

Distance Learning Compensation in CSU Business Schools

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Accounting
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Educators confront many issues when considering moving to distance-learning modalities for instruction. One of those issues, faculty compensation, is addressed in this paper. The paper reports the results of a survey of College of Business Deans throughout the California State University; it also examines one viable working model for this complex issue from the State University of New York.

Introduction

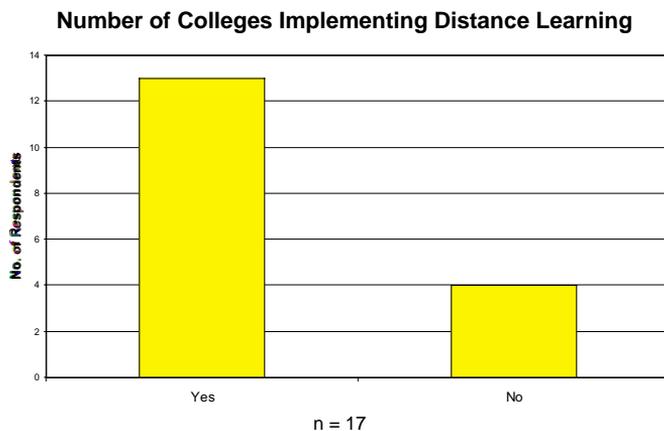
The faculty of colleges and universities throughout California and the United States are constantly being challenged to “do more with less.” And, out of this need for increased efficiency has grown the concept of distance learning. Yet, as with all innovations and new ideas, several questions must be answered to take full advantage of the economies offered by distance learning methodologies.

This paper begins to address the issue of compensation for faculty teaching via distance learning. The authors completed a survey of College of Business deans in California as well as conducting other research on compensation systems currently in use for distance learning courses. We will first report the results of the survey, and then describe one system currently in use. The paper concludes with several suggestions for further research.

Survey Results

In Summer 1998, the researchers surveyed all College of Business deans in California ($n = 42$). Seventeen usable surveys were returned for a response rate of 40%. The charts below summarize the results.

Chart 1 (Number of Colleges Incorporating Distance Learning) shows that, for the seventeen responding Colleges of Business, thirteen utilize some form of distance learning, while four do not. In the context of our study, distance learning was defined as any learning modality which separates an instructor from his / her students in either space or time. (Further analysis and data presentation will be based on the thirteen schools utilizing some form of distance learning.)



The first part of the survey focused on demographic variables regarding the business school itself. Chart 2 (Number of Students in the Business School) shows that most schools in the sample were of moderate size (between 1,000 and 10,000 students), with a few small schools (under 1,000).

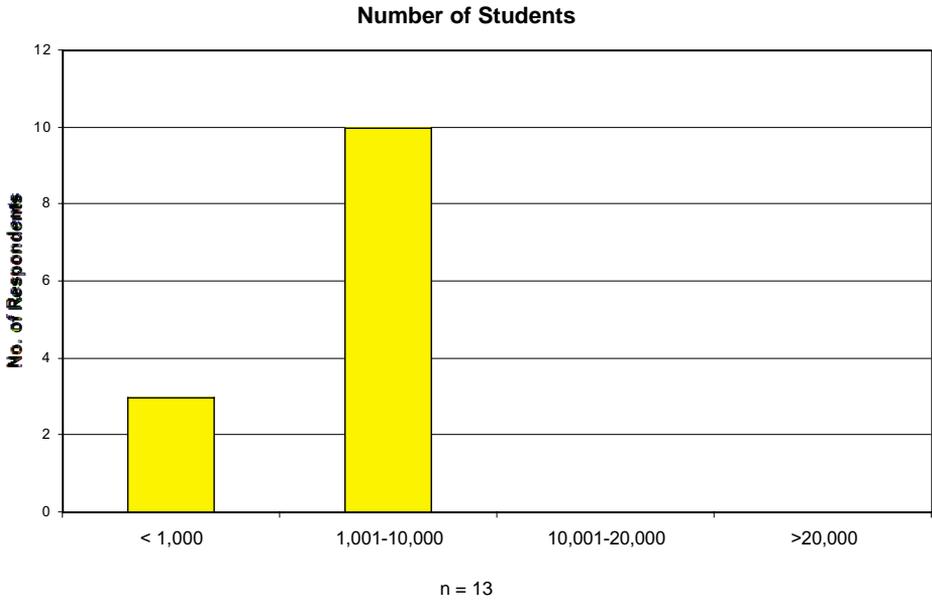
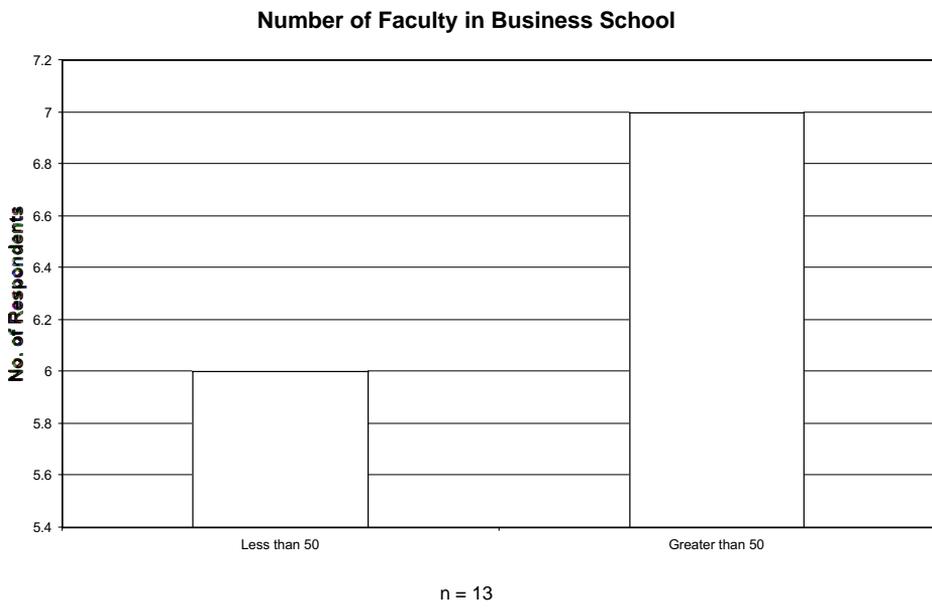
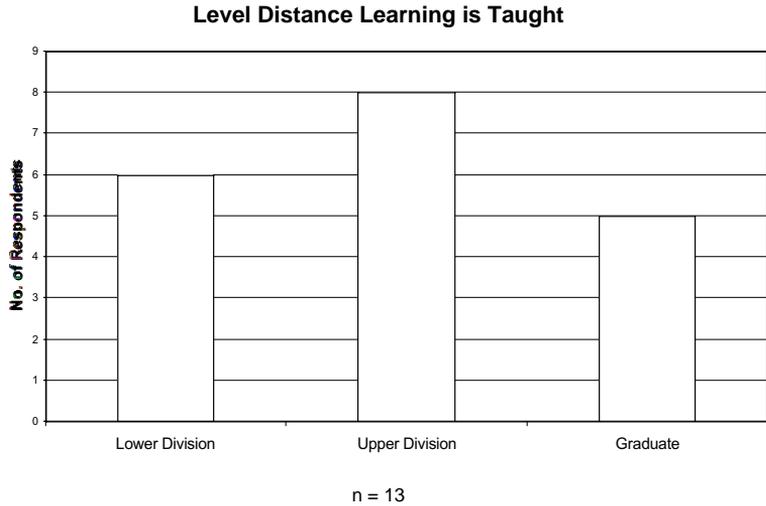


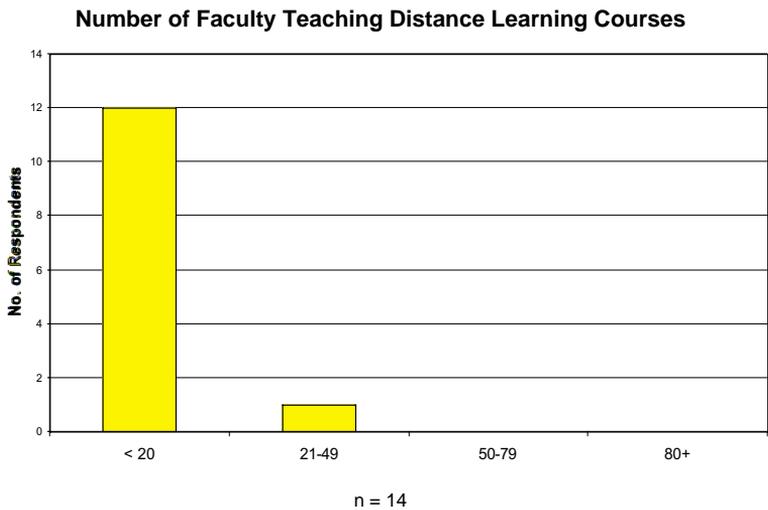
Chart 3 (Number of Faculty in the Business School) reveals that the responding schools were divided into two groups: roughly half of the schools have less than fifty faculty, and roughly half have more than fifty.



We next focused on the extent of use of distance learning in the curriculum. Chart 4 (Level of Distance Learning Use) shows that distance learning modalities are used throughout the curriculum: lower-division undergraduate, upper-division undergraduate, and graduate. (Since some schools use distance learning at more than one level of the curriculum, the sample size is slightly larger here.)

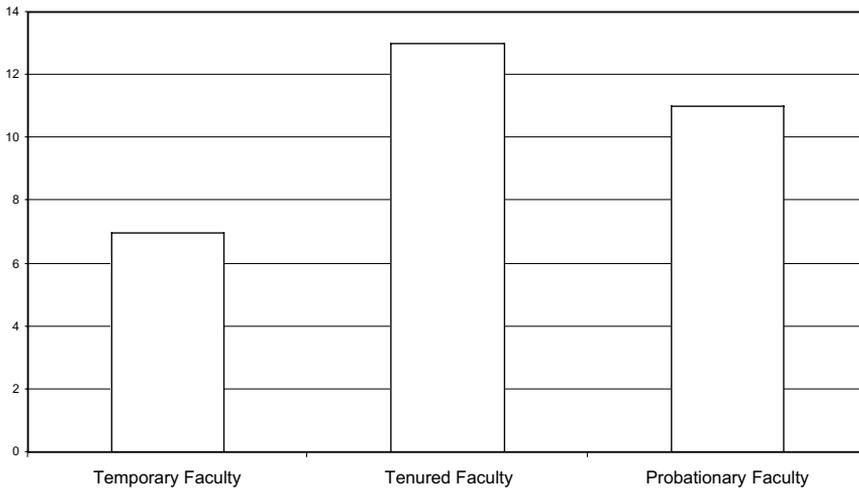


Further, in most schools, only a few faculty are teaching via distance learning. As demonstrated by Chart 5 (Number of Faculty Teaching Distance Learning Courses), in almost every case, less than twenty business school faculty teach courses via distance learning.



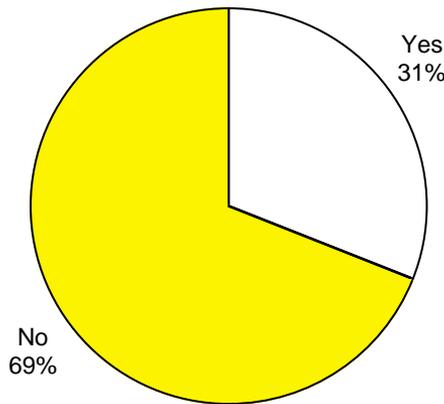
While a few schools do not restrict faculty participation in distance learning courses based on tenure status, many do. As illustrated by Chart 6 (Who Participates in Distance Learning Instruction), only six schools allow part-time faculty to teach via distance learning. All schools in the sample allow tenured faculty to do so, while most (eleven) offer the opportunity to probationary faculty as well. (As with Chart 4, the sample size is slightly larger here since some schools involve more than one type of faculty member in distance learning.)

Who Participates in Distance Learning



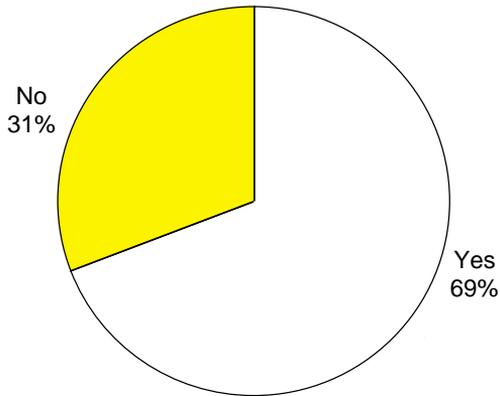
The final group of questions related directly to the issue of compensation. We first asked business deans if faculty teaching via distance learning were compensated for the preparation time involved in getting a distance learning course ready. Chart 7 (Compensation for Preparation Time) shows that, in nearly seventy percent of the cases, faculty are not compensated for time preparing distance learning courses.

Preparation Time Compensation



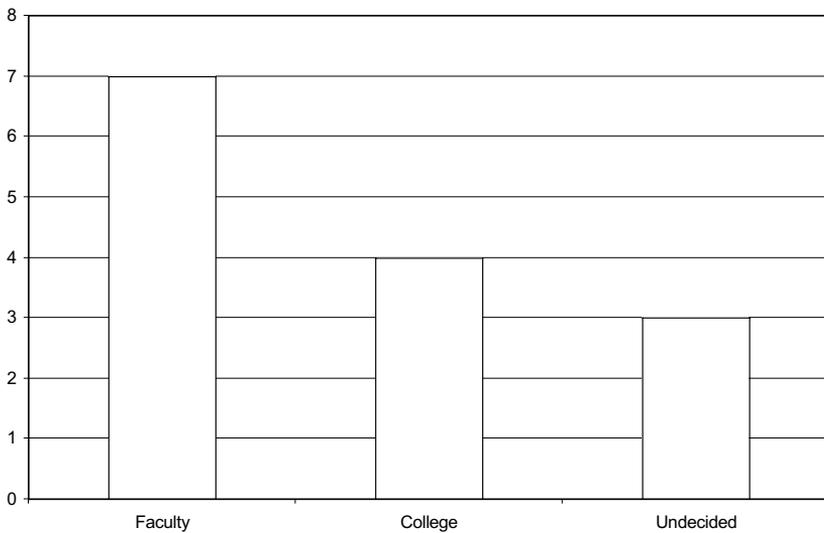
On the other hand, the proportions are reversed when considering the issue of compensation for course delivery (see Chart 8: Compensation for Delivery). Many schools treat courses taught via distance learning as part of a faculty member’s regular course load, with no specific compensation provided outside of the normal compensation. The likely scenario (which should be tested with further research) is that the four schools responding “no” to this question fall into that group.

Compensation for Delivery



The final question with respect to compensation issues centered on the retention of intellectual property rights. Some schools in the sample are still resolving this issue, while one school shares intellectual property rights with faculty authors. The remaining schools assign intellectual property rights either solely to the faculty author or solely to the school, as shown in Chart 9 below.

Retention of Intellectual Property Rights



A Working Model

Although many schools in California are still wrestling with the issue of compensation for distance learning courses, some institutions have already developed such systems. One effective model is in use by Monroe Community College in New York. Based on the SUNY Learning Network Model, the Monroe model has the following characteristics:

1. Faculty developers of distance learning courses receive a laptop computer, one course release time, and a \$1,000 stipend for the development phase. Faculty may use the stipend directly in the course development, or retain it as personal compensation. The laptop, in theory, is returned to the college once the distance learning experience concludes. However, in practice, faculty members generally keep the laptop computer since the course is offered continuously.
2. Faculty members retain intellectual property rights to their materials in perpetuity. The college has the right to use the materials for five years after their development, and faculty are further compensated for updating the course materials.

According to Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley, Vice President for Educational Technology at Monroe, this compensation system works because "everybody wins." The system is combined with several other features of distance learning at Monroe, including:

- ✓ The maintenance of "normal" class sizes for distance learning courses
- ✓ Careful selection of faculty members to participate in distance learning
- ✓ A collaborative view of technology between academic and administrative functions
- ✓ One-stop shopping for information technology training on campus

For further information on Monroe's use of distance learning, readers are encouraged to consult their Web site: <http://www.monroecc.edu/>.

Further Research

As with most preliminary research, this study has raised more questions than it answered. A description of the state of compensation systems for distance learning is a place to start, but several analytical questions remain:

1. What is the relationship between the factors explored in the survey? For example, are larger colleges of business more or less likely to restrict faculty participation in distance learning based on tenure status?
2. What kind of college infrastructure must be in place to make a compensation system effective?
3. How should courses and instructors be selected for participation in a distance learning program? Should compensation be differential based on the course and / or instructor?
4. What barriers (internal and external) block the development of effective compensation systems for distance learning courses?

These questions will be explored in future papers in this series. The authors welcome constructive criticism and feedback on the ideas presented in this paper.