The Online Learning Council is an interdisciplinary working group of faculty and staff originally organized around improving the experiences of our fully online students. The group was charged by the Provost to improve the quality of online courses, explore sound pedagogies and tools to increase the scalability of such courses, improve student retention and persistence in online courses, and expand, improve, and promote support services available to online students.

Annual Report for the Drexel Online Learning Council
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Preamble

The Online Learning Council is an interdisciplinary working group of faculty and staff originally organized around improving the experiences of our fully online students. The group was charged by the Provost to improve the quality of online courses, explore sound pedagogies and tools to increase the scalability of such courses, improve student retention and persistence in online courses, and expand, improve, and promote support services available to online students.

The scope of the Council almost immediately changed to include all courses utilizing various learning technologies and/or incorporating digital learning objects—hybrid courses, web-supported courses, and all variations. As issues of quality course development and design, student assessment, integrating Drexel Student Learning Priorities, and measuring course outcomes were added to the mix of issues addressed by the Council, it became clear that course quality issues were the same regardless of mode of delivery. Hence the Council was dedicated to improving teaching and learning in all courses—regardless of delivery method. Members developed expertise in applying Quality Matters rubrics to courses and learned how to review courses with the eye to improvement, increasing student engagement, and promoting student collaboration, interaction, and connection with the University.

As projects designed to accomplish the goals of the Council were identified, it became clear that volunteer members would not be able to bring projects to fruition with their many competing responsibilities. To take ideas from discussion to finished projects, the Online Learning Council Fellows group was established. With a small stipend Fellows worked to produce deliverables from the Council’s work in addition to their existing professional responsibilities.

This Annual Report provides an overview of the Online Learning Council’s goals, initiatives, projects and accomplishments while summarizing goals for the coming year as well. As the climate for online learning undergoes dramatic change at Drexel, it is important to understand what has been accomplished and what new services and supports have been created for faculty and students to leverage what already exists, build on what has been accomplished, and avoid duplicating efforts going forward.

Online Learning Council Fellows

The mission of the Online Learning Council Fellows is to serve as ambassadors and champions of the Online Learning Council serving the Drexel community. The Fellows are comprised of eight faculty and instructional designers who provide professional development for
faculty, consultation, mentorship and reviews of Online/Hybrid courses for design quality. These services are customized according to need and be utilized at any point in the continuum—in early development of a course or when reviewing/updating an existing program or course.

2012 - 2013 Accomplishments

In 2012-2013, the Online Learning Council Fellows successfully accomplished the following:

- Collaborated in the development of two self-paced online courses: *Drexel University Core Design Element Checklist* and *New Online Faculty Training*. Both courses have also been provided in a webinar and ‘face-to-face’ format to maximize dissemination within the Drexel Community.

- Developed the OLC Fellows Course Design Review Program
  - Program offers faculty three options for course design review: (1) a self-review using the Drexel University Core Design Elements Checklist, (2) a peer-review using the Drexel University Core Design Elements Checklist conducted by one Fellow, and (3) a peer-review using the Quality Matters Rubric conducted by a team of Fellows. Successful Quality Matters reviews receive the QM "seal," which one can then display in the course. All peer reviews provide instructors with constructive, collegial, and confidential feedback on the design of their online or hybrid course. One can use its framework to examine their course design.

- Reviewed 25 courses across 6 colleges.

- Planned, facilitated and presented at numerous workshops and brown-bag sessions within the academic enterprise (Core Design Element Checklist, July 2012; Creating a Culture of Assessment, Aug 2012; e-Learning 3.0 conference, March 2013; Raising the Bar: Online Quality, April 2013).

- To showcase the work of the OLC and OLC Fellows on a global stage, seven Fellows presented 3 peer-reviewed papers at the 7th Annual International Technology, Education and Development (INTED) conference in Valencia, Spain in March 2013. The papers, published in the conference proceedings are: (1) *If You Build It, Will They Come? An innovative approach to shift the culture of a University*, (2) *Challenges and Realities of Academic Integrity: Best practices for instilling sustainable change in students and*
faculty and (3) Professional Development for Online Faculty: Meeting diverse needs through a centralized initiative.

2013 - 2014 Planning

In 2013-2014, the Online Learning Council Fellows plans to:

Winter Quarter

- Explore potential partnership with Steve DiPietro re: writing of program/course/module learning objectives
- Distribute flyers to all faculty promoting the Fellows and the course review program
  - evaluate the effectiveness of flyers as a communication form

Spring Quarter

- Develop of an online module on Academic Integrity
- Plan a live/live-remote session: “A Conversation about Academic Integrity”
  - a collaborative session in which faculty are invited to share problems, practices and lessons learned regarding academic integrity
- Develop and incorporate video(s) about student/faculty experiences and perspectives related to academic integrity
- Conduct review/update of DUCDEC course (in Learn)

Summer Quarter

- Repackage existing materials to create a comprehensive orientation/training program for newly hired faculty
- Develop customizable modules to be used by academic units in conjunction with Fellows-based training materials.
- Explore opportunities for conducting research related to academic integrity
  - Partner with selected faculty to develop online/technology classroom-based cases on academic integrity
  - Collect data from broad group of faculty on academic integrity design and teaching practices

Fall Quarter

- Continue to implement and execute projects started in Winter - Summer

Accessibility Committee

The mission of the Accessibility Committee is to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and identify best practices for accessible content, pedagogy, and student experiences to maximize participation in online and web enhanced (or web enabled) activities at Drexel
University. The Accessibility Committee is co-chaired by Daniel Allen and Dr. Michel L. Miller.

2012 - 2013 Accomplishments

In 2012-2013, the Accessibility Committee successfully accomplished the following:

- Draft Accessibility Course in final stage of development to be piloted this spring
- Personas (used in the design phase of online courses) drafted, reviewed by committee, and finalized.
- Personas were introduced at the eLearning Conference.
- Personas will be introduced to the full OLC in the spring and are in the accessibility course.
- Personas and accessibility best practices were presented by Dr. Miller and Dr. Lyttle at the CEC conference in Texas in April.
- Captioning work group finished their testing of various captioning solutions.
- The Captioning work group presented their work at the 2013 Drexel eLearning conference and have content in the accessibility course.
- Dr. Miller presented as a part of a panel in a Sloan C webinar series entitled: Effective Practices and Available Resources to Support Students and Faculty with Invisible Disabilities in Online Education.

2013 - 2014 Planning

In 2013-2014, the Accessibility Committee plans to:

- Launch the Accessibility Course across the university.
- Create a personas campaign to include:
  - Persona posters sent to schools and college
  - Articulate presentation to explain use of personas
  - Drexel’s Best Practice Checkpoints by Personas – to be used in review of current courses for accessibility.
- Present locally, regionally, and nationally the work we are doing in accessibility.
- Begin research on accessibility at Drexel.

Communications Committee

The mission of the Communications Committee is to report, advertise and disseminate the work of the Online Learning Council it various subcommittees to the Drexel community.

2012 - 2013 Accomplishments

In 2012-2013, the Communications Committee successfully accomplished the following:
• Developed of the INSPIRE website (http://drexel.edu/inspire/). During the first half of the year, the design and layout of the site was created, and in the second half of the year, the focus moved to collecting content and other material for the site.

• Other minor areas that the OLC Communications Committee has addressed are ways of better promoting the OLC, the possible introduction of an OLC newsletter, and developing cross-unit collaborations in all areas of online teaching and learning.

2013 - 2014 Planning

• Update, edit and disseminate the OLC Committee snapshots
• Lead the expansion of Inspire as a portal for OLC activities including course review, OLC created courses (new faculty, scalability, etc)
• Create a two-fold communication strategy which includes:
  • Local (Inspire, blog links – RSS—reporting back to schools and colleges)
  • Wider net: reaching global to impact local by achieving the following:
    o Select courses to package into Course Sites
    o Promote wider supports for assessment, evaluation and dissemination at conferences both local, national and international

Retention Committee

The mission of the Online Retention Committee is to increase the persistence of online students at Drexel University.

2012 - 2013 Accomplishments

In 2012-2013, the Online Retention Committee successfully accomplished the following:

• The Committee established the Online Advising Subcommittee in response to the administrative and academic support needs of Drexel online students. The Online Retention Workgroup provides directional guidance, particularly in the development of analytics questions, while the advising committee executes in response to emergent recommendations.

• Student needs were identified in part through survey, the Online Student Self Assessment Survey (OSSA) administered to new, first time online undergraduate and graduate students as well as the annual survey of all continuing online undergraduate and graduate students. The Online Retention Workgroup recently updated the OSSA.
Because nearly 50% of all new online students at both levels are admitted in either winter, spring or summer terms, the OSSA was rolled out on a quarterly basis. Survey responses trend consistently, revealing that Drexel online students tend to be first generation, choose convenience over reputation, value orientations, indicate high levels of financial stress, and have varied sources for college expenses. Other analysis established vital links between credit load, withdrawal and persistence.

**2013 - 2014 Planning**

- Actions emerged from the above findings, reified by the anecdotal comments and findings of the Inside Track experimental design.
- Triangulate Academic Advising and Coaching. There is a need for cultural capital support, to negotiate academic and administrative expectations, particularly those for autonomy and self-directedness. Coaching to develop an understanding of the ways of the institution and effectiveness skills, when triangulated with advising, yielded a positive student experience.
- Considerable time has been dedicated to the Inside Track experiment.
- Provide Convenience. This has been defined as the flexibility to accommodate non-traditional student schedules with regard to administrative services, course instruction and engagement times. Advocacy in problem resolution, particularly in the onboarding process, was identified as a need in the Online Advising Subcommittee. Advisor assignments are monitored to ensure that all newly matriculated online students have an advisor assignment. Electronic systems to support student course and degree planning – *degree trajectories* – are being addressed. Frameworks to build degree plans in *DegreeWorks*; electronic forms and workflow processes associated with change of major/change of program are in test (authentication reviews have been initiated). The needs of online students have been introduced in the One Stop planning committee.
- Create onboarding checks and balances are just recently being coordinated with Undergraduate and Graduate Studies; Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. The ability to coordinate roles and responsibilities as they pertain to the online student lifecycle is integral to achieving the objective, that we are One University.
- Remission and financial aid are critical to online student’s financing plans. Dashboards of online student progress and particularly completion are constructed and distributed to online advisors to equip them with information on students who at risk of losing these financing vehicles. Courses that are considered gateway to the discipline are identified for an early warning alert; this information is linked to dashboard and performance outcomes for intrusive support.
- Course withdrawals are monitored. Analytic findings regarding the link between withdrawal, degree trajectory, and persistence, as well as preliminary outcomes of the Inside Track experiment with advising offices suggest the need for just in time
assessment of this risk factor, as well as performance. Two beta tests with AIS are underway to explore potential of real time faculty assessments and monitoring, Course Signals and Faculty Feedback.

- Results of 2012 persistence reports, outcomes for Inside Track and new survey results will be available and analyzed as they become available.

**Quality Committee**

The mission of the Quality Committee is to provide the Drexel community with access to a wide range of resources for increasing the strength and integrity of online course delivery.

**2012 - 2013 Accomplishments**

In 2012-2013, the Quality Committee successfully accomplished the following:

- Identified existing training efforts across the university – those focused on online faculty professional development – and reformulating them into a university-wide offering implemented online. With the advent of the University Fellows, the Quality Committee handed over the initial outline for this course and the list of existing resources to the Fellows for integration into a face-to-face training event held in August 2012.
- Formed a task force for creating a university-wide orientation on LEARN for students. The course, intended to be generic enough to apply to most college units, could also be internalized and customized if units so desired.
- Formed a working group to investigate what Academic Integrity resources and practices exist across the university and compile those for dissemination via the OLC and/or the INSPIRE website. The initial exploratory phase was completed in June 2013.
- Brainstorm other topics and areas under Quality Committee purview for possible focus in the coming year.

**2013 - 2014 Planning**

In 2013-2014, the Quality Committee plans to:

- Pilot and release the student LEARN orientation for Fall 2013 intakes and establish mechanisms for periodic review and updating of this content.
- Continue exploration into Academic Integrity practices by compiling and making notable practices and resources available to the Drexel community via the INSPIRE website.
- Pursue a review of (or encourage current stakeholders to review) the current definitions for terms such as online, hybrid, blended, etc. in order to provide a common vernacular for university discussion and activity.
• Revisit the existing faculty development efforts within colleges and work to collaborate those efforts into a unified model for faculty training even if those programs themselves are not merged.
• Identify current faculty mentoring practices at Drexel and explore the possibility of enlarging the structure for facilitating such relationships among online faculty.

**Scalability Committee**

The mission of the Scalability Committee is to provide information, guidance and direction to faculty and staff on how to scale their course, program, department and college offerings. The committee works to increase the efficient use of instructional and institutional resources without sacrificing the quality of the learning experience, significantly increasing faculty workload or over-taxing support resources. The need to put some or all of a course online is increasing, with space at the University becoming a shrinking commodity. While a reasonable course size is 15 students, some faculty find that they have to teach 30 or more.

**2012 - 2013 Accomplishments**

In 2012-2013, the Scalability Committee successfully accomplished the following:

• Designed and launched a course in Drexel Learn that offers insights into how instructors can still provide high quality course experiences and student engagement without exponentially increasing their workload.
• Initiated a university-wide conversation surrounding Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS). These conversations ranges from finding out what MOOCs do well and how those things can be leveraged in a typical online course to making suggestions and recommendations about what, if any, MOOC Drexel University should offer. The goal is to make sure that if Drexel does offer a MOOC, it is a strong representation of what the University does best.

**2013 - 2014 Planning**

• Help to coordinate and facilitate the planning and execution of Drexel University’s first MOOC. In conjunction with representatives from across the institution, determine what strengths we can focus on to make sure our first step into this field is well received.
• Continue to look at scaling in relation to courses, but begin to take into consideration how programs can scale. We will look to specifically at how many sections of a course to offer, whether or not adjunct faculty or teaching assistance can be leveraged and how to ensure these changes to not dilute or diminish the educational experience.
Student Support and Engagement Committee (SSEC)

The mission of the Student Services and Engagement Sub-committee is to focus on increasing access and utilization of Drexel resources, services and programs for the online student through effective communication strategies, development of online engagement opportunities, and the creation of a welcoming on-campus and online environment.

In 2012, the SSEC successfully accomplished the following items:

• Produced 8 online pre-matriculation videos in partnerships with the Office of Graduate Studies to provide graduate students important information prior to the start of classes that would not be discussed at an on-campus or virtual Orientation
• On the Drexel Express website, a drop-down menu was added to allow online students to search for events happening virtually and on-campus in which they can participate.
• Creation and Implementation of the Leadership Laboratory, an all functioning –web accessible room in the lower level of the Creese Student Center, which student organizations can use to host meetings and events online
• In Partnership with Academic, Advising, Retention and Diversity (AARD) the SSEC co-chairs developed questions for a formative and comprehensive assessment for current online students around students’ definition of engagement. This assessment will also explore students’ interactions and relationships with Drexel resources, staff and students respectively.
• Recruited and welcomed 2 current online students to participate on the SSEC
• Samantha Ortiz and Valerie Delleville, Co-Chair and Member of the SSEC, co-authored an article on online engagement for the NASPA: Administrators in Higher Education, Knowledge Community Conference Publication that was distributed to NASPA’s 14,000 members nationally and internationally: [http://www.naspa.org/kc/Spring-2013-KC-Publication-FINAL.pdf](http://www.naspa.org/kc/Spring-2013-KC-Publication-FINAL.pdf).
• At the SSEC monthly meetings, the SSEC brought in speakers from peer Institutions and highlighted the work our colleagues are doing at Drexel to best engage and support online students. Below are the items that were discussed or presented upon:
  • Peer-Mentoring programs discussed and best practices shared by iSchool
  • DeL and SCDC reported on focus groups discussing Career Services for online students and what is currently being offered
  • Sabrina Rum (DeL) discussed social media engagement with Drexel e-Learning and engagement
  • Explored and had presentations from several virtual communities: Going On, Connect Yard, and BBLearn Social, to assess which social media platform would be best to engage online learners. Since we work closely with and have contracted
with BBLearn, we will work to implement BBLearn’s Social to encourage online students to create informal groups online.

- Cynthia Leesman from Alumni Relations presented at Engagement Committee
- Hosted Jackie Candido from the University of Pennsylvania to share her national about online engagement at UPenn at the January 14th Meeting
- Hosted Melissa Englund and Amy Bosio to discuss how Drexel Central will support online students at the February 11th Meeting

2013 Plans

- Continue Partnership with AARD to implement the Formative Survey of current online students in the Spring Quarter
- Work on story board for Drexel Online Student Experience video to release video by Fall 2013
- Continue our work to develop a training for mobile units that will allow on-campus students to effectively engage online students in meetings, events and workshops, in addition to creating an online training for the Leadership Laboratory (Spring 2013)
- Explore the redesign of Drexel Express to reflect changes in Drexel Central
- Explore access of online students to campus resources through the Dragon Card, Library, Recreation Center, Drexel Athletic Events and Student Organization Participation
- Explore with Annette Molyneux, Associate Dean for Counseling and Health, how to best support the mental health needs of online students