

Initial Comparator Research – University of Iowa

(LMS = Desire2Learn [called ICON, Iowa Courses Online], because of Unizin connection, Iowa is beginning a Canvas pilot in Summer 2015)

General Impression: Iowa could be a model of limited change for UO, where IT and pedagogy has been centralized, online development and offerings formally coordinated through an extension (CE) unit (keeping academic connection within colleges/departments), with a small town location and a state-based focus. However, Iowa does not appear significantly innovative in either breadth of tech-based offerings, nor efforts to expand or deliver content. They have joined Unizin and seem to be using that as a platform to explore new things.

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

Continuing Education (<http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/>) offers courses and programs (undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, and certificates) online, on campus, or on location, to serve the people of Iowa “by carrying out to every part of the state the knowledge, the thought, the ideals, and the spirit of the University of Iowa.” CE works in cooperation with the university's academic colleges to deliver online courses.

- Certificate programs are limited to Entrepreneurial Management, Non-Profit Management, Online Teaching, and Public Health.

- Undergraduate and graduate degrees are limited to specific fields, but then can be completed entirely online/at a distance. Degrees are situated in academic units, so CE is just the portal for admission and delivery.

- There are “Instructor-Paced Courses” and “Guided Independent Study Courses” within the online options).

- Tuition and fees: CE and/or online courses are part of the regular tuition/fee structure of the university, but there are fee elements that are specific to the type of courses/engagement/material to be used. (so all online programs have technology fees, but do not include other mandatory fees assessed for on campus courses). Financial aid, scholarships, etc. are, therefore, possible for offered courses and programs.

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?

Online courses and program are coordinated through CE (including design and support), but housed within their academic units.

ICON is maintained and training provided to faculty (<http://its.uiowa.edu/icon>) through Information Technology Services (<http://its.uiowa.edu/>). The Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology (<http://teach.its.uiowa.edu/>) is also part of ITS. Technology and pedagogy are combined within the ITS structure.

Blended and Hybrid do not seem to be categories with any meaning at Iowa, everything is either ‘online’ or not.

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

TILE (transform, interact, learn, engage)(<http://tile.uiowa.edu/>) initiative, is basically an active learning spaces-based approach to facilitate pedagogical training. Includes classroom technology in its area of oversight. Unclear whether this is part of the Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology or is separate/related program.

Otherwise the only pedagogical unit is the OTLT within ITS.

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?

ITS has a service of Student Instructional Technology Assistants (<http://its.uiowa.edu/sita/>) who will work one-one-one with instructors on projects to enhance the use of instructional technology.

The Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology (<http://teach.its.uiowa.edu/>)

- workshops seem very focused on basic stuff, often labeled for graduate students.
- web presence is fairly generic, pages often have limited info, possibly still being developed?
- resources tend to be self-guided (“maps”), perhaps limited to step by step guides, rather than pedagogical concept and direct design support.
- services include collaboration and consultation (as Center for Teaching), Digital Media (streaming), Classrooms, Electronic Portfolio, IU Capture (audio, video content)

Instructional Development, Instructional/Faculty Support Coordinators, Instructional Designers, and Application/Media Professionals, are roles and services provided through CE.

- individuals not listed (so no idea how many, but directory lists two “lead instructional designers” with no other designers, perhaps two teams in which these people are the leads?), but services seem specified to courses to be offered through CE only (makes sense if all online courses are coordinated through CE), but also seems to assume online means LMS, and that only full online (rather than blended or hybrid) require help.
 - there are brief guides for how to maximize your (the faculty member’s) time and relationship with designers and coordinators.

Iowa is part of the Unizin effort.

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?

There is a Dean of CE, with the associate dean for distance ed & outreach being the point person for online course development inquiries.

Some campus-wide fellowship/grants for faculty that seem to combine research/teaching opportunities. Does not seem to be extensive/large quantity.

Otherwise, no visible evidence of central/high authority initiatives concerning teaching technology innovation.