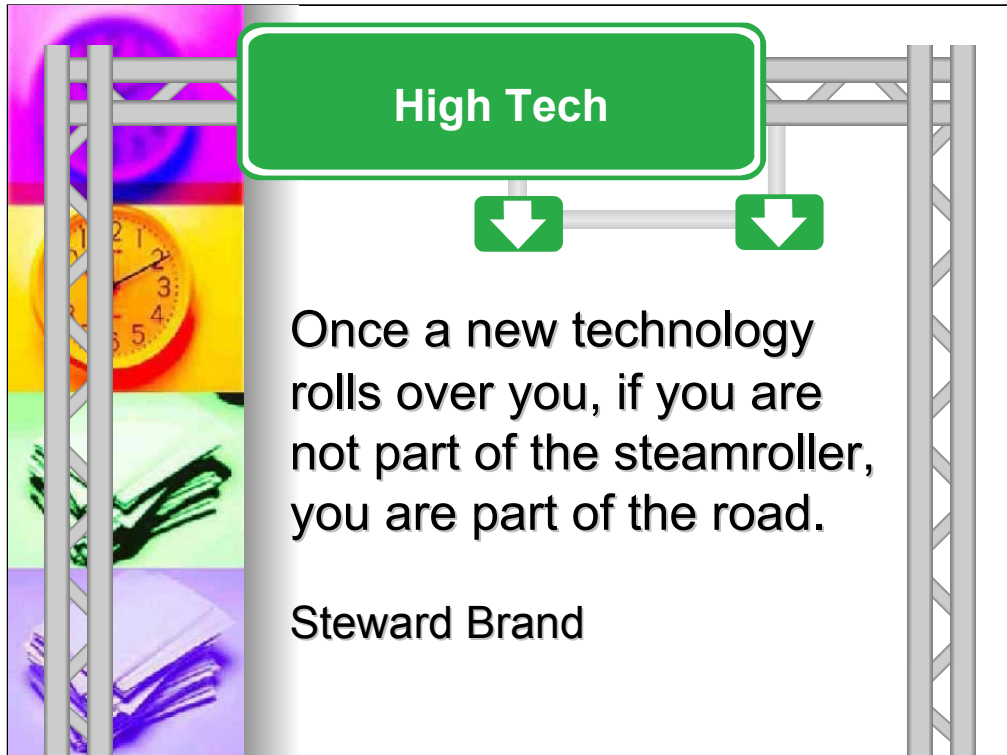




Program Management

**Kim E. Dooley, Associate Professor
Texas A&M University**

Sometimes it seems that our distance education roles require us to wear many hats: administrator, faculty, student, technician... Program management requires us to consider multiple perspectives to determine appropriate planning and policies.



Program management involves managing change. For example, In 1860, the electric telegraph could handle 10 words per minute, by 1900 about 150 per minute, and by 1920 about 400. In the 1860s, a message cost \$10 per word, but by 1888 only 25 cents. By 2000, the world had over 1 billion telephones; several hundred million computers with Internet access; and 1.6 billion web pages to choose from. Every minute, 10 million e-mail messages land in the world's in-boxes. I love this Steward Brand quote to represent this concept.



Institutional Planning

■ Planning for Change

- Enhance Quality of Services and Products
- Reduce Costs
- Increase Productivity

Chart a Course for Change!

■ Continually assess the environment

■ Implement programs and services that meet clients' needs

For this lesson, we will focus on institutional planning and support. Planning for change involves three factors: enhancing quality, reducing cost and increasing productivity. We may not be there yet, but as leaders in our profession, we should be thinking about charting a course for change! We must continually assess the environment in order to implement programs and services to meet the needs of our clients.



Policies

Academic

Faculty

Student

Technical



Simonson & Bauck, In *Handbook of Distance Education*, 2003

In order to meet these needs, policies should be developed in at least four areas: academic, faculty, student, and technical.



Academic Policies

- **Academic calendars**
- **Accreditation of programs**
- **Course quality**
- **Course and program evaluation**
- **Grading**
- **Admissions**
- **Curriculum review and approval**

Academic issues are at the heart of why policies are critical. They concern student, instruction, curriculum, and program and have the most widespread impact by ensuring institutional integrity. A common mistake is that institutions modify existing structure, regulations, rules, and policies to integrate distance education into the system. Things such as course schedules and academic calendars, event, course, and program approval and evaluation, student admission, grading and assessment of student, grade recordkeeping and reporting, and accreditation are all essential considerations for academic policies.



Faculty Policies

- **Compensation and workloads**
- **Design & development incentives**
- **Staff development**
- **Faculty support**
- **Faculty evaluation**
- **Intellectual property**

Faculty issues can easily be the most difficult for policy developers. Clearly, faculty need to be recognized for their efforts and expertise and policies need to clarify distance teaching responsibilities. Key issues include class size, compensation, design and development incentives, recognition of intellectual property, office hours, staff development, and other workload issues.



Student Policies

- **Student Support**
- **Academic Advising/counseling**
- **Library services**
- **Student training**
- **Financial aid**
- **Testing and assessment**
- **Access to resources**
- **Equipment requirements**


Student services should be integrated with general student policies. Support services need to be available when students need them. Homework hotlines, library and media and computer resources need to be equal. Special requirements should be made for mailing assignments, use of e-mail, access to Web Sites, and proctoring exams for example.



Technical Policies

- **System reliability**
- **Connectivity**
- **Technical support**
- **Hardware and software**
- **Access**

Usually, the institution owns the network used for distance education or is responsible for its reliability. Although these policies will be different because they are not related to the educational mission, policies related to student and faculty technical issues, such as the quality of personal computers needed by students who learn at home, should be established. Hardware, software, and connectivity minimum requirements should be clearly explained.



Selecting Technologies

- A**ccess
- C**osts
- T**eaching functions
- I**nteraction and user-friendliness
- O**rganizational issues
- N**ovelty
- S**peed of course development/adaptation

Dr. A. W. Bates, 1997


Another component of technology support involves selecting appropriate technologies for teaching. Tony Bates describes the ACTIONS one should take in making these decisions.



Managing Information Resources

- Support systems should accommodate the academic and instructional design decisions
- Quality standards affect the system design and technologies
- Interplay of human resources and technological, programmatic, and fiscal constraints

Managing distance education programs requires a vision of how it all fits together-like gears that make a motor run. Support systems should accommodate the academic and instructional design decisions, and those in turn impact the quality standards. And Training and Professional development are essential for success.



“Attitudinal issues - how people perceive and react to these technologies- are far more important now than structural and technical obstacles in influencing the use of technology in higher education”
(McNeil, 1990, p. 2).

Distance education causes us to embrace change and creatively design new modes of delivery to respond to the needs of the learners. It's not the technological obstacles, but the changes in attitude that must take place for program management to be effective.