In this issue:

The Online Global B-School: FDU's Quest to Establish its Business School Presence in the Online, Global Community

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The Online Global B-School:
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Abstract

This paper presents an overview of the online and global education initiatives that are being instituted and developed at Fairleigh Dickinson University, a private comprehensive liberal arts university with campuses in New Jersey and the UK. It focuses both on the distance learning and global education initiatives at the University as a whole, as well as focusing on the specific programs that are being initiated and developed at the College of Business. These programs include distance learning (web-based and hybrid courses) that are being offered at the university, the DL course requirements, the Global Business Management program for adult learners, and the emphasis on global aspects (including a Global Virtual Faculty program). The paper concludes with some details and prospects on the future of the online/global perspective at FDU.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Distance learning (DL) is identified to be a learning situation where teachers and learners are not located in the same place (Gilbert, 1995), and where media allows for the geographic separation of the teaching and learning processes (Calder, 2000). With the prevalence and accessibility of the Internet, the ability to deliver courses "anywhere, anyplace, anytime" has been a very attractive proposition (Rosenkrans, 2001; Cooper, 1999; Rose, 1999; Downes, 1998). However, the educational community has in the past relegated it to a lower, inferior status compared with face-to-face instruction (Turoff, 1998; Feenburg, 1999), claiming that technology could not effectively bridge the gap between instructors and students (Noble, 1997). However, supporters have made strong arguments and cases for advocating the effectiveness of web-based distance learning (Hiltz, 1998; Wegerif, 1999; Levin, Levin, and Waddoups, 1999).

Regardless of the controversy and arguments pro and con, overall, the response from many universities has been a positive move towards implementing courses using distance learning. In fact, it was predicted back in 1999 that by 2004, 84% of the 4-year colleges would have some form of online courses through the Internet (McNealy, 1999), and indeed, the American Distance Learning Consortium has confirmed that technology is being widely implemented as part of the American college experience (ADEC, 2002).

The focus of this paper is on the experiences that Fairleigh Dickinson University has had, in terms of its initiative to bring about global and distance learning on a university-wide basis.

Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) is a comprehensive private university, with programs ranging from baccalaureate to doctoral, in a wide range of subject areas. The University, originally founded in 1942 in Rutherford NJ, and currently with campuses in Madison NJ, Teaneck/Hackensack NJ, as well as Wroxton England, currently enrolls in the neighborhood of 10,000 students (both full and part-time), and is the largest private university in New Jersey. Among the colleges that comprise the university are the Becton College of Arts and Sciences, New College of General and Continuing Studies, University College, and the Silberman College of Business.

The Silberman College of Business (SCB), an AACSB accredited business school, offers programs leading to bachelor and MBA degrees (management, marketing, information systems, finance, etc.), as well as specialized degrees in health systems management, pharmaceutical/chemical studies, human resource management, taxation, accounting, entrepreneurship, and international business. There is also an Executive MBA program. The SCB graduate programs enroll many students who are professionals working in the Tri-State metropolitan area.

At FDU, the support for DL originated from the Office of the President. In his inauguration speech, President J. Michael Adams stated, "Effective with the incoming freshman class of 2001, Fairleigh Dickinson University will be the first university in the world to recognize the Internet as a fundamental learning tool by requiring every undergraduate to participate in a distance learning course each year." (Adams, 2000). As the program and initiative developed, there is a division of the university, headed up by Dr. Michael Sperling, called the Office of Interdisciplinary, Distributed, and Global Learning, which is primarily concerned with the promotion, development, and administration of distance and global programs at FDU.

2. FDU ONLINE LEARNING INITIATIVES

One foundation of Fairleigh Dickinson University's venture in distance learning, is the undergraduate DL course requirement. Effective with the Fall 2001 incoming freshmen class, every undergraduate student is required to enroll in one distance-learning course for each year of study during his or her baccalaureate career. One of the primary reasons for this requirement is the University's commitment to global education and the need to use distance learning to bring the world to FDU students.

Online (web-based course) learning is one of the cornerstones of the online course curriculum at FDU, as there are on-line education requirements and options for students enrolled in the University. On the undergraduate level, the requirement is that all undergraduates must enroll in and complete at least one global on-line course during each of their four years in the University. The courses in this category include those conducted online using the Webcampus portal (a Blackboard-based system), as well as those which include classroom sessions as part of a "hybrid" teaching approach. Courses are coded as being intended for delivery to students in each of the four years of the typical undergraduate curriculum (DL1, DL2, DL3, DL4).

Freshmen, many of them in their first semester in college, are introduced to distance learning through the DL1 course, The Global Challenge. This first required distance-learning course, prepares students to think globally. Delivered via online learning and taken within the first two semesters, the course demonstrates the global dimensions of several crucial contemporary issues including the problems of global conflict, the global environment, and health and population concerns. It also emphasizes the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding these issues.

The second phase of the distance learning initiative began in Fall 2002, and new online courses in each of the University's four colleges were introduced for sophomores. The courses include:

Becton College of Arts and Sciences:
    Environmental Biology
    Introduction to Psychology
    Nobel Literature

Silberman College of Business:
    Macroeconomics

New College of General and Continuing Studies:

Introduction to Computers
Career Women in Literature and Film

University College: Arts • Sciences • Professional Studies:

The Life of the Mind (philosophy)

The range of courses allow students to make a selection in terms of the courses which are relevant to their curriculums, or otherwise are of interest to them as electives.

The courses developed for the DL/Global Initiative were carefully designed to meet the needs of students who will be taking these courses online, with only a minimum, if any, of classroom face-to-face meetings. Some of the methods that are used in these courses include:

Online Lectures and Presentations: The online presentation of course materials. These online lectures and presentations include the use of audio, video, and graphics and other multimedia features to meet the needs of visual preference, auditory preference learners, and tactile (or kinetic) preference learners.

Online Tutorials: These include simulated "hands-on" sessions that will meet the needs of tactile (or kinetic) preference learners.

Online Discussions and online seminars/workshops with Global Virtual Faculty.

Perspectives from "Online Seminar" discussions: Assignments in the course are given with the requirement to use online resources, including the Internet, online databases, and online library facilities.

Regular discussions on issues and topics as "online class participation" using the Black-Board discussion board.

Both asynchronous and real-time student online interaction with the instructor.

Personal assessments and "self tests" as well as actual online course tests.

Compilation of a "Personal Academic Webliography."

Providing Internet links to corporate web sites, conferences, professional organizations; online postings and downloads of readings/white papers, articles/papers and other resources associated with the topics covered.

To help support the requirement of online courses, there are Internet-equipped computers in labs through the campuses, together with links to the network and Internet provided in campus dorm rooms. The interaction is supported by web-based e-mail (Webmail), a Blackboard –based FDU course portal called Webcampus. Students can log into Webmail and Webcampus through any internet connection asynchronously and participate at any time.

An important difference between FDU's initiative and those of other universities is in the fact that while some programs are targeted to attracting students from outside the university's geographic area, FDU's initiative is more focused towards introducing its own campus-based students to the Internet, online learning, and the ability to reach out globally through computer networking.

Student Evaluation in Online Courses

The type of evaluation used (course grading) varies from course to course, but often includes several different kinds of requirements, including written papers and reports, online participation using message boards and other means, group collaboration projects, and labs which can be completed outside of the classroom. Some instructors require the compilation of a "webliography" which consists of links that relate to a particular topic or topics being studied. Participation in online message boards is an important part of certain courses. The majority of the assignments, therefore, are submitted online and do not require classroom interaction.

In addition, some courses are conducted using more of a hybrid approach, where there are a certain number of face-to-face classroom meetings. This may include an initial introductory meeting, and meetings

for exams, so as to avoid the possible diffi-culties inherent in online exam delivery.

3. FDU GLOBAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Aside from the goal to have students be-come comfortable working and communicat-ing in cyberspace through the Internet and computer communications, the ability to recognize the global realm and reach of business (and the world and society as a whole) is also an important focus of FDU's initiatives.

This "global perspective" emphasizes, and takes into account, not only the Western, American, or established viewpoints, but also those which integrate the new global economy and "global village" orientations, which are playing a key role in the 21st Cen-tury.

As a result, courses that are delivered online use a unique global component, that being the on-line presence and participation of Global Virtual faculty. These are scholars and practitioners from various universities and organizations around the world, who can provide their own unique perspectives and approaches.

Global Virtual Faculty (GVF)

The primary role of a global virtual adjunct faculty member (GVF) is to bring a global dimension to the learning experience by of-fering different perspectives and observa-tions to students on the issues under study. For example, GVF may be involved through participating in a threaded discussion on a course topic, presenting relevant narrative material or case studies, or directing stu-dents to useful web sites within the Global Virtual Faculty member's area of expertise (FDU Global Education website, 2003).

Each Global Virtual Faculty member is as-signed a campus-based partner, who helps shape and design his or her participation. The campus-based faculty member is re-sponsible for the syllabus, primary material, assignments, and evaluation. All communi-cation and participation is web-based, with the Global Virtual Faculty member remaining in his or her home environment (FDU Global Education website, 2003).

Levels of Involvement

There are two levels of involvement of the Global Virtual Faculty:

Level One (L1) involvement includes consis-tent participation in a course throughout the semester (14 weeks). The average amount of time spent on-line is 1-2 hrs/week.

Level Two (L2) involvement includes partici-pation in a course for a period of up to 7 weeks and is content-area based. Global Virtual Faculty members who prefer to par-ticipate in discussions on specific topics within a particular course, rather than throughout the semester, opt for this level of involvement. In such cases where those top-ics are not in consecutive order, the partici-pation does not exceed a total of 7 weeks/semester. The average amount of time spent on-line is 1-2 hrs/week.

The nature of the participation for Level One or Two is mutually agreed upon by the main facilitator of the course (FDU faculty mem-ber) and the participating GVF and typically includes:

Engaging in an on-going dialogue with stu-dents on a weekly basis in the form of threaded discussion;

Postings of original writing on a topic under discussion;

Sharing observations on a previously pub-lished or presented paper;

Directing students to useful web sites within the global faculty member's expertise (FDU Global Education website, 2003).

Nomination and Selection

FDU global virtual faculty are nominated by a member of the FDU faculty and/or by an-other Global Virtual Faculty member. Each nominee must complete an application form, provide a current CV and meet the following expectations:

Demonstrated intellectual expertise and/or practical experience in a specific field,

Ability to adapt to the course curriculum and Internet delivery modality,

Adequate English proficiency,

Access to appropriate hardware and software applications that allow consistent and effective web-based participation.

Specific opportunities for participation are discussed with each nominee. GVF appointments are made after review and approval of the relevant academic department and/or dean and administered by the Office of Interdisciplinary, Distributed and Global Learning (FDU Global Education website, 2003).

Training, Preparation and Evaluation

Global virtual faculty members participate in an on-line training program that familiarizes them with the pedagogical details and expectations of the program. The GVF collaborate with the FDU course instructor, whenever possible, in planning the delivery of a specific course. At the conclusion of each course, students are asked to complete a formal evaluation of the course and of both the campus-based faculty and the global virtual faculty member's participation. Continuation as a GVF is contingent upon achieving consistently strong evaluations. As participation by all global virtual faculty is coordinated through the Office of Interdisciplinary, Distributed and Global Learning, individuals are assisted in their training and participation, as appropriate, by the staff of this office (FDU Global Education website, 2003).

Some of the GVF which have participated in FDU courses include professors and industry professionals from India, Malaysia, Chile, Romania, Slovakia, and Belgium. Examples of these GVF include Tomas Chuaqui, a political scientist in Chile, Norval Edwards, lecturer at the department of literatures in English at the University of West Indies in Jamaica, Cheng Ming Yu, head of the economics unit of the faculty of management at the Multimedia University in Malaysia, Kumar Ketkar, an editor/reporter for *The Times of India,* and Anna Varkonyi, a Hungarian environmentalist.

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**4. SCB INITIATIVES:
ONLINE/GLOBAL EDUCATION**

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The Silberman College of Business is actively involved in the FDU online/global education initiative. Through a school-wide portal, FDU Webcampus, which is run using a Blackboard-based system, students can access online courses any time they want, through the Internet.

For the first two years, the goal is to give undergraduates a good grounding in several broad areas of learning, so a university-wide general liberal arts course, and a basic business (economics) course are taken.

The Global Challenge and Macroeconomics are courses that would be used to fulfill the first two years' requirements. From the third year on, a variety of courses are being developed, or in the planning stage.

One course which is being developed for launch in early 2004 is MIS 4301, Data Communications and Networks. This course, which discusses computer communication technologies, has the following characteristics:

Data Communications and Networks covers a wide range of important technologies, concepts, and global/ business/ societal implications relating to the implementation and use of network and data communications technologies. This includes not only the technological and technical aspects of data communications, but the associated issues and impacts which play a role in this critical area for the new millennium.

**Online Course Characteristics:
Infusion of Global Perspectives**

The nature of data networks and communications, especially with the growth and influence of the Internet and global communications, is inherently global in reach and scope. The course will discuss not only technological aspects, but also the business, cultural, and societal aspects of networking and communications conducted around the world. Some of the important global issues that are discussed include:

Networking and communications: How they are implemented both domestically and in countries around the world. Equipment and network differences are discussed.

Technologies: Examines how technologies and capabilities differ in various countries;

how advanced is the US compared with other nations in terms of network technologies? This focuses in particular on the developments in Europe and Asia.

Government: The role of government policies and regulations in various countries, and how they affect the business and usage of networks and communications.

Legal Aspects and Standards: The legal aspects of networks and communications, and how they vary in different countries, including the major network standards.

Societal/Cultural: Societal and cultural aspects of network and communications usage.

International Communications: The handling of domains and sites from around the world; also the management of language differences when communicating electronically.

Global Internet Applications: Global applications of networks and the Internet.

Interdisciplinary:

While network and data communications may at first glance appear to be a technical subject, and of course there are a number of technological issues that are discussed, there are other subjects which tie into the area:

Electronic Commerce and E-Business: The expanding use of the Internet, for e-commerce and various other applications are examined in detail. This includes an examination of the various technologies, applications, and issues related to the Internet and World Wide Web.

Marketing: The role of the Internet and networking as a marketing tool, and the marketing of network/ Internet/ communications products and services.

Law: Legal aspects of networking / communications.

Management: Management of networking/communications in the global economy.

Government/Politics: Government and political aspects of networking/communications, both domestic and international.

Finance: Financial aspects of networking / communications.

Psychology: Psychological aspects of network / communications.

Sociology: Societal and cultural aspects of network / communications.

Communications: Communications and language aspects of networking/ communications.

5. GLOBAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (GBM) PROGRAM

The Global Business Management Weekender program is designed to allow adult students to pursue and earn a college degree from SCB, through a "hybrid" approach of both face-to-face classes and web-based online class sessions. The program is intensive and requires a great deal of commitment on the part of the students, but has been very successful in allowing highly motivated adult students/learners to complete their degrees, even though they may still be working.

The GBM uses both the hybrid instructional model, and also a program that is geared to the strengths and interests of adult students. The hybrid model is basically a type of distance learning where there are both online web sessions, as well as conventional face-to-face classroom meetings. The goal is to combine the strengths of both technology and classroom interaction into the course experience. While there is reduced time spent in the classroom compared to a full FTF course, there is an increased emphasis on continuing the interaction and discussions asynchronously after the class period has ended (Garnham and Kaleta, 2002; Young, 2002). In fact, it has been suggested that adult learners are particularly good candidates for distance learning, because of their self-directed, independent nature, and can benefit from the flexibility of asynchronous learning (Thompson, 1988). Moreover, because adult students often tend to exhibit more motivation, discipline, and time management skills than traditional college students, the hybrid instructional model can be very suitable (Koohang and Durante, 1998).

TEACHING ADULT STUDENTS

Based on previous research, there are several goals and objectives that have been identified with regards to distance learning and adult students (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 1998; Brookfield, 1991). These include:

Active learning, cooperation, and collaboration

Real-world problems and work-related applications

Solving of problems, decision making, applied experience

Emphasis on practice

Interactive activities, critical thinking, and discussion

As a result, teaching adult learners can be both interesting and challenging. There are a number of differences that come into play when working with adult learners. Some of these characteristics include:

Lectures need to be replaced by dialog.

The entire semester needs to be planned before the first night of class.

Assignments had to be very structured, and completed before coming to class.

Case studies needed to be replaced with "present time" assignments.

Memorization of concepts is replaced with application of concepts.

Project-based assignments replace objective testing in assessing command of material (Hamilton, 2002).

Adults need a mentor and coach rather than an authority figure, and there is an increased focus on needs and skills that are relevant in the workplace. Adults are generally more motivated than traditional college students, and they are pursuing their studies primarily because they have a use for the knowledge or skill being sought. Because adults are goal-directed, they appreciate a learning experience that is clearly defined, well organized, and with goals and objectives centered on their interests, careers, and expectancies (Hamilton, 2002).

Adult learners have a preference for single concept, single-theory courses that focus heavily on the application of the concept to relevant problems. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them.

In addition, adult learners can draw from an accumulated foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. There are benefits to connecting learning to this knowledge/experience base (Hamilton, 2002).

Adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning and generally want to immediately apply new information or skills to current problems or situations. Adults need to be able to integrate new ideas with what they already know if they are going to keep - and use - the new information. Information that conflicts sharply with what is already held to be true, and thus forces a re-evaluation of the old material, is integrated more slowly. Finally, adults are practical and focus on aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work.

As such, instructors should not take for granted that adult learners are interested in knowledge for its own sake. Therefore, instructors must be able to connect new information to applications that will be useful to the adult student (Hamilton, 2002).

6. GUIDED INDEPENDENT LEARNING

To meet the needs that have been mentioned in the previous section, the courses developed for the GBM program use the concept of Guided Independent Learning (GIL). This approach attempts to maximize the usefulness of the courses to adult learners/students, with the goal of presenting GIL modules instead of traditional class lectures.

In general, the concept of GIL incorporates a modular approach to course content, the focus is on real-world applications, instructors act as "mentors" and "coaches" rather than lecturing, and evaluation (grading) is

based more on application and performance rather than memorizing facts and concepts.

The GBM program is designed for adult students, working full time, who want to finish an undergraduate business degree in roughly 4 years. Most of the students who enter the program have 2 or 3 years business work experience, and the resulting degree is a Bachelor's in Business Administration-Management, with a concentration in GBM. One important distinction is that the GBM program offers intensive courses which include evening and weekend courses, which typically run 7 weeks instead of the usually 15 week semester. Students must be motivated and focuses to complete the coursework in an accelerated, compressed format.

7. ASSESSMENT OF DISTANCE/GLOBAL EDUCATION AT FDU AND SCB.

Assessing these revolutionary initiatives is not an easy thing to do, since there are many different opinions and perspectives, from the viewpoint of both faculty and students. While some faculty have embraced the online course format, and have become involved in creating and teaching in this new way, others may still be uneasy or resistant, but as the initiative develops, it is quite likely that more faculty will take advantage of the benefits that the format can bring (Carfagna, 2003; Maxon, 2001).

The positives are that students can get an early start towards learning how to use the Internet and global networking to enhance both their lives and their careers. Even for students who are computer literate, the knowledge of how to use the Internet in-depth, and apply them to their studies and major areas, is a definitive plus. The global emphasis of the online courses is another major benefit (Carfagna, 2003; Maxon, 2001).

Many other faculty and students have reported benefits from the flexibility in schedules, and the ability for some students, who may be less vocal and willing to participate in a classroom setting, to feel more comfortable expressing themselves in an online environment (Carfagna, 2003; Maxon, 2001).

On the negative side, some students, particularly those who are not so comfortable with computers, may find the online course format unsettling, and may require some time to get used to communicating online. Some courses have been designed with some classroom interaction, in an effort to help alleviate these difficulties (Carfagna, 2003; Maxon, 2001).

8. THE FUTURE OF ONLINE/GLOBAL EDUCATION AT FDU

What is the future of online and global education at FDU? One major objective is to expand the online course roster to offer a greater range of courses to support the DL3 and DL4 course requirements, and the DL Initiative as a whole. This would ideally result in a broad selection of courses that allow students to select those of greatest relevance and interest. From another perspective it would be important to bring about additional flexibility in the course offerings, by having courses available in the traditional classroom, hybrid, and completely online formats.

As the program develops, the ability to offer course content to a larger audience, including students in areas outside the traditional FDU student population areas (metropolitan NY-NJ-PA-CT) is another worthwhile objective.

The Global Virtual Faculty program continues to grow, and over 40 GVF members are partnering with our on-site faculty in the teaching of online courses. It is hoped that a larger pool of GVF could be recruited to help enhance the ever-growing list of online courses that will be becoming available.

Over the next four to five years, Fairleigh Dickinson will expand the online course offerings to 80 to 90 courses, some common to all students, with others specific to a discipline. The program has been supported by a $3.9-million grant-in-aid from the state of New Jersey, a $100,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation and a $50,000 grant from the Pharmacia Foundation. Throughout the first five years of the program's development, FDU expects to spend approximately $12 million on the distance learning initiative. These monies are being devoted to such areas as instructional design, upgrading the digital infrastructure, course management software and technical support per-

sonnel. In addition, FDU is strongly committed to developing new and enhanced methodologies for assessing teaching and learning in an online environment. FDU also continues to explore new teaching pedagogies that maximize the potential of Web-based instruction.

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