Online Graduate Education in Engineering Technology: Lessons Learned

ABSTRACT

Beginning the fall semester 2007, the Purdue School of Engineering and Technology on the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) campus began offering a Facilities Management concentration in the Master of Science in Technology degree program. Concentrations in the Purdue system appear on the transcript. While the general M.S. Technology degree program is a traditional program incorporating on-campus course delivery, the Facilities Management concentration is a 100% on-line program designed for the adult, working student. The program’s curriculum provides an integrated experience in facilities management with emphasis on project and contract management, engineering systems management and energy management.

As a 100% online graduate program, no campus attendance required: admission is online; all coursework is online; student presentations are conducted through various teleconferencing methods; and the diploma is mailed upon degree completion. Courses are delivered asynchronously to allow working professionals in any time zone the flexibility to complete the coursework around their schedules. Course do follow the standard campus semester dates and is laid out to allow completion in two calendar years. To date, the program has 31 graduates representing 13 unique states.

The program is non-thesis, but does require a project in the last semester which can be described as an applied research project that is more extensive and sophisticated than a graduate-level independent study and less formal than a master’s thesis. The overall objective of the project requirement is to engage each graduate student in a study which is typically industry, business or education focused. The focus is to be placed on a topic with practical implications rather than original research. Facilities management students are encouraged to conduct their project at their place of employment.

This presentation details lessons learned through the development of the M.S. Technology, Facilities Management specialization degree program from inception to graduates.

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