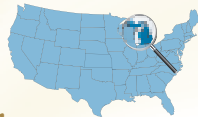


New Doctoral Program Combines Online and



Community College Leadership doctoral students meet as part of new program.

Ferris State University's new Community College Leadership doctoral program combines online and face-to-face learning



with the promise of completion – including the dissertation – in just three years. The program, developed using WIDS and launched this summer, is unique in Michigan and already enrolls 29 doctoral students.

The new program came as a result of a feasibility study conducted three years ago by Bob Ewigleben, former president at Ferris State, and his daughter, Lynne Hernandez. “We identified a need in this area because so many community college leaders and presidents are retiring,” says Instructional Designer Bea Griffith-Cooper. “Our program is blended, with much of it online, so students can continue working. Students finish in three years, as well, which makes it extremely unique.”

Unlike most doctoral programs, the new program at Ferris State starts dissertation work at the beginning of coursework, so the dissertation is complete by the end of three years. And, every course offers a blended learning environment, including online sessions, a one-week intensive session each summer, and one weekend face-to-face session during the fall and spring sessions.

Key to the endeavor was WIDS Software, which provided a consistent framework for building the curriculum and curriculum components. “With input from our National Advisory Board, our core team built the program outcomes very early and then plugged them into WIDS,” says Griffith-Cooper. “Then we developed course level outcomes, courses, course descriptions, course outcomes, assessment plans and course outlines – all in WIDS. Syllabi were generated and the courses were mapped to show how we measure student success against outcomes.”

Face-to-Face Learning

Using WIDS, Ferris State developed solid documentation, at the program level, of where institutional and program outcomes are met, and how those outcomes are assessed and measured. In doing so, Ferris State defined program outcomes and assessment measures and criteria; linked institutional and program outcomes to courses; linked competencies to external standards in the AACCC Leadership Competencies; and documented those connections in a matrix report. That report illustrates in a snapshot how everything within the doctoral program is aligned, which simplified the accreditation process.

A feather in the cap for Ferris State was the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) response to the new program, according to Griffith-Cooper. "They told us this was one of the best programs they had seen. WIDS was hugely helpful because it made it so much easier to provide the documentation required. Designing the program in WIDS was a huge credibility point for us," says Griffith-Cooper. "By going through the process of using WIDS, the HLC knew we were thorough." Even better, according to Griffith-Cooper, is that Ferris State will be held accountable to the program outcomes and assessment of those outcomes. "If we lose that, we lose the distinction of the high-quality program we've built," she says.

"Designing the program in WIDS was a huge credibility point for us."

—Bea Griffith-Cooper, Ferris State Instructional Designer

Ferris State Associate Provost Roberta Tehean agrees. "With a clear picture of what next-generation community college leaders need – based upon the needs assessment and the Advisory Board focus groups – the program does not leave the achievement of these outcomes to chance," she says. "It is not all that common that the courses are so well defined, and WIDS made this possible."

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Program Certification/ Accreditation & WIDS *Simplifying the Process*

Madison College and Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) recently gained critical program accolades. Madison College, in Madison, Wis., received National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) recertification for its Diesel programs, and Moraine Park, in Fond du Lac, Wis., received program approval from the Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI) for its Medical Transcription program.

Madison College Diesel Instructor Aaron Dix attests that using WIDS made the process simpler, and ultimately, revealed content gaps in the curriculum.

Prior to the accreditation, NATEF standards were updated in the WIDS Standards Library. "The NATEF wanted to see course competencies and how NATEF tasks were assessed in each class," says Dix. "So we had to go through and link NATEF tasks to course competencies for each course in the curriculum. It was simple because the standards were already populated and took a simple click of the mouse to link to the competency."

Once all course competencies were linked to the standards, Dix used WIDS Analyzer to run course matrixes. "We received comments from NATEF that the NATEF tasks were well identified and quickly identified," says Dix. "NATEF said we provided excellent documentation."

"In the past, the whole recertification has been stressful for everyone. This go-round was the first time we presented matrices – it was straightforward and trouble free – making it very simple for us," added Dix.

As a result of going through the recertification process, Dix maintains curriculum also improved.

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Blended Community College Leadership Doctoral Program

And while WIDS provided the program's framework, many stakeholders were crucial to its formation and revision, including community college leaders, advisory groups, curriculum committees and faculty from the Colleges of Business, Arts and Sciences and Education and Human Services. The program is operationalized through the College of Professional and Technological Studies.

"Every course was built from scratch by bringing faculty and practitioners together," says Griffith-Cooper. "We built it across the university, which is very cool."

Already, 200 prospective students are listed in the College's admissions database. Ferris State, located in Big Rapids, plans to expand to two cohorts next year, and during the next several years, expand its reach nationally. ●

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Program Certification/Accreditation & WIDS

"After looking at the curriculum, it opened our eyes to a few gaps we needed to address to make the program better." The matrices offered another way for instructors to see what was lacking, such as training aids, or equipment, for example, which contributed to curriculum improvement.

Similarly, WIDS contributed to a simpler approval process at Moraine Park. By creating tables illustrating the comparison between AHDI Model Curriculum components and Moraine Park curriculum components, Medical Transcription Program Director Margaret Spieth provided required documentation for program approval. In doing so, she compared AHDI suggested courses with MPTC courses; AHDI competencies with MPTC competencies; and AHDI objectives to MPTC course learning objectives.

"Because our curriculum was written in WIDS, I could easily locate the necessary level of curricular detail required by AHDI for program review," says Spieth. "Though this was only one aspect of an extremely comprehensive program review, having our curriculum in WIDS proved invaluable in the process!" ●

Upcoming Webinars to Feature the New WIDS

Starting this November, WIDS will showcase features of Web-based WIDS as part of regularly scheduled webinars. As before, participants register ahead of time for a specific date and time, receive log-in details, and join the live one-hour event. A WIDS facilitator introduces the WIDS model and design tool, providing a demonstration of these features:

- review of site set up
- technical requirements
- navigation and data entry
- program design
- program assessment tasks
- outcome assessment plans
- course design
- course outcome summary, syllabi, course assessments, and learning plans
- curriculum approval

Newcomers to WIDS are welcome to attend! Webinar content will be updated throughout the year as development progresses. ●

Check www.wids.org for the schedule.

