Atoms and Bytes: Distance Education and Community Colleges

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online and blended learning.

Distance education asynchronously.
delivered online, synchronously or programs where 30%
Blended learning on campus, and eventually establish a virtual academy?
How can SUNY Broome boost its distance education efforts on campus, and eventually establish a virtual academy?

DEFINITIONS
Blended learning refers to courses or programs where 30% - 70% of the material is delivered online, synchronously or asynchronously.
Distance education encompasses both online and blended learning.

METHODS
- Perused literature on distance education in higher education, specifically focusing on community colleges
- Conducted 14 in-person interviews with staff and instructors at SUNY Broome Community College
- Consulted leading scholars in distance education and nontraditional education
- Attended Distance Learning Steering Community meetings at SUNY Broome Community College
- Researched distance education infrastructures of other community colleges and higher education institutions

INSTITUTIONAL MODELS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION: TOP-DOWN ↓ vs. BOTTOM-UP ↑

Establish distance education department

Convert programs into online/blended formats

Convert concentrations into online/blended formats

Convert/create courses into online/blended formats

Establish Virtual Academy

Create degree programs for Virtual Academy

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS
Considering SUNY Broome’s current needs, available resources, and existing distance education courses and programs, I recommend adopting the bottom-up approach to achieve the ultimate goal of establishing a virtual academy. However, before any further investment of valuable time and funding is made, it is essential to understand the fundamental characteristics of successful distance education programs, as gleaned from current literature and a comparative analysis of other colleges and universities. While these traits are certainly not the only elements needed for a sustainable distance education program, they are the most pertinent to SUNY Broome at the time of this research.

These traits can be attributed to four main stakeholders:

INSTRUCTORS
- Instructional Technologists
- Instructional Designers

STUDENTS
- Course Quality Evaluations
- Virtual Help Desk

ADMINISTRATORS
- Full-time Staff
- Full-time Dean
- Campus Representation

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP
- Course Quality Evaluations
- Virtual Help Desk
- Academic Advisor
- Fees
- Technological Capabilities
- Student Tracking

REFERENCES

THIS PROJECT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE TIRELESS SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE OF:
Dr. Pamela Mischen, Dr. Kelli Ligeikis, Dr. Thomas Kowalik, Dr. Kevin Drumm, Dr. Amy Brandt, Carine Surdey, Jamie Heron-Starr, Jesse Wells, Dr. George Homys, Dr. Thomas Sinclair, Kishan Zuber, Ben Balkaya, Debbie Collett-O’Brien, Joann Lindstrom, Joseph Hurban, Jay Cheng, Michelle Chen, April Oglesbee

THANK YOU!