

Murray State University

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Speaking the Same Language - Online Administration Concerns and How Faculty can Effectively Communicate with Leaders

Jonathan Small, *Regis College*

Anthony Pina, *Sullivan University*

Firm Faith Watson, *Murray State University*



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**SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE: ONLINE ADMINISTRATION CONCERNS AND
HOW FACULTY CAN EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH LEADERS**

A panel accepted for presentation at the Online Learning Consortium
Innovate Conference in Chicago, Illinois

Jonathan Small
Regis College

Anthony Pina
Sullivan University

Firm Faith Watson
Murray State University

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Short Abstract

A panel will contrast executive online leaders concerns with those of faculty and instructional designers, offering practical examples of the types of information and questions to help faculty and Instructional Designers speak the language of leadership, in order to better effect change and gain support for online learning and projects.

Extended Abstract

Executive leadership, faculty and instructional designers can have vastly different interests and concerns when each is considering how to approach new online learning initiatives. While faculty members or instructional technologists are deeply interested in those areas that most directly affect them--often at the individual course level--those who lead online at the institutional level often answer to program or institution-level issues. When faculty or instructional designers tasked with researching new initiatives reach out to executive leadership for support or funding, these requests may be denied. Although the information presented may be academically rigorous, it may not be the type of information that executives need to allocate funds for new projects. It may seem as though they are speaking different languages. In this session, administrative, teaching and design issues will be addressed, with ideas to help all three groups "speak the same language."

Session Objectives:

At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe some of the main concerns facing online leaders at the university level.
2. Discuss emerging trends that online leaders must understand to develop and grow online learning at their institution.

3. Use strategic communication skills to help faculty and instructional designers present more effective proposals to university leadership to help them make well-informed decisions. (Align proposals with concerns of university leaders)

Presentation Organization:

This presentation will feature a panel of well-established online administrators who lead the online learning divisions of their universities. Their general scope of responsibilities include: course development, faculty training, program development, marketing, enrollment, vendor management, policy development, and budget oversight for suites of online programs.

The session will feature a combination of “seed-questions” to get the presentation started and to encourage the audience participants to ask questions of the panel. The session will begin with panel members interacting with audience participants regarding online learning issues that tend to be of most concern to faculty and instructional designers. These will be contrasted with the responsibilities and concerns of those who lead and administer online learning at the institutional/executive level. The panelists will then provide examples of how these differences can result in faculty and instructional designers “speaking a different language” than administrators, resulting in worthy initiatives being denied and decisions being made with a lack of academic input. Panel members will also solicit examples from audience participants. Next, the panel will field questions from the audience regarding emerging trends that online leaders must understand to develop and grow online learning at their institution, such as determining “in-house” capacity for online learning, negotiating OPM

relationships, and online program and curriculum management, evaluation, authorization, accreditation and compliance,

The panel and participants will conclude with a discussion of strategic communication skills that will help to bridge the language gap between faculty/instructional designers and administrators. The panelists will provide attendees a practical framework of how to more effectively present requests for funding and support.