

Initial Comparator Research – Utah

(LMS = Canvas, hosted directly through Instructure url)

General Impression: Clearly identifies adult learners as student population (working, families,, etc.) rather than ‘traditional’ resident university population. This may explain the large number of online courses in existence, even though central online is less than a year old. Utah is definitely working to build online as an option for their primary student population (not an expansion of student audience). Their “hybrid’ university concept is aimed at improving student retention, time to degree, and degree completion rates. Some interesting ideas here, but programs are not yet fully developed. Still, a discussion with Utah officials/staff could be helpful as comparison about how to approach change.

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

Continuing Education (<https://continue.utah.edu/>) is the primary unit at Utah (Independent), although CE programs exist within the Quinney College of Law (<http://law.utah.edu/alumni/cle/>), the College of Pharmacy (<http://pharmacy.utah.edu/ce/>), and the College of Medicine (<http://medicine.utah.edu/cme/>) to provide specific professional programs.

- Continuing Education offers courses on the main campus as well as 4 off-site locations, through distance education and online enhanced programs, as well as international programs. The full list: Academic Credit, Academic Non-credit, Distance Education, English Language Institute, Go Learn (Study Abroad), Lifelong Learning, Osher Lifelong Learning, Technology Education, Test Prep, UT College Advising Corps (a statewide, diversity outreach program to high school students), Youth Education, and HB60 (Seniors program).

- CE has certificate programs in professional development (19 + “Self-Directed Study Certificates”) and technology education (12). Credit classes are individual, but can be taken by current UT students (many classes are available in either credit or non-credit form).

- Online offerings match up with the standard CE lineup, individual credit or non-credit courses, but mainly online courses supporting the various certificate programs. No online degrees (completion, undergraduate or graduate) through CE. Only 1 of the 31 certificate programs is fully online.

The professional schools CE programs often have distance/online/video versions which combined with a remote test can be completed without F2F class time. Pharmacy, for example, provides theirs through webinars.

UOnline (<https://examservices.utah.edu/>, security certificate is out of date) is a new effort to develop and offer online programming (individual classes, with plans for five undergraduate degrees beginning in Fall 2015, according to a Spring 2015 article in campus ejournal ‘Continuum’, <http://continuum.utah.edu/features/uonline>) built on the remote testing services web presence. Entire Initiative is demonstrably in development.

- UOnline is only for registered University of Utah students.

- Tuition is the same for online and campus, with online students paying an additional \$30 per course fee for online.

- 478 individual online courses offered at the University of Utah, with 19,573 students having taken at least one online course as of 2013.

There are two online graduate degrees offered by individual colleges:

- Online MBA degree (<http://mbaonline.business.utah.edu/>)

- Online Master's in Nutrition Science

(<http://www.health.utah.edu/nutrition/degrees/graduate/online-masters-nutrition-sciences.php>)

- another Online Master's in Electrical and Computer Engineering is scheduled to begin in 2017.

One professor (in Electrical Engineering, and currently Assoc. Vice Pres. For Research) has been leading a MOOC since 2009 on teaching a flipped classroom, but also has many video lectures on electrical engineering on Youtube, etc. (not sure if that is from another MOOC or online course, though).

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?

Teaching and Learning Technologies (<http://tlt.utah.edu/>) is the central educational technology unit. It partners with, but is not part of, University Information Technology (<http://it.utah.edu/>), the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (<http://ctle.utah.edu/>), and the libraries. TLT provides most of the technology support – classroom, hardware and applications, video services, etc. – but also the Canvas use workshops and seminars. CTLE provides a range of workshops, seminars, tutorials and other events – for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students – including teaching technology topics, such as the Spring 2015 Teaching Workshop Series: Teaching a Flipped Classroom (<http://ctle.utah.edu/tws/index.php>).

The UOnline Education Initiative is meant to address issues of student retention, time to degree, and degree completion. The intent is to create a “hybrid” university where students can take a combination of on-campus courses and online courses, using the best of each to build their degrees.” In addition to fully online course and program development, the initiative looks to develop and support hybrid and flipped classroom courses. Aside from the stated purpose, I am guessing that there was a need to coordinate the wide variety of online classes that existed prior to the new initiative in some more standardized way.

The two existing online master's programs seemed to be run through their individual colleges. It is unclear how existing online courses were developed and administered prior to the new UOnline initiative (I suspect it was from individual colleges/schools/ departments with technical support from TLT).

University Information Technology (<http://it.utah.edu/>) appears to concentrate on IT systems, solely, as a central unit. There is a Project and Initiatives program, and Business Intelligence is emphasized as part of their service process.

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

CTLE provides pedagogical services to both faculty and students. Workshops and seminars do incorporate technology issues, but their offerings are not limited to technology. Aside from a Director and Assoc. Director, CTLE employees 3 Higher Education Instructional Consultants, 1 Program Manager, 5 Graduate Fellow Consultants, 1 Admin Assistant, and 2 Interns).

- CTLE facilitates 8-9 Faculty Learning Communities (<http://ctle.utah.edu/flc/>) each year, each focused on individual themes which faculty can join as meets their interests. Subjects include “Classroom of the Future”, “Creativity”, and “Data Journal Club” among others.

There is collaboratively designed “Framework for Developing Quality Course Environments” (QCF) (<http://tlt.utah.edu/qcf/>) put together by TLT, CTLE, and CE. 6 staff come from those units and the library. The intention was to provide a common approach to instructional support as these services were being provided by numerous campus units. QCF includes a self-guided online tutorial, and links to various third-party material. The “course design model uses a “backwards design” process focuses on identifying the learning objectives (goals) first and then moving on to align the learning objectives (goals), assessments, and teaching and learning activities.”

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?

Instructional design is provided for general pedagogical development by the CTLE. It is more difficult to pin down the nature of service support from the TLT. They have five ‘Technologists’ in their Course Development section and one ‘Technologist’ in their UOnline Center section (plus a manager, a systems person, and about 20 student technologists in this section of the TOO). There are classroom tech service and media service personnel in their own sections as well (and systems, etc.) and one individual designated as the Compliance coordinator..

The UOnline initiative has its own staff, but no process for course development visible (in their current web presence, which is brand new and undeveloped so far). Staff includes at least 3 instructional designers, 1 instructional technologist, an IT project manager, information architect, video service coordinators, camera operators, 4 exam services technicians, and one designated online program compliance coordinator).

There is an Education Services (<http://lib.utah.edu/services/education/index.php>) unit in the Marriott Library for “(p)roviding course-integrated library instruction at all levels from first-year to graduate” and “(d)eveloping instructional resources in information research and management that satisfy the needs of learners with varying skills and learning styles.”

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?

The Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs has a number of Academic Task Forces and Initiatives, which seem to be referenced as factors in the ed tech and online programs (Strategic Scheduling, Enhancing Graduate Rates, Transfer Process, etc.). Did not find a direct link, but this seems to be to source of recent changes at Utah.

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies was appointed Director of the UOnline Education Initiative in July 2014. UOnline initiative to build online offerings for student retention and degree completions improvements clearly has some backing from authority (references to strategic TFs and Initiatives). New course development (84 new online courses) to support 5 online undergraduate degrees (and a third master's degree), is currently underway.

Both the TLT and UOnline are located physically in the main library, but both dual report to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the university's CIO. They are not part of the library's organization. The library does have digital content and instructional resource activities and are clearly linked to CTLE and TLT.

There is/was a funding program for "strategic online course and program development" offered through the office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Not sure how/when this is active as it presented as a funding program in a couple of places (recently, too), but the proposal process itself states "not being offered in 2015". The funding is aimed at developing online courses to "reduce bottlenecks in the curriculum" and develop online bachelor degrees.