

## **What key academic issues have arisen with the growth of online or distance education?**

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- Look at the answer to this question through the lens of the Academic Strategic Planning process currently underway at UM
- The strategic importance lies in expanded access

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- ASP Committee has heard about a variety of issues that relate to distance/online education - directly or indirectly
- An aspiration is “functional virtual learning environments” - what does this mean at UM
- Bringing online off the fringe and into the mainstream

## **Expanded Access...New Populations of Students**

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- Declining cohort of graduating high school seniors in Montana (but there is a low matriculation rate for high school students in MT to higher ed)
- High School dual enrollment to attract both in-state and out-of-state students (or even virtual high schools in MT??)
- Need for developmental preparation for students who might matriculate from both high school and the work force
- Reaching international students (both on campus and in their home countries)
- Mid-career enhancement (e.g., Nonprofit Management Certificate, MA Public Administration)

## **Breadth of Online Programs Available**

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- What can/should be offered during regular terms and beyond?
- Many courses at UM, but few degree programs
- What types of programs are a good fit for online completion of a degree or certification? How to prioritize amongst the possibilities...
- BA/BS programs require BOTH gen ed courses and ~40 credit hours in the major - requires great infusions of new \$\$\$

## **Online Instructional Issues**

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- Who teaches online courses? Preparation of faculty to teach online (different pedagogies)
- Workload (part of FTE or an add-on; compensation)
- Often no release time; little financial incentive for planning
- Assessment of impact - how is teaching evaluated and where does it fit in annual reviews? (note that quality control is improving with new training, etc.)

## **Student Services**

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- What do students get besides a grade and credits?
- Coordinated advising
- Access to campus amenities (health center, libraries, labs, gyms, football tickets, etc.) - some people want all or some of these and others do not want any of them...

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- UM is poised for explosive growth in online offerings - the demand seems to be there
- This biggest issues identified by the ASP process is: campus buy in, measured growth, strategically positioned programs, quality assurance.