

# *Full-time Professors Dislike Distance Learning – What Can Be Done?*

## *Challenges of Convincing Faculty to Become Involved in a Controversial Technology*

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*Abstract— For over a decade the annual Babson reports have indicated that only about 30% of full-time professors approve of distance learning, and several other more recent reports echo that finding. Since about one third of all college students in the United States are currently taking at least one course at distance, this means that the pool of teaching talent available to them is likely to exclude some of the most significant resources at each institution of higher learning.*

*This paper examines the problem from the perspective of perceived difficulties that inhibit otherwise suitable and acceptable instructors, especially full-time faculty, from greater participation in online courses. These perceived difficulties are: threats to an academic career, confusion about costs and benefits, introduction and proliferation of MOOC's, higher cost of online courses, lower student evaluations and response rates for online teaching, past faculty boycotts and disagreements concerning online teaching, the role of adjuncts versus full-time faculty, and unfavorable comparisons with "successful" on line programs.*

*While much of the emphasis on distance learning research lately has concentrated on massive open online courses, MOOC's, the vast majority of online offerings are not done in the MOOC format. Instead, they are unique, proprietary local offerings developed by an individual faculty member or team and presented using traditional learning management systems like Blackboard, Canvas and Moodle. So the individual faculty member is most likely teaching in an individualized modality, not in MOOC format. What can be done to induce more full-time faculty to participate in online courses? Several options are proposed to improve the situation, including inducements to the involvement of more tenured faculty, revising the top management and faculty governance paradigms to include positive awareness of the strategic importance of distance learning, and taking advantage of the insights from institutions which have been able to leverage online learning advantageously.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The topic of distance learning has always been surrounded by controversy. For the past 20 years, since the subject became part of the ongoing discussions about educational technology, there have been thousands of reports based only on the topic of comparing online versus traditional face to face education. In the earliest days of the academic debate on the subject there was a flurry of articles and commentaries around the topic called "no significant difference". These articles would frequently conclude with a paragraph saying in effect, "after comparing this course in its traditional format and its online

learning format, we found no significant difference". In fact, an entire literature emerged around the NSD (No Significant Difference) debate. [1,2] That debate has continued, but online courses are increasing in popularity, to the point where the most recent statistics indicate that 31.6% of college students are taking at least one course online, and almost half of these are taking all of their courses online.[3] Distance-learning enrollments have been rising for the last 14 years consecutively, to a total of 6.359 million students. But overall college enrollment has been decreasing consistently, dropping by 5% since 2012. [4]

### **II FACULTY OPPOSITION**

If every third college student is taking a course online it would seem that most faculty members, especially full-time professors-- the crucial arbiters of course content, learning strategies, and, of course, the most knowledgeable in their respective fields among educators-- would be leading the way toward disseminating their disciplines using the new modalities and methodologies. But just the opposite is the case. There is ample evidence that the professoriate in the United States is enthusiastically opposed to distance-learning in all of its forms: partly online, or hybrid courses; fully online courses and entire programs; and, especially, massive open online courses, MOOC's. The most compelling evidence for this surprising statistic can be found in the annual Babson reports which since 2003 have summarized sentiments of leaders in postsecondary education on a broad range of topics related to automation in higher education. The methodology for the Babson reports is to contact senior university administrators – provosts, deans, department heads, etc., and ask them to respond to questions related to distance education. In study after study, administrators are felt to be generally favorable and faculty generally unfavorable. The typical faculty acceptance rate has been in the range of 29 to 31% over the past five years. Perhaps surprisingly, for administrators the rate is in the 70 percent range. [5,6] Administrators approve, but faculty do not.

While the subjects of the Babson studies were administrators giving opinions about mostly full-time faculty, when the focus is changed to asking the faculty themselves, similar results emerge. Since 2013 Inside higher Ed and the Gallup organization have annually polled faculty direct for opinions

about online technology, with findings that generally echo the Babson results. These reports include a wider sample of adjunct and contingent faculty not covered by the Babson analysis, but disclosed a similar kind of faculty unease about distance learning. [7,8,9,10]

Further, a recent study conducted by Educause, the US higher education technology research organization, polled the US professorate, using a sample similar to the various Inside Higher Ed and Gallup organization polls just mentioned. It reinforced this concern about low faculty approval for distance learning in general, and the split between the positivity of administrators and the negative perception of faculty. One of its comments was:

“Faculty have a love-hate relationship with online teaching and learning: They don’t want to do it but think they would be better instructors if they did. Most faculty agree that online learning makes higher education available to more students, but few agree that online learning helps students learn more effectively. Faculty predominantly teach courses with no or only some online.” [11]

These thoughts are echoed in many of the studies that have examined the issue of faculty governance in the context of distance learning. In a recent study aimed at determining the sentiments of full-time faculty who had actually taught a distance course, the respondents felt that the traditional face-to-face approach was still best:

“On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest score), respondents ranked the overall quality of courses offered at their institution highest for traditional courses/programs. Regarding the perceived quality of these different types of courses, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, traditional courses received the highest average ranking (4.29), followed by blended courses/programs (3.26), fully online courses/programs (2.71) and MOOCs” (1.79) [12]

The reasons for this consistent refusal of full-time faculty to be supportive of distance learning are complex, but may be due to negative perceptions surrounding the online education process that have existed for a long time. Each of the perceived obstacles contributes to the challenge.

### III PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: THREAT TO AN ACADEMIC CAREER

In 2004 Professor George Schell wrote a pivotal article in the prestigious journal *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery (CACM)*, titled “Universities marginalize online courses: Why should faculty members develop online courses if the effort may be detrimental to their promotion or tenure?” In it, he described the angst felt by a faculty member who was encouraged by his dean to teach online. A number of issues were mentioned. First, there was

uncertainty about the technical support available to develop the courses. Even then there was a wide range of technology available, but the institutional approach varied drastically. Some university units had highly articulated, well-funded, encouraging programs which welcomed faculty and help them every step of the way. But most offer considerably less support, encouraging the faculty member to use various websites, and other self-help modalities. Second, tenure-track faculty, even though encouraged to establish courses online, were seldom given any indication of the weight that would be allocated toward promotion.

Most faculty evaluations are based on three fundamental criteria – teaching, publications/research, and service. If most of the other faculty were teaching in traditional circumstances, that is, face-to-face, how would the newcomer to teaching online be treated in the context of acceptance by her or his tenured peers at evaluation time? Third, developing an online course is a time-consuming process. Would the institution be willing to reduce workload in some proportionate way to compensate for the developmental time? In most cases, according to Prof. Schell, the answer is no, so the course development time would have to be fitted in with existing teaching workload, a zero sum trade-off. Either the research suffers while the online course is developed, a typical scenario, or research intensity does not change, but the new course suffers from lack of time dedicated to its preparation. As Schell summarized the situation:

“So why should faculty continue to develop online courses when it is detrimental to their goal of promotion and tenure? The answer may be the faculty members who are “coerced conscripts.” Universities offer incentives other than promotion and tenure. Reduced class loads, monetary stipends, and other benefits may be provided to faculty. Yet faculty members are dismissed from the university if they cannot attain tenure. This mixed message works to undermine widespread implementation of online course development required to implement a major or program at a university. The long-term viability of online courses in the U.S. is in serious doubt if the viability is tied to the perceived academic value of developing them” [13, p 56]

Bowen and Tobin [14] took note of the somewhat reticent attitude of faculty governance in many issues, concluding that distance-learning objections, especially with respect to workload concerns, were seldom presented strongly. An article about faculty governance in Australian universities found that there was considerable opposition to the workload requirements implicit in distance learning, contributing to lower morale on the part of the professorate. [15] In a similar vein, an American study quantified the workload burden for online faculty:

“The research reflected in this study found that online teaching demanded a minimum of 14% more time than traditional instruction, most of which was spent presenting instructional content. The weekly impact on teaching load also varied considerably between the two formats. Traditional teaching was more stable across the semester while online teaching fluctuated greatly during periods of advisement and assessment.” [16]

#### IV. PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: INTRODUCTION OF MOOC'S

Probably the most publicized development in online learning during the past decade has been the emergence and flourishing of massive open online courses, MOOC's. Even though MOOC's constitute a very small portion of all the online courses taught in the United States, they definitely have captured the imagination of many, garnering hundreds of millions of dollars in venture funding, and also creating considerable uneasiness in the professorate. Typically MOOC's are taught by a person who has considerable renown in the subject matter area already, often a senior faculty member at an Ivy League or other prestigious university. Because of the extensive investment in MOOC's, the learning environment is sophisticated, carefully maintained, frequently updated and includes the newest available graphics, interactive software and other enhancements to attract students. The typical online course at a university is not in the same category as MOOC's, since the level of support investment is not comparable. Because of their high visibility, MOOC's always pose a threat to replacing individual university courses, and for that matter, for reducing the labor cost involved in teaching a course at distance. [17,18]. MOOC deployments in some locations, for example Georgia Tech, University of Illinois, and others, are being used as part of a program to reduce the cost of tuition. Further, the continually increasing venture capital funding for MOOC's suggests that they will be a major thrust in online learning long-term. [19,20]

These perceived threats to both online and traditionally taught programs from MOOC's are definitely moderated by some of the downsides that have been reported. One of the major MOOC disadvantages is very low completion rates, often in the below 10%. [21] Many students simply cannot sustain the intellectual rigor required, so they do not complete the entire course. Second, most of the literature on MOOC's indicates that they are most successful when the users are highly educated already, with some of the most successful results found for students who have already earned the appropriate degree involved. [22]

To summarize, while MOOC's may be a long-term threat because of their potential for reducing unit costs and their extensive publicity, their disadvantages are probably enough to diminish them as a concern for an online instructor in most situations.

#### V. PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: APPARENT HIGHER COST OF ONLINE PROGRAMS

Implicit in several of the other perceived obstacles is the idea that investments in e-learning are expensive. Intuitively, it makes sense that the aggregate costs of training of instructor and staff personnel, learning management system investment, maintenance of training and course delivery spaces, etc. could exceed the cost of a traditional face-to-face class. Last year, Stanford economist Caroline Hoxby distributed a working paper called, “Online Postsecondary Education and Labor Productivity”, in which she delivered a very pessimistic view of the return on investment of distance learning in general:

“The findings provide little support for optimistic prognostications about online education. It is not substantially less expensive than comparable in-person education. Students themselves pay *more* for online education than in-person education. Online enrollment usually does raise a person's earnings, but almost never by enough to cover the social cost of the education.” [23]

Subsequent analysis by a large number of specialists indicated that many of her conclusions were based on incorrect interpretation of data. While most critics were very positive about her comments on the importance of emphasizing lifecycle cost versus benefits in the context of distance learning, there were many criticisms of the use of for-profit distance-learning cohorts, which constitute only about 10% of all distance-learning activity in postsecondary education, causing the data to be inappropriately skewed.[24]

The problem of cost continues to linger in any discussion of online learning. This inevitably brings up the idea of return on investment and the possibility that online courses, in order to pay their way, must have large numbers of students. As mentioned, many of the MOOC's definitely aim for that result. Even in the beginning of the MOOC era, there were TED lectures like the one by Prof. Peter Norvig of Stanford, called “the 100,000 student classroom”, which suggested that drastically higher numbers of students could be accommodated in a learning environment involving the most eminent professors in the world.[25] Other researchers have explored the idea that distance-learning, reducing overall labor costs for instruction, could become a way of drastically reducing the total cost of attending college. [26, 27]

The idea of distance education as an offset for faculty labor costs is usually considered a nonstarter, probably because of the low acceptance rate among most full-time faculty currently. Nevertheless, the possible threat of using lowered unit instruction costs as an administrative motive for encouraging distance learning is perceived by many instructors as a serious problem.

## VI. PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: LOWER RESPONSE RATES AND LOWER EVALUATIONS FOR STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING (SET)

Even though it has been the subject of countless articles in the academic literature, the problem of lower evaluations for online courses has achieved very little publicity. The findings have been developed in the context of comparisons of paper and pencil evaluations done in the face-to-face mode versus online evaluations. There is a clearly demonstrable effect: in general, response rates for online evaluations are significantly lower than for paper and pencil evaluations in college courses. For example, when a large university changed from paper and pencil to online evaluations, the response rate dropped from 73% to 43%. While this result gradually rose afterwards, there is considerable potential for skewing of evaluations when less than half of the students respond. [28] Another report showed severe variations, from 0 to 95%, at a different institution. [29] But the most significant problem is not the low response rate; it is that online student evaluations of teaching (SET) are lower online. A large study in a university setting followed 250 online courses in a semester and had the following conclusion:

"The results indicate that average SET ratings in online classes are significantly lower than the average ratings in on-campus classes across all five dependent measures." [30]

While that study covered many courses for one semester, a longer-term analysis gave similar results. Tracking 181 different courses over a seven semester span and collecting evaluation scores for online course evaluations versus face-to-face course evaluations gave consistent results:

"Significantly lower evaluation scores for both the instructor and the course are produced when a web-based modality is used. In general, these results did not vary for courses at different levels of matriculation or at different levels of student participation" [31]

A 2011 large scale study in Spanish universities pointed in a similar direction. [32] Even though this problem has been below the radar amid the various other discussions of distance learning pros and cons, it is definitely going to emerge as an important dissuader once it becomes better known. If a faculty member has a tentative feeling about embarking on distance learning already, it can only be a hindrance if she or he becomes aware of the considerable body of research indicating that both response rates and evaluations are inherently lower when processed online, particularly for courses that are taught online.

## VII PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: ROLE OF ADJUNCTS VS FULL-TIME FACULTY

Who does most of the online teaching? The American Association of University Professors publishes an annual summary of the allocation of college instructors according to five categories. Based on the most recent data, for academic year 2015—2016, the allocations are: full-time tenured professors 21.4%; full-time tenure-track professors 8.2%; full-time non-tenure track 16.7%; part-time 40%; graduate student employees 13.7%. [33,34] By this analysis, less than 30% of all college instructors are tenured or tenure-track. Incidentally, this statistic has been widely reported in the popular literature for many years. Articles like this recent one in *Forbes* are typical. The implication is that most students are less likely statistically to be taught by a tenure or tenure-track instructor. [35]

It would seem that most of the online teaching is done by contingent or adjunct faculty, many of whom simultaneously teach for several institutions. A recent study found that 48% of adjunct faculty teach for at least two universities and, of these, 40% teach completely online. 15% reported having a full-time position at one institution while teaching adjunct for another. [36, 37] There are no indications that this component of online teachers is any more satisfied with online learning options than tenured or tenure-track instructors. If a significant amount of the distance-learning burden is falling to contingent faculty, and approximately two thirds of the professorate overall are not supportive of distance learning, there are several probable outcomes. First, the quality of online offerings may suffer substantially, due to the transient nature of contingent faculties' workloads. Adjunct salaries are drastically lower than full-time faculty, and most receive no benefits, leading to the current situation where half of online adjunct faculty teach for several institutions at the same time, not a recipe for high quality instructor – student interaction. The full-time faculty member, especially a tenure-track individual, faces a disadvantage because of this situation since comparisons are inevitably made between online and traditionally taught courses to the disadvantage of the former.

## VIII. PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: REPORTS OF FACULTY BOYCOTTS AND DISAGREEMENTS CONCERNING ONLINE LEARNING

As mentioned, Bowen and Tobin [14] and many others have noted the relatively low key role that faculty governance has played in shaping the institutions trajectory concerning online learning. In the absence of a strong administrative emphasis, sometimes individual faculties or clusters of faculties have openly protested the introduction of distance learning programs which were perceived to deprive faculty of some of their course development prerogatives. An example is the revolt by faculty at San Jose State in 2013 when the administration attempted to cause MOOC's developed by Harvard and MIT to be integrated into existing course materials. The university president rescinded the order, apologized and agreed to move at a more moderate pace in encouraging curriculum changes.[38] A similar clash occurred

about the same time between the Rutgers University at New Brunswick administration and the faculty members of the graduate school, which voted against new programs which were being established as part of a contract with eCollege, a division of Pearson publishers, which would have significantly increased course offerings but with stipulations about the mandatory use of Pearson materials. [39] North Park University, a small Christian college of about 3,000 students, was also involved in a decision to add many online programs, most of them available through smart phones, against the wishes of some of the faculty. As of late 2017 many of these new courses have been successfully implemented, but considerable faculty discussion and involvement was required to achieve that result. [40] The University of Virginia also was touched by faculty resentment at the attempted ouster of its president partly, according to the chairman of the board of visitors, because of reluctance to become more deeply involved in online education. [41]

The fact that faculty protests have been sporadically reported because of objections to the introduction of online curricula segments is certainly a downside of any decision process involving distance-learning. In addition to all the other perceived obstacles, the last place a new online instructor wants to be is in the middle of a controversy.

#### IX. PERCEIVED OBSTACLE: COMPARISONS WITH "SUCCESSFUL" ONLINE PROGRAMS

As e-learning enrollments are increasing continuously, in contrast to the steady decline in overall university matriculation, there is a perception that the basic metrics for evaluating "successful" programs are attributes like total number of attendees, effectiveness of the learning management system (like Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard, etc.), course evaluations, and the like.. From the literature it seems that there are actually several notable success stories, which for an instructor in an "average" program could be daunting. Among these are University of Maryland (University Campus), Arizona State University, Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), Georgia Tech, and Harvard and MIT's edX program. If success is measured in terms of enrollment growth, University of Maryland University campus (UMUC) definitely qualifies. UMUC has been in the distance learning field for 70 years and has gained particular attention in 2017 for dramatic growth of its programs. In the United States alone 4300 new students were added in the summer term and over 9000 for the fall term, increases of 10% and 8% respectively over the previous academic year.[42] Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is another example of an online system which has grown considerably. Most recent statistics indicate year on year growth to be 55,000 to 64,000. [43]

In terms of delivering high-value at low unit cost, the Georgia Tech online computer science program is probably the most significant model available for Online Masters in Computer

Science (OMCS) degrees. The Georgia Tech option, since its initiation in 2014, has achieved so many graduates that it now amounts to 7% of all 11,000 computer science Masters degrees awarded in the United States annually. Using a combination of MOOC's and other specialized techniques, the Georgia Tech program has a total cost of about \$8,000, roughly one-fifth of the price of its face-to-face program. [44, 45] Arizona State University (ASU) has a *sui generis* reputation in distance learning, especially during the past five years when it has been particularly successful in developing dozens of complete online programs, and achieving high national rankings in all of them. ASU is also notable for involving large percentages of senior faculty in online programs, and has been named most innovative university two consecutive years by *US News* rankings. [46]

In summary, the threat of trying to be compared with "successful" programs is that each institution has its own special teaching culture. Why imitate Southern New Hampshire University, where nearly all the teachers are full-time adjuncts, when one's institution is a large public research university? Why try to be like Arizona State University, when one's own institution has a different mission and direction? Why try to copy edX, when the MOOC approach has been found to pass less than one in 10 of its students? Nevertheless, many professors who are borderline in their decision to embark on a distance learning enterprise, might be put off by the apparent successes of these other institutions, feeling that they could not measure up.

#### X. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS—SOME PERCEIVED PROBLEMS WILL NOT CHANGE BUT THE PARADIGM MUST CHANGE

The image that emerges appears to be a situation that is intractable. Distance learning continues to grow, and overall college enrollments continue to decline. Less than a third of full time faculty approve of online learning. In contrast, most administrators feel that online learning is a definite part of long-term institutional strategy. A number of examples have been described of issues that can influence a decision not to teach online, and most of these perceived problems are not likely to be reduced anytime soon. For example, the cost of an online course is a subject of continual debate, and is nowhere near resolution. The number of adjunct or contingent faculty has been rising every year, according to the AAUP, so that will remain stable or continue to increase over time. MOOC's are not going away either. But some of the perceived problems have to do with institutional support. If there is a long-term solution of this low popularity dilemma for online learning it will undoubtedly have to take place in that sector. Two paradigms in postsecondary education will need to change drastically in order for full-time faculty to begin embracing online learning: the faculty governance departmental support paradigm and the top administration support paradigm.

#### XI. REQUIRED PARADIGM CHANGE: CHANGING FACULTY GOVERNANCE APPROACHES

## TOWARD REWARDS, EVALUATION AND STATUS

One solution to this problem would be a drastic modification of the current faculty governance paradigm, so that the expertise, strategic departmental and divisional experience, and other advantages possessed only by the more senior faculty members can be leveraged into broader and more productive participation on line by them. Many of the studies cited indicate that faculty governance groups at many institutions is still ambivalent about the role of online learning in promotion and tenure decisions. As described earlier, many faculty have justifiable doubts about the outcomes which could be expected if they accept an opportunity to teach online. First, they wonder whether the preparation time required will be penalizing with respect to their research, the zero-sum issue previously described. Second, they are uncomfortable with the prospect that going online, in addition to all its other uncertainties, probably will automatically lead to lower course evaluations, and lower response rates, not a good prospect for someone whose teaching evaluations are a crucial element of the tenure decision, salary other decisions which affect an academic career. Third, and probably most important, faculty members who know about successful institutions and their ability to attract tenured and tenure-track faculty to online learning opportunities, are probably uncertain whether their own institution is on a trajectory toward matching that sort of environment.

The paradigm change required would involve some drastic alterations in the current scheme for rewards, evaluation, and status at the school and departmental level. With respect to rewards, it would be necessary to assure faculty of financial as well as administrative support in switching to distance-learning – that means generous course release time during the semester allocated to developing the new course, full funding of learning opportunities within the institution and beyond aimed at consolidating and solidifying the expertise that is achieved, and perhaps reduction of outside committee work while course development takes place. As to evaluation, the paradigm changes are even more complicated, because distance-learning would have to be considered differently than normal face-to-face courses with respect to student evaluation of teaching (SET) scores, and also recognition of the learning curve associated with this technology – the first course may not be popular, although all the literature indicates that subsequent courses improve drastically. Finally, status maybe the most crucial in this paradigm change the faculty and faculty governance level. As described, the status of distance learning is well below that of face-to-face teaching. Gradually that would have to change and the only way that can take place is through incremental examples of top-notch faculty teaching at distance. It probably would not take many instances of full professors successfully sharing their expertise through e-learning modalities before other faculty wanted to participate more broadly in their turn. So the status of the distance learning practitioner may gradually become improved as more and more respected instructors join in the effort.

Changing the faculty and faculty governance paradigm, while crucial, is impossible unless the top management paradigm is similarly turned upside down. Without major shifts in the attitude of the institution's leaders, no changes will take place, and the faculty acceptance rate of on line teaching will continue at 30% or less.

## XII REQUIRED PARADIGM CHANGE: SIGNIFICANTLY RESHAPING TOP MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOR TOWARD ONLINE LEARNING

With respect to top management it has been mentioned that senior administrators are very supportive of distance learning, again and again declaring it to be a part of their long-term strategy, in every poll on the subject. If that is really so, then the paradigm change should be easier at the top than at the faculty governance level were distance learning is unpopular. The required change would have three manifestations: more recognition of high achieving faculty and departments in delivering distance-learning courses and programs, significantly increased funding for faculty development in distance learning and for related departmental enhancements to make the student experience better – labs, software, etc., and long-term budgeting decisions to cement the paradigm change. The change would require senior administrators to stay in close touch with the vigorous and frank debates that are taking place in public forums everywhere. [47, 48]

In terms of high recognition for faculty achievements in distance learning, the easiest change to achieve, since it is part of the manager's job anyway, there would be awards, celebrations of excellence, letters of commendation, etc. to show that top management has become more attuned to this reality, since about a third of the matriculated students are already taking an online course. The second manifestation, increased funding, is always the most difficult, not because the goal of increasing the resources allocated to distance learning is unworthy, but because any university's decision to reward one cost center involves reducing resources to others. There will have to be plenty of generous funding for release time, new labs, better software, travel, and in addition to other inducements that would be relevant to an individual faculty member. Finally, once the added resources are placed into this paradigm change for distance-learning support, the last part is relatively easy; seeing to it that the new budget numbers, properly adjusted for inflation, continue through subsequent years.

The top management paradigm change should be easier because all studies indicate that administrators show high approval rates for distance-learning. But only with support provided at all the significant points, and especially through increased, sustained funding, will be effect be lasting.

## XIII. CONCLUSION

In summary, this is definitely a dilemma in postsecondary education. Faculty are suspicious and unsupportive of distance learning for many reasons, which have been described as mostly perceptions of external challenges. Most of those challenges will remain for a long time, but where the dilemma can be solved is at the individual institution, through the very difficult process of paradigm change. Senior officials need to be ready to allocate not only increased financial support, but, just as important, more visible acceptance and even celebration of the status of distance learning and also, most importantly, the instructors who are teaching in that mode. And faculty governance structures must also make the same drastic change so that attitudes toward all aspects of on line learning become supportive in all crucial areas, like work assignment, status of online courses, granting of release time, and, most important, promotion and tenure processes.

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