Emerging Trends in Online Learning: Great Challenges (and Great Opportunities!)

Bruce N. Chaloux

State University System of Florida
Strategic Planning Committee Workshop
December 17, 2012
A Prediction...

• ‘Our primary hypothesis is that the dominant university model—a broad-based teaching and research institution, supported by a large asset base and a large, predominantly in-house back office—will prove unviable in all but a few cases over the next 10-15 years’
Prediction For/By...

- For Australia by Ernst and Young in a report entitled ‘University of the Future...A Thousand Year Old Industry on the Cusp of Profound Change’
- The Australian System of Higher Education looks a lot like...the U.S. Model...so a fair question—why wouldn’t this play out in the U.S. as well? I think it will!
- ‘Exciting times are ahead- and challenges too.’
Five Trends Driving Change...

- Democratization of Knowledge and Access
- Contestability of Markets and Funding
- Digital Technologies
- Global Mobility
- Integration with Industry
Three Broad Business Models

• ‘Streamlined Status Quo’
  • Some established universities will continue to operate as broad-based teaching and research institutions

• ‘Niche Dominators’
  • Some established and new entrants will fundamentally reshape operations targeting specific markets with tailored education

• ‘Transformers’
  • Private providers and new entrants will carve out new positions in traditional markets and/or merge with parts of higher education and other sectors
Online Learning in the Headlines

Just in the last few months...

- ‘Reinventing College’
- ‘College May Never Be The Same’
- ‘Free, Online and Ivy League’
- ‘MOOC Madness’ and ‘MOOC Mania’
- ‘School’s Out, Forever’

…and on and on
So Why the Recent Hype?

• MOOCs...Massive Open Online Courses have stoked the hysteria and debate
  • Serving huge numbers of students
  • Free
  • Movement into online learning of ‘prestige’ institutions.

• Can this ‘Model’ Transform Higher Education?

• The Real Backdrop
  • Increasing costs of higher education
  • Our graduation track record
  • Value Proposition
Where Is This Going?  
(Implications for Traditional Colleges and Universities)

Trends That Are (or Will) Impacting the Higher Education ‘Industry’
Trends...

• The distinction between online and on campus continues to diminish and will do so rapidly in the next few years—simply learning

• Technology ‘tools’ will be ubiquitous and more mobile and will change how students want to and will engage in learning

• Faculty acceptance and development will be a continuing challenge, in some measure as the professoriate is changed by online learning

• New competitors, both academic and non-academic, will provide increasing challenges for traditional institutions
Trends (continued)...

- Competency-based learning will gain great favor and the erosion away from ‘seat time’ measures will continue to grow
- Badging and other strategies and new assessment tools to measure student’s knowledge will proliferate—many from outside academe
- Recognition of credit (transfer, prior learning assessment, MOOC credit) will become common (and problematic for many institutions)
Trends (continued)...

• Alternative programs to reduce the cost of higher education will emerge

• Time is expense...and the push for accelerated learning strategies will grow as a mechanism for reducing the cost of attaining a degree

• Faculty roles will change...dramatically, fueled by the impact of MOOCs
  • How courses are offered
  • When they are offered
  • Size and scope of offerings
Trends (continued)...

• The policy construct in higher education will continue (and needs) to change
  • Recognizing new learning approaches as David suggested
  • Increasing demands for accountability
  • Continuing focus on rewarding for degree completion
  • Changes in federal and state financial aid
  • Changes in accreditation

• Continuing shift to more work/skill-oriented degree programs that respond to workforce needs

• New and shorter pathways to degrees

• Graduate programming will continue to move towards practice and will be delivered online
Challenging Questions...

• Can we integrate into our campus-based experiences, emerging technologies and available tools that students want to use?
• Can we re-structure our time-based term models to allow students to move at their own pace through a program?
• Can we work with business and industry to ‘re-validate’ the credential and importance of the degree?
• Can we restore faith in our ‘industry’ among the public?
Our Greatest Challenge...

• Can we change the existing culture of our colleges and universities so that we can balance
  • the needs of the public
  • demands of our students
  • requirements of policymakers
  • interest of our faculty and local academic communities
  • quality, cost and access (breaking the so-called ‘iron triangle’)
Your Opportunity...

- You have many of the pieces and significant assets in place
- You have several options/strategies outlined to consider
- You are timely in the evolving online learning environment
- You can learn from others but create the ‘Florida model’ that addresses your unique state and its needs
Whatever Structure You Embrace...

- Recognize changing environment
  - Online and/or blended
  - Competency-based options
  - Prior learning recognition
  - Cost
  - Reducing time and place restrictions
- Flexible to adjust to future changes
- Responsive to the needs of Floridians
- Efficient
- Focuses on Quality
I Wish You Success As You Move Forward...

Your Questions...and Maybe a Few Answers (or at least opinions)...

Thank You!