

Initial Comparator Research – Oregon Institute of Technology

(LMS = Blackboard, <https://online.oit.edu/>. Managed by Information Technology Services; <http://www.oit.edu/faculty-staff/technology-services>).

General impression: A specialized mission, narrow academic focus, and institution-wide learning objectives (<http://www.oit.edu/faculty-staff/provost/eslo>) have allowed for the development of online degree programs at a quicker rate than might otherwise be expected for an institution of relatively small size.

1) What services does this institution's Extension unit provide to campus partners?

None. OIT does not appear to formally offer continuing education. Students can enroll through a non-admit option (<http://www.oit.edu/admissions/non-degree>), which will allow them to take classes for personal enrichment (among other listed reasons). Non-admit students can take up to eight credits per term.

The closest OIT comes to interacting with a public audience is through the Office of Innovation and Technology Transfer (OITT; <http://www.oit.edu/faculty-staff/innovation-technology-transfer-oitt>), which helps develop and disseminate OIT-produced inventions to the public. Even in this case, their focus is largely on maintaining intellectual property rights.

2) Where is digital education housed? Are there separate units for online learning and blended or hybrid courses? Are technology and pedagogy combined or separate? How much of this effort is centralized?

Digital education is housed at Oregon Tech Online (<http://www.oit.edu/online>). 130+ courses are offered per term—most are associated with online degree programs, but there doesn't appear to be anything actively barring an on-campus student from taking an online course. Current online degree offerings include 2 professional certificates, 1 associate's degree, 4 bachelor's degrees, 7 bachelor's degree completion options, and 3 online minors. There is currently no online graduate education, though there may have been options in the past or may well be options in the future.

According to the resources page for Oregon Tech Online faculty (<http://www.oit.edu/online/about/faculty-services>), a standardized Blackboard template is used to deliver all courses. OIT also licenses Collaborate, and their Online Education department appears to support this limited range of tools in full, rather than try to do more. On-campus faculty who want to develop hybrid courses are also supported, as is technology use in the on-campus classroom (see <http://www.oit.edu/online/about/faculty-services/technology-on-campus-classroom>). There are consistent definitions, especially for hybrid course offerings (see their "guiding assumptions" for hybrid ed document, <http://www.oit.edu/docs/default-source/online-documents/faculty-resources/manuals/hybrid-assumptions.pdf?sfvrsn=4>).

3) What structures, formal or informal, are in place to encourage pedagogical innovation on campus? Is there any effort to centralize such activity?

The Commission on College Teaching (CCT; <http://www.oit.edu/faculty-staff/resources/committees/commission-college-teaching>), one of the standing committees of the institution, offers discussion groups, innovative teaching grants (including support for travel to conferences, professional development, at which OIT faculty are sharing their pedagogical strategies), and regular lunchtime talks that focus on the use of technology in teaching. This seems to be a collaborative faculty-led effort rather than a fully-staffed service unit, but it has pulled together a notable number of resources for a committee of its type, and there appears to be significant faculty interest. This is a real faculty-directed learning community.

4) Where are instructional design and instructional technology housed? What pathways exist to guide faculty to instructional technology services? Is access to instructional technology support uniform across different faculty groups at the institution?

Support is provided by the Online Education department, with basic Blackboard help being provided by Information Technology Services. Support is not uniform—Online instructors are subject to different guidelines (and receive different support) than do on-campus faculty.

5) At what administrative level are digital education initiatives, endorsed, supported, or made a fundraising priority? For example, does the institution count, encourage, or otherwise track student enrollment or participation in digitally-inflected (hybrid, blended, tech-enhanced F2F) courses? What institutional investments have been made in hybrid and/or blended learning?

None noted.