

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES AND POLICIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE HYBRID COURSES: A COMPARISON STUDY

*Deborah K. Baird, Utah Valley University, deborah.baird@uvu.edu*  
*Pamela A. Dupin-Bryant, Utah State University, pam.dupin-bryant@usu.edu*

### ABSTRACT

*The past few years have been characterized by a proliferation of hybrid courses in many educational settings. Hybrid learning is designed to integrate the best features of face-to-face learning with technology-based online learning management systems (LMS). The blending of traditional and distance deliveries is gaining momentum at many institutions of higher education. As faculty are increasingly encouraged to develop hybrid courses, the need for defined policies is becoming evident. Currently there is no clear benchmark for such policies and there are few guidelines as to how to compartmentalize and "sell" a hybrid course. Is it an online course enhanced with face-to-face gatherings or primarily a campus-centered course with technological tools incorporated? This study examines and compares how two universities of similar size have developed their hybrid programs. Both have strong traditions in face-to-face and distance delivery. Each has taken a different approach to incorporating hybrid courses with other course offerings.*

**Keywords:** Hybrid Course, Blended Course, Learning Management Systems (LMS), Course Management Systems, Technology and Teaching, Course Development

### INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the president of Pennsylvania State University declared that the convergence between online and residential instruction was "the single-greatest unrecognized trend in higher education today" [20]. In the decade following, systematically combining traditional face-to-face instruction with digital media instruction for course delivery became generally known as a blended course design with the term "hybrid course" becoming indicative of a course that pre-schedules separate class periods in both formats [6, 7].

Moore [13] applauded the beginnings of the hybrid format, stating that "the emerging view is of a mutually respectful relationship between teaching at a distance and teaching in the classroom, and the idea that 'each can do its proper work' is now encapsulated in the concept of blended learning."

Research suggests that hybrid courses can be more effective than either face-to-face or online only courses. For instance, the 2010 US Department of Education report titled "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies" examined 51 empirical studies comparing online education with traditional face-to-face courses and concluded that instruction combining online and face-to-face elements had an advantage over those that were purely online, and that students who take all or part of their class online perform better, on average, than those taking the same course face-to-face [19].

In schools where physical instruction space is at a premium, administrators also see hybrids as a logistical benefit. Hybrid courses not only alleviate the pressure on physical space but also increase engagement, add flexibility and amplify learning for all students. The merits of hybrid course design include the enhancement of learning through the use of technology along with the benefits of socialization from personal contact with peers and professors. "Hybrid courses blend the best of both worlds: they retain 'the magic of the classroom,' or the personable and spontaneous face-to-face experiences we have come to rely on. This is combined with the power of new and relevant technology—reusable, flexible and interactive online experiences that reflect the changing world in the 21st century" [17].

Well-defined policies and procedures for developing hybrid courses do not appear to have kept pace with the rapid growth of hybrid courses [11]. There are few guidelines as to how to compartmentalize and promote a hybrid course. Training and support policies for faculty who develop hybrid courses are varied, both between institutions and in departments and schools within them [5]. The purpose of this study was to begin an investigation into how universities are developing their hybrid course programs. The research question specifically asks "How do the

policies and procedures relative to hybrid courses at two large universities compare and contrast?" This examination of the way two universities of similar size and serving similar populations have developed their hybrid programs reveals some of the differences in approach that can occur and suggests problems that can arise.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The blending of traditional and distance deliveries, both for degrees and for individual courses, is gaining momentum at many institutions. Research that studies the hybrid course design is building and groundwork texts suggest why and how hybrids can be an effective blend of face-to-face and online deliveries. Table 1 provides three examples. Note terms such as "groundbreaking" and "new learning mode" in the descriptors used by Amazon to describe the contents.

**Table 1:** Textbooks for Blended/Hybrid Course Design, with online descriptions used by Amazon

Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. (2008). <i>Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles and guidelines</i> , San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.	"This groundbreaking book offers a down-to-earth resource for the practical application of blended learning in higher education."
Snart, J.A. (2010). <i>Hybrid learning: The perils and promise of blending online and face-to-face instruction in higher education</i> . San Diego, CA: Praeger.	"An in-depth exploration of a new learning mode that could radically change higher education."
Stein, J. & Graham, C. R. (2013). <i>Essentials for Blended Learning: A Standards-Based Guide</i> . NY: Routledge.	"As education turns more to blended learning, this book provides invaluable insights."

While often used interchangeably, the terms "hybrid" and "blended" are quite unique. The term "blended" often describes a course taught in person and enhanced via technology using the tools available within a Learning Management Systems (LMS), also known as a "course management system", such as Blackboard Learning System or Instructure Canvas. The term "hybrid" parallels the term "blended" in that hybrid courses also seek to enhance learning through the use of technologies. However the entire course is restructured so that content is delivered both face-to-face and online in a prescheduled, structured manner. Often a hybrid course is 50% face-to-face and 50% online, particularly when capturing classroom space is desired. The hybrid course requires a redesign of the course itself, whereas a blended course may not [10].

Garrison and Vaughn [9] clarify the key assumptions of hybrid design as "thoughtfully integrating face-to-face and online learning, fundamentally rethinking the course design to optimize student engagement, and restructuring and replacing traditional class contact hours." The hybrid course design is expected to create three general areas of improvement: 1) improved pedagogy, 2) increased access and flexibility, and 3) increased cost-effectiveness [4]. "Hybrid learning is designed to integrate the best features of regular face-to-face learning with technology-based online learning by dichotomizing the total class time into a distance or a web-based learning portion and an in-class or face-to-face meeting portion" [14]. Table 2 highlights the definition of terms that we used in this study.

**Table 2:** Definition of Terms

<b>Blended:</b> A blended course is any course that is taught both in person and via technology. The technology-delivered components serve as enhancements and reduce the time traditionally spent in the face-to-face class.
<b>Hybrid:</b> The hybrid course is restructured so that the course content is delivered both face-to-face and online in a prescheduled, structured manner. Typically a hybrid course is 50% face-to-face and 50% online.

Garrison and Kanuka [8] propose that it is inevitable that higher education institutions with strong campus-based curriculum will adopt hybrid learning approaches in a significant way as a necessary process for "mitigating the fiscal and pedagogical challenges and deficiencies" of current traditional education, and they posit that this will redefine higher education as being learning centered. Well-designed hybrid courses can also provide improvement at the institutional level where there are many issues of concern. Snart [16] observes that faculty on many campuses are feeling the push from administrators to increase hybrid course offerings and suggests major challenges to institutions that the hybrid format can address: 1) managing enrollment, 2) scheduling classroom space, 3) aligning learning objectives, 4) improving student retention and success, and 5) reaching tech-savvy students.

Academic research is beginning to emerge reporting on various aspects of blended and hybrid courses such as faculty and student satisfaction, technologies incorporated, and instructional design [5, 12]. Current research is showing that faculty satisfaction with their hybrid teaching experiences varies. One study found that faculty

believed they were doing best with aspects that were shared by traditional face-to-face courses such as organization of the syllabus and clarity of the learning objectives, but felt dissatisfied with course aspects that were unique to blended learning. "Faculty were able to draw on their traditional teaching experiences to aid them in designing and delivering specific aspects of the blended course, but had difficulties with course components that were unique to blended learning and with which they might have had less experience." This discrepancy in skill level has implications for designing support services and professional development activities for faculty that target pedagogy for blended courses [5].

A professor at the University of Wisconsin who recently adapted his law course to the hybrid design noted what he felt were benefits of the hybrid teaching format. He included the opportunity for increased feedback mechanisms, an increase in the incentive for regular student engagement, and substantive curricular improvement brought about by the substantial redesign experience. He also discovered an increased enjoyment on his part for the face-to-face meetings, since the "nuts and bolts" material had already been delivered online [3].

Studies show a mixed level of student satisfaction with the hybrid format. Long Island University is actively incorporating hybrid courses into their schedules, and a 2012 survey revealed that students found the following to be the most effective aspects of hybrid courses:

1. Flexible scheduling helpful with time management;
2. Opportunities for independent work;
3. Opportunities for interaction with the instructor and with peers;
4. Good organization of the course and course materials by the instructor;
5. Instructor's sympathetic attitude towards students.

The following aspects were identified by students as the least effective aspects of hybrid courses:

1. The challenge of independent time management;
2. Lack of opportunities to interact interpersonally with the instructor and with peers;
3. Confusion regarding assignments and the scheduling of F2F (face-to-face) sessions;
4. Technical difficulties with the LMS or limited computer skills [5].

"There are skeptics even among Millennial students—some students noted that the mix of face-to-face and use of technology was interesting and challenging and kept them engaged. Others observed that a teacher's presence is more important" [2].

Reporting on a national survey of over 1000 colleges and universities, Allen, Seaman and Garrett [1] discuss blended learning (they use the terms blended and hybrid as synonymous) and where it is being used. "It is becoming clear that blended learning is generally not part of an institutional transition strategy from face-to-face to fully online courses, but rather a discrete option which institutions choose on its own merits." They asked the question, "Do students prefer blended courses over either fully online or face-to-face?" They found that in 2006 students were neutral as to delivery method. However, the report summarizes that the situation is dynamic. "Consumer experience will grow and become more sophisticated, the balance between consumers who regard delivery mode as a primary versus secondary consideration may shift over time, and school development and positioning of online/blended provision will shape consumer perceptions. Based on consumer data, what appears certain is that the market for online/blended higher education has a lot of room for growth."

Overall, the research suggests that "when technology is chosen thoughtfully, it has the potential to enhance the hybrid teaching and learning environment significantly while making the experience more interactive and time efficient for teachers and students alike" [15].

Giving attention to specific hybrid course design and delivery processes can help program administrators develop procedures that will help to facilitate the process. McGee and Reis [12] point out that the range of conceiving and approaching blended course design is as varied as instructional methods. "The variety of designs suggests that best or effective practices may be limited to broad generalizations that may be contradicted depending on the beliefs of the designer." They propose that if the hybrid delivery model continues to expand and become a mainstay for higher education, then more clearly vetted models and well-substantiated effective practices are needed and should be be strategically integrated into institutional systems.

### METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study reporting on the current policies and procedures regarding the hybrid format at two comparable universities, Utah Valley University (UVU) and Utah State University (USU). The current policies and procedures of the two universities were collected and compared. Artifacts relative to hybrid courses were the primary source of data. Course catalogs were reviewed and correspondence to faculty from administration regarding hybrid courses were analyzed. Discussions with faculty and administrators also served as a basis for data collection.

Utah Valley University (UVU) is a teaching institution in central Utah, 40 miles south of Salt Lake City. At UVU, the fusion of academic and hands-on learning is referred to as "engaged learning." Along with the institution's long-rooted commitment to serving the needs of the community, UVU's emphasis on engaged learning led to the prestigious certification as a "community engaged university" by the Carnegie Foundation in 2009. Students are given many opportunities to participate in local internships and community service. With over 33,000 students, UVU is now the second-largest four-year institution in the Utah System of Higher Education (behind University of Utah) and is providing higher education to more Utahans than any other university. In addition to many certificate and diploma programs, they offer 61 baccalaureate degrees and master degrees in education, nursing, and business administration.

Utah State University (USU) is in northern Utah, 81 miles north of Salt Lake City. Utah State University is a "Doctoral/Research University - Extensive" institution, as designated by the Carnegie Corporation, meaning that in selected areas historically associated with its designation as a land-grant and space-grant university, it provides doctoral and master's level education and supports and expects of its faculty significant research efforts. They foster the principle that academics come first by cultivating diversity of thought and culture and by serving the public through learning, discovery and engagement. Besides the large main campus in Logan, they have three regional campuses, one comprehensive regional college, and 28 extension offices throughout the entire state. Student enrollment is 28,000. They offer 168 undergraduate degrees and 143 graduate degrees.

### FINDINGS

In this comparison study of two universities, the merits of the hybrid course format are encouraging both schools to increase their offerings in this mode. However, each has taken a different approach as to faculty support and presentation of the course to the student. One school offers their hybrid courses as primarily face-to-face while the other promotes them as online classes. Both describe the complementary format as course enhancements. A summary of observations relative to policies and procedures are displayed as Table 3.

**Table 3:** Comparison of Procedures for Developing and Teaching a Hybrid Course

Notable Activities	UVU	USU
Uses term "hybrid" separately from the general term "blended"	Yes, school wide	Yes, within the parameters of an "online course". Some departments do not use the term.
Invites all interested faculty to develop a hybrid course if interested	Yes	Informally yes; formal invitation extended to regional and distance education faculty
Has a clear procedure for faculty to apply for permission to develop a hybrid course	Yes (form)	Yes (form)
Has established a support center with staff dedicated to support of hybrids	Yes (Innovation Center)	Yes (Center for Innovative Design and Instruction - CIDI)
Offers a training course for faculty who are planning to develop a hybrid course	Yes	No
Clearly indicates to students at registration that a course is "hybrid" and what that means	Courses are clearly labeled "Hot Bunk Hybrid" but the student must search for additional explanation	Not at the undergraduate level; a few graduate courses indicate they are hybrids and lists the detailed scheduling
Hybrid course support staff are housed within the distance education departments of the school	Yes	Yes
Learning Management System (LMS) employed	Canvas by Instructure	Canvas by Instructure
Ongoing support offered	Yes	Yes

In the 2013-14 academic year Utah Valley University offered 37 hybrid courses, some with several sections offered, and clearly identified them as such, although they were listed along with other regular campus classes. Hybrid courses at Utah Valley University are offered by most disciplines. Utah State University did not offer a list of hybrid courses at the undergraduate level in 2013, although some distance education courses under the heading "Online" were described as having blended or hybrid characteristics. USU invited current distance education faculty to develop hybrid courses for spring of 2014. These courses are offered as distance education courses. Some departments at USU have established the identity of hybrid courses as a separate category. Some departments are not using the term hybrid at this time.

**Hybrid Course Policies at UVU**

Utah Valley University has been actively engaged in various forms of distance delivery for over twenty-five years including online and interactive live video. There are three off-campus sites used for live classes or for interactive video conferencing. Most of the online courses are used to apply towards a traditional on-campus degree, but there are three degrees offered through online-only delivery: Aviation, Emergency Services, and Hospitality Management. It is also possible to obtain a generalized associate degree. Developing hybrid courses began in 2010. UVU's university president, Matthew S. Holland, has particularly encouraged funding and training for hybrid courses to become a major factor in the university's offerings. In his 2012 State of the University address he emphasized that research supported the benefits of hybrid learning and explained:

The development of hybrid courses, ...at my urging, is the primary focus of online development right now. While hybrid courses still require the use of a bricks and mortar classroom, they do not require the full use of the classroom. What this allows for is two separate courses, even those in entirely different fields, to share – or "hot bunk"...the same room during the same time block of the same semester. This last year, of the 65 developed hybrid courses, 48 were hot-bunked which effectively opened up 24 additional classroom spaces [11].

UVU defines Hot Bunk Hybrids as those that share a classroom that is normally scheduled for one section. Fifty percent or more of face-to-face class time is replaced by content and activities delivered via distance education technologies. Two hybrid course sections are offset to occupy the same room during the same time on different days of a normal classroom schedule. The term comes from a military term indicating two soldiers are sharing the same bunk on opposite 12-hour shifts.

At UVU, students register for a hybrid course as if it were a regular face-to-face course. The online element is considered supplementary, albeit carefully prescheduled to carry a portion of the course content. Sometimes the student does not understand the online element of the course and some say that the description in the online registration system about the delivery of their course can be confusing to them. They do not always investigate the meaning of "Hot Bunk Hybrid" and may shy away from the section. When they register for the course on the lecture day they choose, they are automatically registered for a TBA additional section. The TBA acts as a placeholder in Banner, but sometimes confuses the student. Often they ask about it on the first day of class, concerned that they may be required to attend another class at an undisclosed day and time. Table 4 displays a sample of the online appearance of the class schedule used by the student for registration.

**Table 4. Sample Listing in Student Class Schedule, UVU**

<b>Principles of Marketing - 12156 - MKTG 3600 - 002</b>						
Technology enhanced: course is taught both in person and via computer, online, or other technologies.						
Associated Term: 2014 FALL						
Levels: Undergraduate						
Attributes: HY - Hybrid, Course fee of \$1 applies, Lab access fee of \$32 applies						
3.000 Credits						
Scheduled Meeting Times:						
Type	Time	Days	Where	Begin - End Dates	Schedule Type	Instructors
Class	10:00 am - 11:15 am	T	WB 123	Aug 25, 2014 - Dec 18, 2014	Hot Bunk Hybrid	xxx
Class	TBA	TBA	TBA	Aug 25, 2014 - Dec 18, 2014	Hot Bunk Hybrid	xxx



One major element of UVU's hybrid effort is the faculty support training called the Hybrid Teaching Initiative (HTI). HTI is offered through the school's Innovation Center which is housed in the Distance Learning Department. The Innovation Center publishes this mission statement: "Innovation in Instruction and Technology leverages innovative educational approaches and new technologies to promote effective and efficient teaching and learning across the curriculum." HTI offers a workshop called The Hybrid Boot Camp for professors who will be developing a hybrid course, and which faculty is strongly encouraged to attend. The invitation faculty receives to participate in this boot camp is quite enticing:

Hybrid courses couple technology with innovative teaching practices to increase flexibility and engagement. Hybrids transform one or more face-to-face sessions into online experiences, reducing physical seat time without diminishing educational outcomes. Because hybrid courses require significant re-thinking of teaching practices and understanding of new technology, we're offering the Hybrid Boot Camp as a two-week development experience. Faculty who join the Hybrid Boot Camp will explore new ways of teaching and learn to use relevant technology to foster engagement. You'll walk away with your own hybrid design strategy and a prototype lesson that can serve as a template for the rest of the course. Stipends of up to \$1800 may be available to full-time faculty who complete the Hybrid Boot Camp [18].

Boot camps are offered during fall, spring and summer semesters. UVU faculty are given rudimentary background regarding pedagogy and best practices for teaching, then are given significant training in the technology required and how to set up materials in Canvas, the Learning Management System used for course delivery. They are not monitored as to the design and development of the course materials and teaching tools used, but are given individualized support. They are fully supported in the use of Canvas as they deliver hybrid courses. Technicians at the Innovation Center are assigned to specific courses and connect with individual faculty during the semester. Below is a sample of the initial support contact received via email in 2012 by UVU hybrid instructors as presented in Table 4.

**Table 5: Hybrid Instructor Support Letter, UVU**

<p>My name is xxx and I work as a Course Specialist in the Distance Education Department here at UVU. Recently, with the dramatic increase in the development of hybrid courses, the university administration has decided that faculty of "HOT-BUNK" Hybrid courses need some technical support, much like faculty who teach "Online" and "Live Interactive" courses.</p> <p>I can provide you with several support services I hope you will find valuable. All of our services are free to hybrid faculty and your students and will not be an additional cost to you, your students, or your department. A few of the services I provide are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help to resolve any technical issues that you or your students may have in the course.</li><li>• Review your online materials periodically to ensure links, pictures, and videos are still functioning properly and repair any broken files that crop up.</li><li>• Import your Canvas course over to the new semester with all the files intact.</li><li>• Help to manage assignments and assessments for accommodative students.</li></ul> <p>If you have any questions or would like to set up a meeting where we can further discuss how I can be of assistance to you and your hybrid courses please give me a call or send a quick email. I sincerely look forward to meeting with you and providing you and your students with the support that is now available to Hybrid Courses.</p>
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Not only is UVU heavily incorporating hybrid courses into the curriculum, the Woodbury School of Business launched a hybrid degree in hospitality management that began in fall 2012. The hybrid program is facilitated online, with a dedicated campus lab where students receive face-to-face instruction from professors. The degree offers both online and on-campus experience designed to give students the resources necessary for success and increase the quality of time spent with professors. For further insight into UVU's support system see: <http://www.uvu.edu/innovation/hybrid/>

### **Hybrid Course Policies at USU**

USU has a long tradition of delivering courses throughout the state through online distance education and live interactive video conference (IVC) classes. There are 27 programs delivered entirely online, including certificates, bachelors and masters degrees. At USU hybrid courses are incorporated into the online education program as a

subcategory, and students are told: "Online and Hybrid courses are essentially the same thing. The only difference between the two is that with hybrid courses, even though all course work can be completed online, there are specific times in which student participation is required via interactive technologies on the internet."

The hybrid student is expected to register as an online student through distance education channels. Below is a sample of how the registration schedule was presented to the graduate student in Fall of 2013 (Table 6). However, the undergraduate student schedule was more general and simply lumped hybrid courses into the delivery category "online". When a hybrid course was indicated, it was primarily an online course that included a one week in-class meeting schedule. This did not match the current evolution of the term "hybrid" as described earlier.

**Table 6: Sample Listing in Student Class Schedule, USU**

Course	Title	Delivery	Instructor	Credits
STAT 5200	Design of Experiments	Campus	xxx	3
ASTE 6200	Principles and Practices of Extension Education	Interactive Broadcast, Monday - 3:30-5:00 p.m.	xxx	3
FCSE 6340	Curriculum Development Testing and Evaluation	Hybrid course - both online and on-campus Online component: June 24 - August 9 On-campus component: July 8-12 (room ASTE 108)	xxx	3

Although there is no "boot camp" type instruction for hybrid course faculty, there is a specific set of steps that the faculty must perform and for which they must get approval signatures. Many of the RCDE faculty are familiar with distance education delivery methodologies. In addition, faculty in other departments and colleges have developed hybrid courses on an individual basis, often with various terminologies and policies. (One professor commented to us, "We are not allowed to use the term 'hybrid'.")

**Table 7: Letter to Regional Campus and Distance Education (RCDE) Faculty, USU**

<p><i>Instructional technology increases the options available to instructors to enrich the teaching-learning experience. These options also present logistical and personnel resource decisions that must be addressed by the university, administration, and support staff. Developing a course for hybrid delivery is one such pedagogical and resource allocation decision.</i></p> <p>A hybrid course is taught both in person, in a classroom (also IVC) and via technology. The technology-delivered components include teaching and learning activities and <b>reduces</b> the time traditionally spent in the face-to-face class. Two types of hybrid delivery are applicable to this process: (1) Shortening scheduled meeting times; (2) replacing entire scheduled meeting times with asynchronous (online) direct instruction. Note: an instructor cannot change the complete, original delivery method of a course (i.e. switch from IVC to online course as shown in Banner) without prior approval.</p> <p>The following steps are required by an RCDE instructor who wishes to develop and deliver a hybrid course (<i>note: requests for hybrid development must be submitted no later than one month prior to the start of the semester – and preferably when the course is scheduled by their respective campus</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The instructor must receive approval to develop and teach a hybrid course from their campus dean and their department head <i>prior</i> to the semester the course is to be delivered.</li> <li>2. In submitting the course for approval to be taught hybrid, the instructor will provide the following information:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The course, original delivery method, and original scheduled meeting times.</li> <li>b. The instructor must be able to demonstrate through adequate online content that their hybrid format includes the required "direct instructional time" for the academic credits assigned to the course. In hybrid delivery "direct instructional time" can be achieved through a combination of both synchronous and asynchronous instructional delivery.</li> <li>c. Verification that the instructor has met with an instructional designer with the <i>Center for Innovative Design and Instruction (CIDI)</i> on best practices and instructional tools for hybrid delivery, and the designer will certify that the course follows best practices.</li> <li>d. A written plan that includes a complete proposed schedule of meeting days/times for the semester. The instructor must consult with their campus scheduler who will work with RCDE Logan to ensure adequate capacity for the days/times and frequency of synchronous instructional delivery. Once approved, the plan must be included in the course syllabus. If the schedule changes during the semester, notice must be provided to the students and campus scheduler to ensure room availability.</li> <li>e. A description of synchronous and asynchronous instructional delivery methods and content planned for the semester to be included in the syllabus.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
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Upon receiving approval for designing a hybrid course, the USU faculty member is required to work on an individual basis with an Instructional Designer through USU's Center for Innovative Design and Instruction (CIDI). While developing the course, instructors are encouraged to view online tutorials and use the Instructional Consulting

Services offered through CIDI. There is no generalized training required regarding the pedagogical principles of hybrid course design. For further insight into USU's support system see: <http://cidi.usu.edu/index.cfm>

### CONCLUSIONS

McGee and Reis [12] propose that "if the blended delivery model continues to expand and become a mainstay for higher education, then more clearly vetted models, examples of effective course designs, and well-substantiated effective practices are needed." They conclude that what is primarily missing in the literature are examples of blended courses, and suggest that examining the experiences of others can inform, model, and clarify how blended courses differ from other delivery designs.

The comparison of the two universities in this study gives examples of disparate policies and procedures in place for their hybrid courses. Each has similar student populations and well-developed distance education programs, yet our examination revealed inconsistencies in the rate of increase in hybrid course offerings and differences in how policies and procedures to support them have developed.

Even within universities there may not be a unifying consistent policy for developing hybrid courses among departments and colleges, as noted at USU. Some faculty at USU are specifically invited to develop hybrid courses and others work within parameters set by individual colleges or departments, but there is no generalized training program. Each participant is supported individually through the distance education department. At UVU all faculty are invited to participate, but are expected to participate in the school's hybrid training boot camp prior to developing a course, and then are carefully monitored throughout the development and delivery of the course.

Our recommendations are intended to support the academic freedom of the instructor, and while we do not recommend "bureaucratic red tape", certain procedures should be clearly outlined to enhance the educational experience for both the faculty and the student.

Faculty should be given plenty of resources, training, and guidance to make proper choices that complement the course dynamics. A pitfall to avoid is faculty trying to fit their course into a hybrid format by simply off-loading printed materials to an online format. The choice to move to hybrid should enhance the learning experience, fit with the objectives/goals of the course, and augment learning. We suggest some generalized training as to the potential use of blended methods, but development policies should not be "one size fits all." For example, demonstrating the value of digitizing lectures and freeing up contact time for personal interaction would present a paradigm shift that might strengthen the course [3]. Examples of successfully executed hybrid courses would be beneficial benchmarks.

At both universities the way courses are presented for registration makes a difference as to student expectations. Further study is warranted regarding the satisfaction of students for their experience in registering for and then completing a hybrid course. Course listings should be more clearly defined prior to the semester so students can make informed choices. A comparison analysis between offering hybrid courses as enhanced face-to-face courses and offering them as enhanced online courses would add valuable insight to policy development.

An emerging stream of academic research is describing some of the successes of the hybrid course format, particularly from faculty and student data. Additional study is recommended using different sources of data. The following reviews could be requested by researchers or policy developers: a) peer review from a content area expert, b) peer review from an education expert skilled in hybrid courses, c) instructional designer review, and d) administrator review.

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