

Developing Institutional Support for an Inter-Institutional Project

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Over-Arching Issues

The initiator of an inter-institutional project understands the need, the goals, and the strategy of the project and is its chief advocate. Others (faculty, registrar, chief financial officer, academic administrators, academic advisors) are essential partners in the project. These essential partners may or may not be advocates for the project. The initiator may need to overcome apathy, resistance, or, at worst, sabotage by institutional colleagues.

Alliances are agile and fragile. They depend not on hierarchical relationships, but on a web of relationships. They capitalize on resources at multiple institutions to meet unmet and emerging academic needs. They change faster than the institutional partners change.

Who Does What?

Provost, Academic Dean, Graduate Dean—Academic administrators lead the inter-institutional project and assure compliance with institutional policies and practices. Administrators provide the vision for advancing the work of the alliance and assure that institutional resources appropriately support the work of the project.

Department Heads—Department heads assign the workload and compensation for faculty who teach inter-institutional courses. They create a culture of support among departmental colleagues for faculty who teach inter-institutional courses. They collaborate with department faculty to implement curriculum revisions that allow inter-institutional courses to “fit” within the program design. They communicate with departmental academic advisors about inter-institutional course offerings.

Faculty—Faculty develop, teach, and manage the courses. They collaborate with inter-institutional colleagues to optimize the value of the course for all of the institutional partners.

The Institute for Academic Alliances (IAA) was founded in April 2004 to encourage and assist higher education institutions to develop and deliver collaborative online academic programs. The IAA works with academic institutions to rapidly deploy innovative, high-quality collaborative academic programs in emerging fields. Since its inception, the IAA has worked with 16 higher education alliances involving over 100 higher education institutions in 37 states.

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Technical Support Staff—If inter-institutional courses are technology based, the institution’s technical support staff will recommend courseware, upgrades, provide skill training for faculty, and support the technical needs of faculty.

Academic Advisors—Academic advisors are the brokers for inter-institutional course offerings. They communicate with each other, with students, and with faculty.

Campus Coordinator—A staff member at each partner institution is responsible for assuring that communication, student enrollment, course instruction, and student data transfer happen according to the plan.

Continuing Education Officer—The Division of Continuing Education supports inter-institutional courses through assuring online access to library resources, easy student access to inter-institutional courses, and student access to technical support.

**To learn more visit
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