If Distance Learning Degrees Come, Can Funding Be Far Behind

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Introduction

In 2015 Abilene Christian University started an extension campus in the Dallas/Fort Worth area with fully online doctoral and master’s programs being offered and support requested from the Abilene campus with existing resources and no requests for additional funding. This poster discusses the story of how the Library navigated the process of leveraging our materials budget to develop a partnership with our extension campus to create a blended funding model with formalized roles and documenting common actions that led to increased support for the library from the university and greater accountability for our resources and services to distance learning students.

ACU Dallas

Campus Opened in 2015 in Dallas, Texas (Addison) University of Phoenix Model

• High-profile location with logo on the building
• New Marketing Staff and web site development and social media
• Advisors and Ambassadors available to assist with enrollment

Started in 2016 with Ed.D. and MBA program
Now has 12 online programs including 10 master’s programs and 2 doctoral programs.

Funding

• Peer Analysis with similar schools
• Expenditures per student – $425 (bottom 25% of peer group)
• Decided on estimated $300 per online student ($50 per student per course)
• Allowed for the growth of new programs

Data

![Graph showing data comparison between Dallas Online and Abilene focusing on different months from June 2017 to March 2018. The graph visually represents the usage trend and resource allocation between the two campuses.]

First Year

• $50,000 in New Resources
• New Hire – Online Learning Librarian (based in Abilene)
• Some additional support for Interlibrary Loan of articles and chapters (We do not loan our books to online students and online faculty).

Assessment

• Reference Questions – Increase by 40%
• Online Students account for 25% of the Interlibrary Loan Requests
• Onboarding of new students with librarian webinars – 168 students attended.

What Was/Could Be

$50 per student per course (6 courses per academic year)
• 2015-2016 - $41,097
• 2016-2017 - $166,260
• 2017-2018 - $172,000
Original Formula would have been $250,000
2018-2019 - $180,000 (Original formula would have been $540,000)

What We Learned

• Formula-based budgeting is a helpful start for us but not sustainable
• It was a good starting point and has started us down to road to incremental increases based on the continued success of our online programs.
• Important to distinguish between the use of our library resources by our online students/on-campus students.

ACU Off-Campus EZProxy Statistics

- Usage by Week
- Usage by Month
- Usage by Top 25 Resources

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