

SELL BENEFITS, INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS, AND SLEEP BETTER - OFFER AN ONLINE DEGREE

**Lori Braunstein, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way,
Ellensburg, WA 98926, braunstl@cwu.edu**

**Robert A. Lupton, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way,
Ellensburg, WA 98926, luptonn@cwu.edu**

**David R. Rawlinson, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way,
Ellensburg, WA 98926 david.rawlinson@cwu.edu**

**Natalie A. Lupton, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way,
Ellensburg, WA 98926, luptonn@cwu.edu**

**Laurie Stehle, Central Washington University 400 E. University Way,
Ellensburg, WA 98926, stehlel@cwu.edu**

ABSTRACT

Just like in 2009, diminished funding for higher education continues to drive the move towards increased class delivery efficiencies: i.e., more online courses. The ever-increasing use of online delivery continues to put pressure on faculty to maximize efficiencies vis-à-vis information technologies, while maintaining or exceeding course quality. This special session poses the question, "How can your department, college or university sell benefits, increase brand awareness and sleep better? Offer an online degree!

Offering some online courses to students might be beneficial, but the ITAM Department at CWU went one step further and developed an online degree – and at a time of budget cuts, added 4 new tenure-track and 2 new non-tenure track positions to the department.

According to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), "about 10 percent of the 7,000 [yearly] graduates with Technology-based associate degrees transfer to baccalaureate programs. This study finds that a transfer rate of about 30 percent would better meet student and industry needs" (Baccalaureate Enrollment, 2005). The SBCTC indicated the following fields have a high need for this new pathway: Accounting and mid-management, education, social/legal paraprofessionals, engineering and information technologies, marketing/sales, and public safety.

According to A Skilled and Educated Workforce, "Employers have become increasingly selective and are choosing to hire those workers who present a mix of deep technical knowledge in a given area and a set of more general or transferable skills in the areas of management, communication, and teamwork."

This successful model – which has resulted in an additional 200 students in the ITAM Department over the last 3 years – can be duplicated by marketing educators!

This special session presents anecdotal experiences and findings from faculty teaching online, hybrid and traditional courses and offers insights into the process and success of offering a new online degree at a traditional liberal arts university.

REFERENCES

A Skilled and Educated Workforce: An assessment of the number and type of higher education and training credentials required to meet employer demand, Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, January 2006.

Baccalaureate Enrollment Growth Needed to Meet Educational Needs of Technical Associate Degree Graduates, Research Report No. 05-1, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, April 2005.