

## 4. Impact of Change on Institutional Challenges

### *Institutional Challenges Articulated by the Commission*

The Commission's most recent accreditation report was reviewed during the design of the LTU Online initiative. The institutional challenges noted in the accreditation visit document relating directly to LTU Online include:

1. "effective communication in matters of institution-wide concern by the central administration;"
2. implementation of "a mature, program-specific, university-wide assessment plan;"
3. "the correct balance between cutting-edge practitioners and full-time academicians;" and
4. "a funded program of faculty and staff development, especially regarding the use of new technology and for the implementation of the assessment program."

Advice and suggestions noted by the Commission associated with these challenges included:

1. "develop faculty understanding of assessment in general and student learning outcome assessment in particular;"
2. "establish 'best practices' within the college, and ... should use the trained faculty as peer mentors;"
3. "Special attention should be given to faculty development for part-time faculty;"
4. "Significant effort needs to be given to improve collegiality, build collaborative relationships, develop mutual respect, and strengthen trust between senior administration and the faculty and staff;" and
5. "Pay special attention to the budget, space allocation, facilities, and staffing of the library to ensure that the library is adequate for an institution offering both undergraduate and graduate programs."

### *Institutional Actions Taken To Address Challenges*

In April 2005, Lawrence Tech hosted a Commission focus visit to evaluate the progress made in the areas of assessment and governance. The result of the focus visit showed that Lawrence Tech had responded to these challenges to the satisfaction of the Commission's focus visit team.

Informed by the Commission's accreditation report and the focus visit, the LTU Online initiative responds to the issues of assessment and governance in these ways:

1. The LTU Online proposal was developed with significant communication and collaboration with a wide range of units, individuals, and stakeholders.
2. Dr. Vaz and Dr. McCord visited each college faculty to present and discuss the LTU Online initiative, and feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the program design.

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3. Dr. McCord visited the Lawrence Tech Faculty Senate to present and discuss the LTU Online initiative. A similar presentation and discussion was held with Lawrence Tech administrators and staff members.
4. The LTU Online course development and assessment methodologies are integrated with University assessment efforts. This includes the appointment of Ms. Diane Cairns, LTU Online producer, to the University Assessment Committee as a representative of LTU Online and the College of Management, where she is an adjunct instructor.
5. The LTU Online proposal included significant work on the role of faculty members and expectations for participation. Special care was taken to ensure that full-time faculty do not feel that their participation in LTU Online activities is expected.
6. All faculty received correspondence about the LTU Online program, and were asked to contact LTU Online staff if they were interested in developing or teaching online courses. This correspondence was issued prior to starting external recruitment efforts for new online faculty.
7. Early recruitment of academically qualified online adjunct faculty was conducted through online job posting services provided by two professional organizations: EDUCAUSE and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT).
8. All instructors – existing full-time Lawrence Tech faculty members, existing Lawrence Tech adjunct faculty members, and new faculty members – teaching with LTU Online will receive significant faculty development, mentoring, and coaching, including a six-week online training program developed and delivered by the Educational Teleconsortium of Michigan.
9. Academic administrators, program administrators, and full-time faculty members are informed on a regular basis about the progress of LTU Online.
10. LTU Online is not tasked with building its own technology and service infrastructures, but rather collaborates with campus technology service providers, the Lawrence Tech Library, and student services units to improve Lawrence Tech's technology and student service capabilities.