



Why Distance Learning?: Higher Education Administrative Practices

By Gary Berg

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Despite significant investment in computer-based learning in higher education, there is a dearth of current research on administrative strategies for its effective use. Drawing from a national survey of higher education institutions and interviews with administrators, this book addresses key issues of distance learning: Why are higher education institutions pursuing such ventures? How are administration and management practices affected by these motivations? How should universities address the difficult administrative questions raised by distance learning?

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This book explores explicit motivations, focusing on access and a belief in the pedagogical advantages of this approach to higher education. The survey reveals that top university and continuing education administrators are more than twice as likely to lead the implementation push than individual faculty. The study also found that the core of distance learning is administratively housed in self-supporting continuing education units, and that the majority of respondents pay full-time faculty under a regular load arrangement for these courses--with no additional stipend for course development. Controversial findings involving issues of intellectual property and the different attitudes of community colleges and doctoral degree-granting institutions toward distance learning are also covered.

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Editorial Review

Review

The book is well-written, and addresses aspects of distance learning program administration that had not previously been studied the same way....Why Distance Learning? represents a valuable contribution to the literature on distance learning. This book is recommended to any librarian who is interested in knowing more about the history and administration of distance learning programs. It is also recommended to administrators of established programs and to any institution that is considering beginning a new distance program. [W]ell written with an appropriate level of detail, and the material is refreshingly current, with both electronic and print-based resources included. This publication is a good introduction and overview of the literature on the burgeoning and confusing field of distance education and the issues surrounding it. It is recommended for library schools and university libraries with an interest in distance education. (*Journal Of Library and Information Services In Distance Learn*)

About the Author

GARY A. BERG is Dean of Extended Education at California State University Channel Islands and author of numerous articles on current issues in higher education, educational technology, and media studies, as well as four books.

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