Developing Thriving Online Graduate Programs: Growth & Infrastructure

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Overview of Indiana State University

- Comprehensive state PUI – 5 Colleges
- Doctoral Research University (Carnegie)
- 14,000 total students
- 2,300 are graduate students
- About half of these students are online
- 39 online graduate programs (Master's, Doctoral, Certificate & License)
- Estimate of online courses, hybrid and how many on campus programs offer online programs

Online initiative

- ISU Pioneer in distance education (1997)
  - Synchronous (point TV)
  - Satellite sites
  - Growth slowed, lack of focus
- 2009 – Online, Distance – became part of strategic plan
- State of online education: Many courses, few programs

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Growth in Online Programs (2010-2016)

- Strategic Plan mandated growth

- Office of Distance Education formed w/Dean

- Infrastructure lacking

  - DE Dean redirected funds for very technical staff to funds for Instructional Designers with Pedagogical training

  - Online course for instructors

    - 3 hour course, DE pays for it and pays $2000 to instructors, 3x a year

Online program growth

- Focus was changed from course development to online program development
  - Initially instructors were paid a stipend to develop course but lack of focus
  - Also funds for Foundational Studies
    Course development

"Use more Carrots than Sticks"

- Incentive for Online Program Growth
  - Formula: 30% overhead to university

    and remaining 70% of tuition split between program and Distance Education
  - Incentive to Programs for Recruitment
    - At 16 students, they broke even
    - At 24 students, they profited

Online Program Growth

- New programs have to go through state board but programs converted to online do not

- Online certificates and Post Master's certificates have not been very popular

- Some licenses for K-12, gifted & talented students, and visually impaired

- Early Programs: Sports & Recreation, Safety Management, Ed. Leadership, M.Ed.

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Tools & Support

- Infrastructure:
  - Tutoring Online through Math and Writing Center
- Market Analysis
- Enrollment Management by Distance Ed
  - Consultant – study where we lose students from Inquiry to Enrollment process, leaky sieve
- Hired Recruiters, Admissions Counselors*
  - (surpassed the Graduate College)

Current Goals of Distance Education

- Double enrollment by 2022
  - Enhance distance education offerings
  - Marketing
  - Creating capacity
  - Creating new programs

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Changes in Graduate Students & Programs

- Nature of graduate students changed
  - Full time employment
  - Take courses at night and summer
  - More mature group of students
  - Less traditional
- Nature of programs changed
  - To complement their employment
  - Final Projects applied to work

Changes needed in the Graduate College

- Procedures
  - Half of graduate students in online programs
  - Procedures created for on campus students
  - Confusion among online students and programs about procedures in the CGPS (faxing, pdfs, scans)
- Files and forms
  - Student files were hardcopy
  - Hardcopy forms delivered by U.S. Mail
  - needing many signatures
  - Forms lost, not on campus to walk to offices
- Hours
  - 8 am -4:30 pm

Challenges to the Graduate College

- Serving the new population
- Procedures – making instructions clear
- Electronic application for admission
- Student Success Series – Online synchronous & asynchronous
- Graduate faculty status for online adjuncts
- Theses & dissertation submission (ETD – Proquest)

Collaboration Graduate College with Distance Education

- Html automated emails that go out to inquiries and admitted students from our CRM (Talisma)

- Collaborated in using Hanover Research to survey CGS deans on admissions structures

- Collaborated on how to create data for regular yield reports

- Graduate College using Distance Education as a model for recruitment/admissions

Graduate Recruitment & Admissions

- Still in progress
- Distance Education developed staff to recruit and enroll students
  - Phone calls
  - Yield: Inquiries, Applications, admissions, enrolled
- Graduate and Online programs starting to adopt recruitment strategies like undergraduate first-time full-time first year students

Online grad application & check out
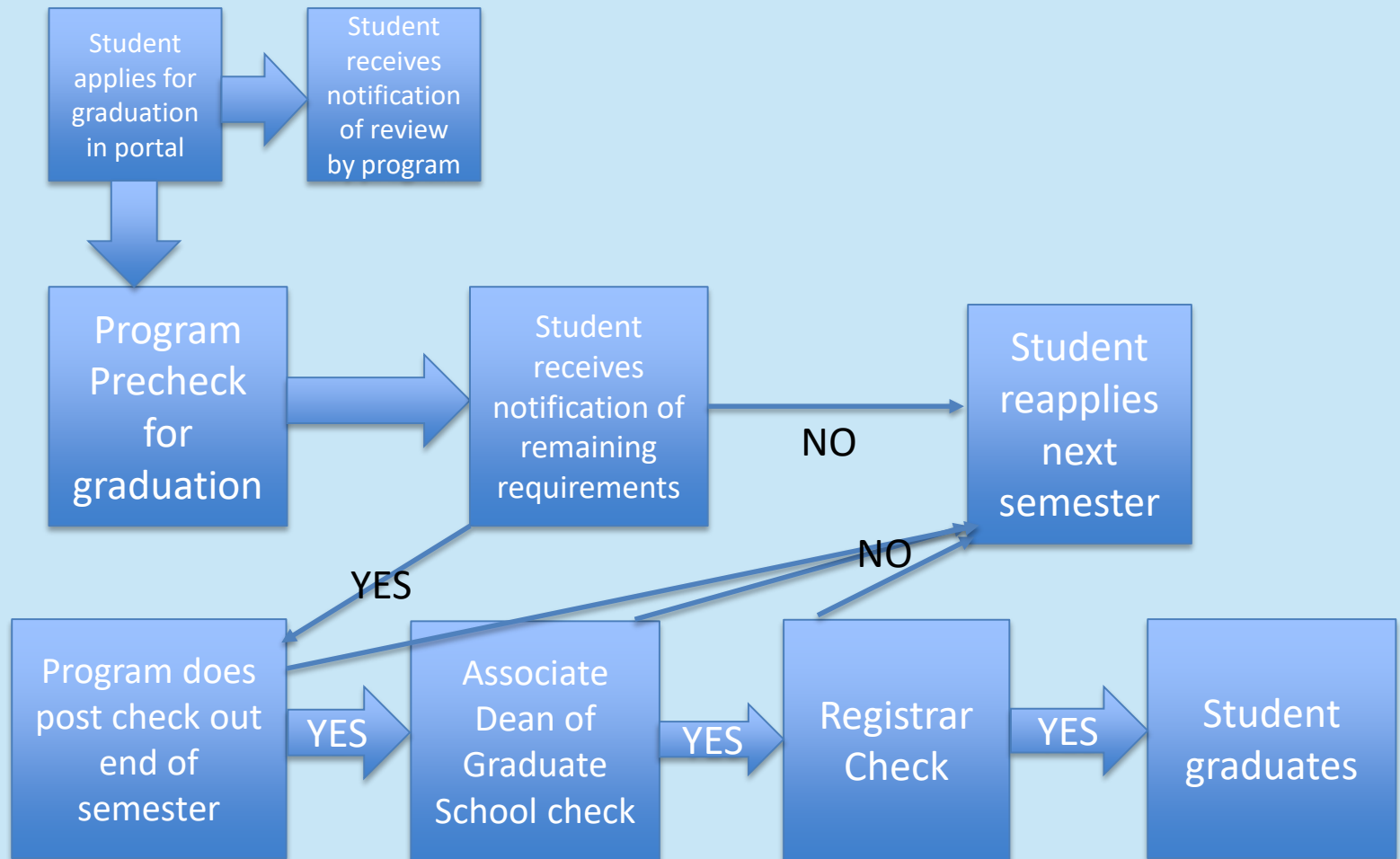
International Students

- Limits on online courses when in U.S.

- Regulations:

  - students from most countries cannot take from abroad (Canada)

  - Some U.S. states have restrictions

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Conclusion

- Growth in online programs is good for enrollment growth

- Needs infrastructure to back it up
  - Instructional designers
  - Graduate College Processes (or Admissions, Registrars)