year.

A first evaluation site visit for the grant was conducted in October 2000, near the beginning of the second full year of the grant. The second site visit of the grant was held October 2001, after the beginning of the third year of the grant. The most recent site visit occurred in May 2002. In addition to interviews conducted during the site visit, the evaluator reviewed documents and pertinent websites (www.orst.edu). This document represents the third evaluation report for the grant.

The primary goals for the three-year grant are:

- Develop 99 new courses to be used in eight distance-delivered degree programs,
- Develop and implement a comprehensive course development strategy, and
- Address faculty issues having to do with the new course development strategy as well as within the distance-delivered courses themselves.

To date, Oregon State University's Distance Education unit has developed more courses than required by the grant (115 of 99, or 116%). In Year Three, development began on 37 new courses, 70% (26) of which were completed. Course enrollments across terms in the year indicate steady enrollment ranging from small numbers in the summer term when most courses enrolled 15-20 students. Only one course in the summer term enrolled fewer than 10 students. Furthermore, the list of courses developed is evidence of OSU Extended Campus's efforts to develop courses that are not stand-alone courses, but instead those needed for overall attainment of a particular degree or are useful for a particular sequence.

OSU Extended Campus personnel continue to work on implementing a comprehensive course development strategy. To accomplish the latter goal, the OSU Extended Campus has been integrating its work with that of conventional academic departments at the university. This approach is substantially more complex than the approach originally set out; in effect the focus of this grant has provoked cultural change at the institution. This evaluation report focuses on the institutional change process.

In this report Distance Education is distinguished from distributed learning. Distance Education is the actual unit at Oregon State University that delivers learning at a distance using face-to-face, video-based, online, or a mix of technologies. As of September 1, 2002, Distance Education formally became the OSU Extended Campus; this change was made in order to build relationships and to allow the unit more flexibility. For the purposes of this report, distributed learning refers to all forms of technology-enhanced or distant delivered activities including but not limited to mixed mode on-campus courses, courses delivered at distant locations by the OSU Extended Campus, and online courses delivered by the OSU Extended Campus or conventional academic departments.

Overall Oregon State Approach to Distributed Education

This Oregon State FIPSE grant has evolved to focus on the integration of the OSU Extended Campus more fully with academic structures and has brought to light how distributed learning generally has been implemented in a decentralized and piecemeal fashion at the institution. For example, some departments offer completely online courses that are not run through the OSU Extended Campus. Other departments and even individual faculty offer blended courses that are partially delivered using the Blackboard course management system, but no one coordinates these activities. No single unit at Oregon State has the authority to coordinate distributed learning or can ask departments to implement their online courses using common guidelines or practices. Some campus units have responsibility for certain types of learning (i.e. the OSU Extended Campus for physically distant courses, Blackboard administration through ITS) or selected areas of coursework, but no single unit or committee coordinates all aspects of distributed education in order to make sure that Oregon State University is consistently represented through quality learning opportunities that meet institutional criteria in terms of class size, pedagogy, and delivery standard, etc. While this decentralization worked previously, it now leads to fragmentation, overlap and inefficiencies as multiple units do similar work (online course and program creation by anyone or any department that chooses) and other areas that require attention are ignored (for instance, policies are needed for a definitive campus-wide statement on distributed education and intellectual property rights as well as guidelines for good pedagogy regardless of delivery mode). One specific area of confusion is Blackboard training. Several respondents noted that OSU Extended Campus was not providing enough Blackboard training; this particular function is not within its purview but is a related function to what they do. Blackboard training is the responsibility of Information Technology Services.

While the OSU Extended Campus has initiated and sustained discussions among faculty and administrators (for example, about pedagogy for online instruction), these activities become difficult as the budget crunch worsens. Furthermore, the OSU Extended Campus has been given no real authority within the institution nor has any symbolic authority been granted to them to lead OSU in terms of distributed education.

Integration of the OSU Extended Campus with Broader Institution

Many people on campus are interested in the newly formed Distance Education committee in the Faculty Senate and with the OSU Extended Campus unit generally.

About fifty people attended a Distance Education Forum held earlier in the year. Faculty and administrators from across campus discussed the OSU Extended Campus's vision for integrating its efforts with existing academic structures. During interviews campus administrators expressed confidence in the capabilities of the OSU Extended Campus, but also noted that they need to better understand the role of the OSU Extended Campus and what distinguishable returns it can make possible to departments and colleges.

Bill McCaughan and Mark Merickel are both considered visionary and "outside-the-box" thinkers. Nevertheless, despite their leadership, others on campus spoke about remaining issues including personnel turnover within the OSU Extended Campus and lingering worries about how the unit was previously managed. This perspective on campus is beginning to change slowly: a faculty member noted that the "campus mood is less suspicious" of the OSU Extended Campus these days. Campus officials are also recognizing that distributed education can provide pedagogically sound courses that provide students and faculty with a convenient scheduling alternative.

An administrative official believes that "the more recent emphasis [within the OSU Extended Campus] has been much closer to the mission of the institution, instead of chasing money." He noted that while OSU proper is caught up in the "best and the brightest" syndrome, the OSU Extended Campus is concerned about the other students in the state, who make up the majority. This person responded that while OSU needs to meet the needs of the state, faculty perceptions of distance education are that it is expensive and that the long term benefits to individual faculty members and department are unclear.

Despite this warming to the OSU Extended Campus leadership and wider understanding about it generally, concern and misunderstanding remain high regarding how monies brought in through distributed learning will be shared with academic departments, the library, and the OSU Extended Campus. Of primary interest is how revenue sharing models would work between conventional academic departments and the OSU Extended Campus. One dean noted what a difference it makes that the OSU Extended Campus is no longer isolated because it begins the discussion of revenue sharing in a public forum. He also noted that while it is nice to have development money made possible by the grant, ongoing money is needed and "at Oregon State money follows student credit hours."

One revenue-sharing model presented at the Distance Education Forum called for a 55%-45% split between a department and the OSU Extended Campus. This distribution conflicts with other perspectives on-campus:

- A Faculty Senate member thinks at least 60% should be returned to the department, maybe even 75%.
- The Budget Reconciliation Committee has proposed a 66%-33% division generally on-campus for administrative support.

- Some department chairs want an explanation for why the OSU Extended Campus wants more overhead (45%) than they get for research grants (41%).
- Some departments and colleges want the distribution to be 94% to the unit with 6% going to the OSU Extended Campus for "brokering" the course.

Other policy issues remain of concern to departmental and college administrators as well:

- A department chairperson wants to be able to pay the department's faculty, not the OSU Extended Campus with the money.
- Faculty are also suspicious of the "new" model suggested by OSU Extended Campus that a tenured professor oversees four or more adjunct faculty members who are the instructors for a distributed education course. The OSU Extended Campus needs to make clear that this model is already being used on campus, particularly when graduate students teach sections of courses for a lead professor.
- Some faculty that cannot "see" students who are at a distance think that faculty members who work with students at a distance are not doing anything. "People don't see these students as real students." Furthermore, uneven enrollments—10 to 12 students in face-to-face courses compared to only 5 in some online courses, causes some faculty to resent their colleagues who are teaching online courses.
- Copyright and intellectual property rights policies continue to confuse people. Some faculty members believe that the OSU Extended Campus is usurping these rights. OSU Extended Campus administrators understand the problem of "false ownership:" that faculty and administrators think that the OSU Extended Campus owns their courses when they do not; the Oregon University System actually owns the courses and gives the ownership back to Oregon State University.
- The Provost initially released a budget system that put all units in competition for student credit hours; this action coupled with tightened budgets causes departments to freeze activities to hold onto "their" money. Such approaches to funding are antithetical to collaboration models such as those proposed by the OSU Extended Campus because they fundamentally work against sharing. Since then, however, the Provost has amended the budget system so that the OSU Extended Campus will not be competing with academic departments for student credit hour production.
- Another basic misunderstanding on-campus is that the OSU Extended Campus has within its purview the ability to "give" academic departments student credit hours. This is not true. OSU Extended Campus can facilitate a department generating more student credit hours by increasing production via the development and delivery of pedagogically sound courses or programs that meet student and state needs. What is also true is that with the new budget system in the state, the OSU Extended Campus actually already enhances the number of student credit hours going to departments because departments get to "count"

SCH generated by the OSU Extended Campus, even if the department has little to do with delivering that course. One dean believes that "distance education has not progressed as much as people wish it had with the money going back to the departments...[because] student growth has not been as fast as expected." It's not clear in what time frame this return on investment could, or should, be expected.

In summary, one dean captured the character of the continuing misperceptions about the OSU Extended Campus as stemming partially a) from misunderstanding, b) from the questions being inadequately answered, and c) just from a basic philosophical difference.

Dean and Department Chairpersons' Perspectives

In general, college deans at Oregon State are sophisticated about distributed learning but there is some confusion about how the OSU Extended Campus works. For instance, one dean noted that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is giving away its content for free but that OSU is charging for content through the OSU Extended Campus. This administrator fundamentally misunderstands the MIT Open CourseWare Initiative, which makes course syllabi and artifacts available in an online format but does not provide courses with instruction free of charge. Similar to this misunderstanding, some deans erroneously noted that "distance education [was] failing nationwide." Their evidence: NYU and Columbia's efforts, which were fundamentally different endeavors from the OSU Extended Campus. Another difficulty is that colleges within Oregon State University without distributed education or online presences know little about the OSU Extended Campus. What knowledge they do have comes from faculty colleagues or from students who have taken courses with some distance component. The result may be that when some students express distaste for distance courses (probably online components of existing courses); this displeasure gets translated back into the culture of a college as "students don't like the distance side of a course." To the contrary, recent evidence from the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that half of students who can compare distributed with face-to-face instruction feel there is no difference. While the remaining fifty percent are split, half of that group find distributed education better than face-to-face and half find it worse (Sikora and Carroll, 2002).

A dean, who is supportive of the OSU Extended Campus, noted the increase in interest in and "presumed" demand for distance education. Another dean who has worked with Distance Education in the past feels that people on campus do not "have a sense of the value that can be attained" through the OSU Extended Campus. Other departments and programs have coordinators and chairpersons who are very happy with the OSU Extended Campus and feel that they work very well together and that the OSU Extended Campus been available to them. Some of the heavily funded OSU research colleges have comparable or better technical facilities than the OSU Extended Campus allowing them to do their own production if they so choose. Nevertheless, OSU would be well-served to coordinate distributed learning efforts as these decentralized colleges may not adhere to institutional policies to standardize the look and feel—not the content—of OSU distributed education.

Despite these positive perspectives, as noted above perceptions of the OSU Extended Campus on campus remains mixed. More extensive conversations are required with on-campus constituencies to help them understand what OSU Extended Campus is and how it can partner with them to help OSU collectively better meet students' learning needs. One reason this information is not more widespread may be that discussions to date have largely occurred between upper-level administrators and not with departmental faculty and administrators.

Faculty Senate

The idea of integrating the OSU Extended Campus with conventional campus units is new to many people at Oregon State. While new strategic planning about the future of Oregon State University, OSU2007, does not include distributed education as an official satellite group, recommendations can be forwarded through appropriate satellite groups. Campus officials are also pleased with the new Senate committee formed to focus on distance education that formally began July 1 because "there are a lot of people with concerns." Initially the Senate committee will focus on a) faculty relations, b) long term financing models, and c) marketing and recruitment needs. Another area to give attention is institutional policies and their impact on distributed learning.

- A dean cited policies recently implemented by Faculty Senate committees that, in general, are antithetical to the increasing presence of electronic and distance delivered education. For example, a policy that does not allow for a faculty member or a limited number of faculty members to participate in a graduate-level proposal or dissertation defense via telephone.
- Questions remain regarding approvals that are necessary for programs offered entirely online. Although programs may have institutional and state approval in their conventionally delivered format, does that approval extend to an entirely online program? What about mixed method programs? Who needs to discuss these differences and determine new policy to alleviate inconsistencies?
- Faculty reward policies need to be re-visited. Can online courses be considered for inclusion in a faculty member's dossier forwarded for promotion and tenure consideration? Some departments may have some guidelines or have general rules about whether courses are in-load or out-of-load can be included. In many cases work done for the OSU Extended Campus or for online coursework may be considered out-of-load and not officially counted.

The characterization of the integration of the OSU Extended Campus with the Faculty Senate varies. Administrators and faculty from conventional departments on campus describe the OSU Extended Campus as being subservient and "needy" and required to answer to other departments' issues and concerns. Extended Campus administrators tend to view the new Faculty Senate committee as a method for them to better communicate with the rest of the university. It is not clear that institutional units and their personnel understand the role of the new Faculty Senate committee in the same way. Some believe

the new committee has a governance role, while others, largely from OSU Extended Campus, see the committee in a more advisory role. This difference needs to be clarified.

The OSU Extended Campus - Internal Issues

While much of the grant's focus has been on integrating the OSU Extended Campus with conventional on-campus procedures, day-to-day operations within the OSU Extended Campus continue. Some interviewees noted issues internal to the functioning of the unit. Personnel turnover and growth in the number of employees (over 20 FTE now) was noted not only by personnel in the unit but also by deans and faculty coordinators of programs. Some noted that turnover might be a distraction and detriment to accomplishing goals. A department chairperson stated that although "they have a lot of personnel, they say they'll do stuff for you...[but it does] not [work] so well."

In other areas, work progress is easier now that the new Banner portal system has been installed; the portal is up and running but by late Spring only at about 25% of capacity. OSU is working on making it more operational. The portal and OSU Extended Campus system interact with one another eliminating the need for course data to be entered twice. In fact, rather than having separate class schedules, now Extended Campus courses are included in the official schedule of classes released. OSU Extended Campus courses are included in the back of the paper version and integrated into the web-based version. As the portal is brought up to full implementation, extensive training is required for administrators, staff, and faculty, but it is not apparent which office will provide and continue to provide needed training.

Earlier in the year faculty coordinators of degree programs met with OSU Extended Campus staff and the Statewide Degree Council. This meeting was very successful. The faculty coordinators appreciated having few scheduled agenda items allowing them to ask questions and get answers that they needed. Faculty coordinators said that it was important to have the undivided attention of the OSU Extended Campus staff. Program coordinators noted that OSU Extended Campus staff work hard to solve problems including scheduling of classes, etc. for them. In other ways, OSU Extended Campus personnel are doing a good job of integrating with the broader campus.

- Interviewees cited the excellent Instructional Design Team within OSU Extended Campus. A few OSU administrators seem to believe, however, that faculty members do not want help from OSU Extended Campus in developing their courses.
- OSU Extended Campus works well with the library support system, and interviewees said that library services for distance education students are excellent. The library is well integrated into newly developed courses that are built with support from the OSU Extended Campus production group; however, if a department does the production itself, then the library is largely ignored. Issues that remain include:

- The library does not have access to the portal because it is not an academic department, and
- Dissertation students at a distance are "invisible" to the library system, which means that they are unable to check out books. Right now the Distance Education Librarian checks out books for these students.
- OSU Extended Campus, Student Affairs, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs staff are collaborating on courses and modules that can be used for orientation and student success. These will be useful for all students—distance and conventional—and made available via the portal. They are currently working on how to ensure access to module without students incurring additional costs.
- Faculty coordinators are happy with the work of the OSU Extended Campus advisors; and OSU Extended Campus advisors are pleased with their integration with departmental advisors. The coordination has lowered faculty coordinators' workloads. By the time students meet with their specific faculty coordinators they are better prepared and know more about the background and what's necessary to pursue particular degrees. Students are much clearer now on who can answer specific types of questions. The result is that students bounce around less.

OSU Extended Campus has done a good job integrating with key personnel from traditional units within Oregon State University.

Funding Models and Revenue Sharing

Approximately twenty percent of the OSU Extended Campus budget comes from state sources; the rest is from internal fees and revenue sharing. However, this budgetary structure is not well understood on campus creating a need for more showcasing of good revenue-sharing examples. Departments and programs need to understand how revenue sharing will work—specifically not generally. Money flows have always been important but have become especially so because of the tightening budget situations state- and nationwide. Again, a clearer—and more widespread—understanding of how monies brought in through distributed learning will be shared with academic departments, the library, and the OSU Extended Campus is necessary.

Work remains to be done on how different models work with actual departments and with interdisciplinary programs that have no "home" department and therefore no faculty who can be assigned to the interdisciplinary program. When no one "owns" a program, it is at the greatest risk because it is a theoretical possibility that no faculty will be assigned to the program if each contributing department chooses to withdraw their support and faculty members. Interdisciplinary programs are unable to hire faculty of their own because they are virtual entities. Those interdisciplinary programs that function largely through OSU Extended Campus must rely on OSU Extended Campus to be their "department" and give the program faculty and staff support. This support needs to be long term and thoughtful; it cannot be merely an allocation of money in a single year for

development of courses. Attention needs to be given to refreshing and delivering courses as well.

Identifying and Counting Distance Students

With the increasing focus on the OSU Extended Campus and distributed learning at Oregon State University, clearer data is needed to inform decision makers and to guide policy. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a standard definition in use on campus for "distributed education student" or "distant student." Neither is there an official data definition committee although an *ad hoc* committee of Banner users acts as the *de facto* data definition committee. The result seems to be that there are a) no "official" definitions in use at Oregon State and b) no mechanism for agreeing on definitions.

There are methods for using Banner codes for selecting students enrolled in online courses. But determining whether they are on-campus, conventional students versus true "distance" students is more problematic. It may be that one of the closest approximations might be to use zip code as a proxy and to say those students with a Corvallis zip code (or within a 10 or 20 mile radius) are "resident" students and that all others are distance students. While this is a messy method, it may be the best first approximation that is needed for arriving at a better method for determining whether students are distance students or not.

Oregon State has few resources in institutional research; it is not an institutional priority. OSU Extended Campus leaders should consider hiring someone to run "superqueries" out of the Banner system to have baseline data from which to work. An alternative would be to buy some time of a policy analyst already running such queries out of the Banner system.

If data were available, it would be nice to have course counts and headcounts presented as shown in the following tables, first for the courses (Table 1) and then for the enrollments in those courses (Table 2). It would be best to have unduplicated counts; these are much easier to extract for course than for enrollments.

Table 1: Oregon State University Courses, Specific Term XXX

Online courses <i>offered through OSU Extended Campus</i> = #####
<u>Other distance courses <i>offered through OSU Extended Campus</i></u> = #####
SUBTOTAL OSU Extended Campus courses = #####
Online courses <i>not offered through OSU Extended Campus</i> = #####
Other distance courses <i>not offered through OSU Extended Campus</i> = #####
Blended courses (primarily on-campus courses that use other delivery methods) = #####
<u>Conventional on-campus courses</u> = #####
SUBTOTAL On-campus courses = #####
TOTAL Oregon State University Courses (Sum of two SUBTOTALs above) = #####

Table 2: Enrollment in Oregon State University Courses, Specific Term XXX

Enrollment in online courses *offered through OSU Extended Campus* = #####

Enrollment in other distance courses *offered through OSU Extended Campus* = #####

SUBTOTAL OSU Extended Campus Enrollments = #####

Enrollment in online courses *not offered through OSU Extended Campus* = #####

Enrollment in other distance courses *not offered through OSU Extended Campus* = #####

Enrollment in blended courses (primarily on-campus courses that use other delivery methods) = #####

Enrollment in conventional on-campus courses = #####

SUBTOTAL On-campus Enrollments = #####

TOTAL Oregon State University Enrollments (Sum of two SUBTOTALs above) = #####

Suggestions

Based on interview data and review of documents and websites, the evaluator made the following suggestions to the principal investigator during the site visit, and they are repeated here:

- Clarification is needed regarding the Faculty Senate Distance Education committee and whether it is an advisory or a governing committee. It probably should be an advisory committee and provide leadership in collaboration with the OSU Extended Campus for distributed learning at OSU including drafting clearer policies.
- A better integration of distance education and conventional student services on campus will prevent duplication of effort. One place to look for guidance is the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications Student Services LAAP project (see <http://www.wcet.info/projects/laap/index.htm>) for ideas of how to get conversations started across groups.
- Dean McCaughan and Dr. Merickel should work with the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Council on understanding the implications of distributed learning for graduate education.
- Provide information in deans' retreats on how distributed learning generally and the OSU Extended Campus specifically can figure positively in budget discussions.
- As the President is a proponent of distributed learning, he or the Provost might consider convening a half-day seminar on the "promise of distributed education" for all aspects of a modern university such as Oregon State.
- If there is not one already, OSU might consider creating a Data Definition Committee to aid in standardizing vocabulary and definitions across the university; there may already be such a committee associated with the portal and data warehouse work.
- Continue regular meetings of program directors and OSU Extended Campus staff, with no scheduled agenda as an opportunity for program directors and coordinators to have the freedom to ask OSU Extended Campus staff what they need.
- Draft and widely distribute specific revenue-sharing funding models.
- Generate more success stories to show faculty and administrators from conventional academic departments the benefits of partnering with the OSU Extended Campus. They need to see and understand how the revenue sharing and service arrangements can work for them; that it will not "take away from their primary mission."

Conclusion

The OSU Extended Campus has met the course creation goals of the grant in the first three years of implementation. They are well on their way to integrating the old Distance Education unit, now the OSU Extended Campus, within the traditional university structure of academic departments and Faculty Senate. This goal is much more extensive than that originally envisioned in the proposal, but also one that will serve Oregon State University and the citizens of the state of Oregon better in the long run. The upcoming no-cost extension year will be used to continue the institutional change needed to truly integrate the campus.

References

Sikora, A. C., and Carroll, C. D. (2002, November). *A profile of participation in distance education: 1999-2000*. Postsecondary Education Descriptive Analysis Reports (NCES 2003-154). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

List of Interviewees

Mark Abbott, Dean, College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences
Carol Babcock, Distance Education, Finance Officer
Barbara Balz, Registrar
Sherman Bloomer, Dean, College of Science
Bob Bontrager, Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management
Allan Brazier, Degree Program Manager, Education
Bob Burton, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs
Paul Doescher, Faculty, Rangeland Resources
Rick Eckel, Associate Director of Distance Education
Sally Francis, Dean of the Graduate School
Jeff Hale, Director, Liberal Studies Degree, College of Liberal Arts
Wayne A. Kradjan, Dean, College of Pharmacy
Lorrie Lind, Distance Education Academic Program Assistant
Melinda Manore, Department Head, Nutrition and Food Management
Mark Merickel, Director of Distance Education
Bryan Miyagishima, Distance Education Librarian
Pat Muir, Coordinator, Environmental Science Degree Program
Susie Nelson, Distance Education Advisor
Larry Pribyl, Co-Director, Communications Media Center
Paul Risser, President
Nancy Rosenberger, Professor of Anthropology, President of Faculty Senate
Fran Saveriano, Coordinator, Master's in Business Administration Program
Kay Schaffer, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Bruce Sorte, President-Elect, Faculty Senate
Sam Stern, Dean, School of Education
Lisa Templeton, Marketing Director, Distance and Continuing Education
Pam Van Londen, Distance Education Project Manager

Documents

"OSU to unveil revamped distance education program," press release, September 4, 2002.

Fall 2002 Schedule of Classes hard copy

<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/>

<http://catalog.oregonstate.edu/>

Oregon State University

Protocol

2002 Site Visit

Administrators

1. What are the pros and cons of integrating Distance Education with traditional academic departments?
2. What still needs to be done?
 - a. Structurally?
 - b. Culturally?
 - c. In terms of policies?

Internal Personnel

1. What are the pros and cons of integrating Distance Education with traditional academic departments?
2. What remains to be done?
3. Are there any lingering problems?
 - a. What are your ideas on how to address these problems?