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To illustrate the breadth of online programs and the practices and services presently in place to support them at Canisius, the following diagnostic report has been developed to provide some context for the Task Force on Online Education's work in developing a Policy for Conducting Online Education and an accompanying report of recommendations requested by the President.

Online Courses and Programs:

Presently, Canisius offers nine graduate degree-granting programs online and is increasing the number of online courses available to undergraduates. In the three most recent semesters (Summer 2011 – Spring 2012) Canisius has offered 218 online courses (of those, 37 are at the undergraduate level), a 70 percent increase in the number of courses from the previous year alone. In FY 2012, 527 students enrolled in these programs, registered for more than 13,000 credit hours and generated approximately \$8 million in revenue for the college.

Placed within the context of what is occurring with online education at the national level, consider the following excerpt from the Babson Survey Research Group's 2011 Report entitled *Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States*¹, which looked at more than 2,500 colleges and universities to examine fundamental questions about the nature and extent of online education. Here are some of their key findings:

- Sixty-five percent of all reporting institutions said that online learning was a critical part of their long-term strategy, a small increase from sixty-three percent in 2010.
- Over 6.1 million students were taking at least one online course during the fall 2010 term; an increase of 560,000 students over the number reported the previous year.
- Thirty-one percent of all higher education students now take at least one course online.
- In the first report of this series in 2003, fifty-seven percent of academic leaders rated the learning outcomes in online education as the same or superior to those in face-to-face. That number is now sixty-seven percent, a small but noteworthy increase.
- Less than one-third of chief academic officers believe that their faculty accept the value and legitimacy of online education. This percent has changed little over the last eight years.

Canisius' own experience with online programs, illustrated in part by the following statistics, suggests that the college has been successful in developing market-responsive, mission-centric online offerings. The primary focus of online course and program development has occurred at the graduate level. Advanced online degrees are particularly attractive to working professionals and non-traditional students who have other personal and professional commitments that make attending traditional, campus-based programs impossible. Consider the following:

¹ Allen, I. Eileen and Seaman, Jeff. *Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States*. Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group, LLC. 2011.

The State of Online Education at Canisius College

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Online/Hybrid Programs (Year Offered)

School of Education and Human Services	College of Arts and Sciences	Wehle School of Business	Office of Professional Studies
Physical Education (2007)	Anthrozoology (2011)	International Business (2010)	School and Community Health (2011)
Literacy (2009)			Applied Nutrition (Hybrid) (2011)
Sport Administration (2009)			
School District Leadership (2009)			
School Building Leadership (2009)			

Enrollment of Online Graduate Programs

GRADUATE PROGRAMS – 5 Year Enrollment								
Major	Department	FA 07	FA 08	FA 09	FA 10	FA 11	1 yr Δ	5 yr Δ
Anthrozoology	Biology					36	N/A	N/A
Applied Nutrition	Professional Studies					11	N/A	N/A
School & Community Health	Professional Studies					12	N/A	N/A
Literacy, On-line	Grad. Ed & Lead.			19	63	74	17.5%	N/A
Physical Education, On-line	Kinesiology	73	106	128	150	148	-1.3%	102.7%
Sport Administration, On-line	Sport Mgmt.			37	113	142	25.7%	N/A
School Building Leadership, On-line	Grad. Ed & Lead.			22	56	88	57.1%	N/A
School District Leadership, On-line	Grad. Ed & Lead.			3		9	N/A	N/A
International Business	Management			7	12	10	-16.7%	N/A

In addition, online programs that have an on-ground counterpart consistently outperform them in enrollment:

Spring 2012 Registration: On-ground / On-line Comparison

Program	Registered	Budget	Variance	% Budget	# of Students	Avg Cr Hrs
Sport Administration	492.0	607.0	(115.0)	81.05%	62	7.9
Sport Administration ONL	948.0	736.0	212.0	128.80%	144	6.6
Literacy	240.0	301.0	(61.0)	79.73%	33	7.3
Literacy ONL	441.0	391.0	50.0	112.79%	68	6.5
School Bldg/District Leader	255.0	269.0	(14.0)	94.80%	48	5.3
School Bldg/District Leader ONL	496.0	331.0	165.0	149.85%	87	5.7
Physical Education	284.0	474.0	(190.0)	59.92%	36	7.9
Physical Education ONL	858.0	776.0	82.0	110.57%	150	5.7

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Currently under consideration by the New York State Education Department are five proposed online graduate degree programs in: TESOL; Educational Technology; Bilingual Education; Health Education; and Respiratory Therapy (OPS). When approved, all of the proposed programs will be administered by the School of Education and Human Services.

A Transformational Education: The Strategic Plan for Canisius College, approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2011 recognized the importance of this delivery system and includes the following objectives that explicitly apply to advancing learning opportunities in the online environment:

- I. 2.e. Diversify delivery systems for courses and programs to respond to students' learning needs and interests.*
- I.4.a. Develop and implement a mission-based, market-sensitive online academic program strategy*

Less explicit are objectives that bear the potential to involve or impact online education:

- I.1.d. Investigate, provide and promote utilization of state-of-the-art technology to enhance the student experience.*
- I.2.b Use student learning outcomes as a strategic input into the planning and budgeting processes.*
- I.2.d. Investigate, provide and promote utilization of state-of-the-art technology to maximize operational effectiveness in all areas of the university.*
- I.3.a. Expand the scope and amount of support for faculty development of scholarship and new forms of teaching.*
- I.5. Develop mission-centric programs in professional education.*
- V.2.a-f. Achieve all enrollment targets for 2011-2016.*
- V4.a. Implement recommendations from the college's organizational review process.*

The strategic plan serves as the prevailing guide for activities related to the development of online education at Canisius. As new programs arise, the New Program Committee and Academic Program Board are expected to apply their protocols and standards for excellence to online education as they do for traditional face-to-face programs.

Instructional Design

To support these online courses and programs, Canisius currently employs one instructional designer who assists faculty with the design, technical support, and training through the FacTs Center (Faculty Technology Services). The instructional designer also offers technical support to students as needed.

Specifically, the main objective of the Instructional Designers is to help Canisius faculty plan and teach their online courses. This includes continuous development opportunities to help faculty stay on top of new online teaching and learning trends:

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1. Trains instructors to teach online using the Learning Management System,
2. Help faculty to identify the kind of support they need,
3. Develops and implements training workshops (online course development, Softchalk),
4. Collaborates with administrators to support ANGEL,
5. Create a variety of opportunities for faculty to teach each other (i.e. Mentor Program, Learning Meetups, etc.),
6. Identify outside professional development opportunities such as conferences and organizations,
7. Develop culture of continuous improvement of strategies for online teaching and learning, and
8. Develop community of practice among those who teach online.

Canisius College instructional designers are proactive about training and work to promote the available trainings to new and current faculty. Instructional designers deliver a 5 week workshop which includes working one-on-one with instructors to customize courses, introducing instructors to delivering content in an engaging way in the learning management system, and a brief introduction on the Ignatian and College history. The FacTs center has also developed the GriffGuide to Online Learning as a supplement to the workshop and tutorial on online education.

Presently, the college employs one instructional designer to handle the training and administrative tasks associated with launching and maintaining an online course or program. With more than 200 courses currently taught online, staffing is an increasing concern. Other challenges posed for ensuring the highest quality online teaching and learning experiences point to the lack of:

- Coordination among the multiple offices required to support and administer courses.
- Faculty support services to minimize redundancies and maximize best practices.
- Unified policies and procedures.
- Approval processes for online course development.

These inconsistencies in training, administration and implementation of online education are in many ways symptomatic of our inexperience, limited resources, and lack of structure. The development of policies and protocols are a necessary step forward toward improved coordination, direction and planning for the future of online education.

Faculty

Presently 93 faculty members are teaching online. Forty percent of those are full-time faculty members at Canisius. Many of them have participated in the Online Teaching Workshop offered through the FacTs Center, but those who do not miss out on opportunities to enrich their courses with best practices, the highest quality design and the latest student engagement opportunities.

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Faculty who wish to teach a new course or transfer a traditional classroom-based course to the online environment do not have a formal protocol to follow at present. In most cases, faculty have a conversation with the chair about doing so; but this is not always the case. Nor do chairs necessarily communicate the new or modified course to the dean. This lack of coordination creates confusion for the department/division and can lead to errors in the registrar's office, which ultimately impact students.

Faculty are regularly encouraged to propose new programs that are of high academic quality, innovative, respond to market needs, and have the ability to attract and retain students. In the case of new program development, faculty are expected to follow existing protocols established through the New Program Committee and the Academic Program Board.

Intellectual property and copyright issues may become an increasing concern for online course development and have the potential to impact face-to-face teaching and research matters as well. Canisius should examine its current policies and procedures and develop a comprehensive statement.

Students

The level of student interest in online education at Canisius appears to parallel the national trend and Canisius' response is receiving high marks in some areas. In January of this year, the Canisius College Online Graduate Program in Education earned recognition in the areas of teaching practices, student engagement, student services and technology, in *U.S. News & World Report's* first-ever ranking of top online education degree programs.

In the category of "Teaching Practices and Student Engagement," Canisius ranked 25th among 156 participating schools. The college was recognized for having quality education degree programs that promote student participation in classes, allows opportunities for students to readily interact with their instructors and classmates, and prepares them for career roles in group settings. Demonstrating engagement is a criterion for education degree programs to receive accreditation from National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and was the most highly weighted indication *U.S. News* used to determine this ranking.

In the category of "Student Services and Technology," Canisius ranked 46th among 151 schools that participated in the survey. The college was recognized for its diverse online learning technologies, which provide greater flexibility for students to take classes by the methods of their choosing at the times of their choosing. The college was also recognized in this area for students' ability to have courses centralized into a single student information system. Service-based indicators include live tutoring, career placement assistance, and access to technology support.

Internal surveys of Canisius graduate students enrolled in online programs demonstrate a mixed experience. While many report a positive experience, there is more to be done to enrich the

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experience for all graduate online students. Consider the table from the 2011 Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey (Attachment A).

Marketing & Recruitment

At Canisius, online programs are marketed much in the same way as on-ground programs. Admissions representatives receive no formal training in online education and are generally unfamiliar with the learning management system. When students express interest in an online program, they are mailed (not e-mailed) a packet that can take a week to arrive. In cases of new programs, sometimes a Web page is printed and mailed to students interested in online programs.

As admissions activities increase to attract students from the online market, Canisius must develop a strategy to reach this student population and reinvest resources to adequately market these programs. Additionally, admissions counselors must understand and be fully prepared to discuss the requirements of online learning, the challenges, and benefits with prospective students.

Readiness

The FacTs Center prepared an online readiness survey for students who wish to enroll in online courses/programs. It assesses their ability to succeed in the online environment and quality of writing, communication, time management, and technology skills. Since January 2011, over 300 students have taken this voluntary assessment. Of them, 67% of students may think they are fit to take an online course from this survey; 7% evaluate that they are not.

In addition to the readiness survey, graduate students in particular are required to participate in an online orientation program, which is newly sited within the School of Education and Human Services. Previously, the orientation was administered through the Admissions Office through an on campus event. The plan moving forward is to conduct the orientation online to better meet the needs of working adults and those who are at enrolled at Canisius from a distance. Additional and more tailored program orientation occurs within each program.

For undergraduate students taking an online program, the orientation is not required and many are in need of training to succeed in the online environment. Students are expected to rely upon the course instructor for online course-specific information and questions. Academic advisors are not necessarily trained or even familiar enough with the online learning experience to address questions and concerns. This is potentially a retention issue.

Student Support Services

Although it is not required that all student services become available for online students, there is a need to expand services that are not currently available at off hours. The majority of online students pay the same tuition and fees that traditional students pay and the assumption is that they should have access to comparable services, especially Student Retention and Success, Tutoring, Counseling, Student Academic Support Services, Library, ITS/Help Desk, Academic Advisement, Disability

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Support Services, and Career Services. At present most of these services are available only during regular business hours.

With the recent hire of a Director of Veteran's Affairs to recruit and support veteran students, the college must make available services to support the specific needs of this population, such as counseling and tutoring services, as well as access to the Office of Disability Support Services.

While the college is responsive to the needs of students with disabilities, the college needs to develop a comprehensive ADA policy.

Student Advisement

Graduate students are assigned to their program director or chair for advising. In most cases, this advisor also teaches in the program and students may be reluctant to approach this individual with course and technology related issues. Furthermore, student advisors (at the graduate and undergraduate level) lack a central place to filter common issues through. For this reason, many shared issues for instructors or advisors go unresolved.

Undergraduate students are assigned an adviser through the advisement office. Undergraduate advisors are not required to participate in training on the learning management system, online courses, or how to best advise students learning online.

The results of the readiness survey and the orientation can be input into the students' records and the scores can be viewable by admissions representatives, advisors, and the Office of Student Success and Retention. However, this is not a current practice.

Conclusion

Tracking with national trends, online programs at Canisius offer important and effective solutions for students increasing desires for flexible and diverse learning systems. They are yielding outcomes comparable to face-to-face courses and programs and they are revenue generating for the institution.

To that extent, investigating opportunities to further develop online education was cited as a priority in the college's new strategic plan. But as policies and procedures have not kept pace with the growth and demands of such programs, President John J. Hurley formed the Task Force on Online Education (TFOE) to address how we will develop and implement standard policies to guarantee the quality and consistency of online education across courses and the schools. Task Force is also taking up issues that are of central concern to faculty such as, (1) what prior training for faculty will be required and how such training time will be handled within existing faculty contracts and expectations; (2) how we will resolve the intellectual property issues that arise, specifically the issues as to ownership and use of online course materials; (3) how we will determine student readiness to learn in the online environment; (4) what the technology requirements will be for a larger online

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program and how the college will plan for and provide that technology; (5) what the standards for online courses will be in terms of seat counts, delivery standards, and expectations for instructors; (6) what the role of instructional designers in the development of online courses and programs will be; (7) how we will insure that online programs reflect the college's mission and identity; and (8) how we will provide marketing services for online education.

While outcomes have been generally positive for students and the college thus far, Canisius is showing signs of growing pains in this area of its educational offerings. In addition to the TFOE's charge above, the President has directed the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee and members of the Organizational Review teams to develop strategies and tactics that achieve the goals of the strategic plan. While their work is underway, it is the intention of the Task Force to contribute to the strategic planning efforts with the diagnostic and develop policies and practices that support Canisius current offerings and those developed in the future.

This report, the Policies for Conducting Online Education, and other supporting documents have been carefully prepared by members of the President's Task Force on Online Education. They are:

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Attachment A

Graduate Students Survey 2011

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN ONLINE COURSES

Orientation to the school and my program was useful.

My advisor is knowledgeable about online learning.

College services normally available to face-to-face students are readily available to online students.

The Readiness for Online Learning website was helpful when I began my online program.

There are a variety of ways an online student can get involved in the Canisius Community.

All

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	All Responses
Orientation to the school and my program was useful.	6 12.2%	12 24.5%	26 53.1%	2 4.1%	3 6.1%	49
My advisor is knowledgeable about online learning.	25 47.2%	17 32.1%	9 17.0%	1 1.9%	1 1.9%	53
College services normally available to face-to-face students are readily available to online students.	10 19.6%	12 23.5%	21 41.2%	7 13.7%	1 2.0%	51
The Readiness for Online Learning website was helpful when I began my online program.	14 27.5%	22 43.1%	14 27.5%	1 2.0%	0 0.0%	51
There are a variety of ways an online student can get involved in the Canisius Community.	8 15.1%	11 20.8%	20 37.7%	10 18.9%	4 7.5%	53
All	63 24.5%	74 28.8%	90 35.0%	21 8.2%	9 3.5%	257

	All Agree	Neither	All Disagree	All Responses
Orientation to the school and my program was useful.	18 36.7%	26 53.1%	5 10.2%	49
My advisor is knowledgeable about online learning.	42 79.2%	9 17.0%	2 3.8%	53
College services normally available to face-to-face students are readily available to online students.	22 43.1%	21 41.2%	8 15.7%	51
The Readiness for Online Learning website was helpful when I began my online program.	36 70.6%	14 27.5%	1 2.0%	51
There are a variety of ways an online student can get involved in the Canisius Community.	19 35.8%	20 37.7%	14 26.4%	53
All	137 53.3%	90 35.0%	30 11.7%	257

FINAL QUESTION

Would you recommend Canisius College to other graduate students?

Yes	No	Not Sure	All Responses
257 81.6%	15 4.8%	43 13.7%	315