Creating an International Joint Certificate in IT Administration

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Summary

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the University of Agder (UiA), Norway, are collaborating on the creation of an undergraduate certificate in Information Technology Administration. The certificate is designed for students who are interested in managing the complex technical infrastructure of today's organizations. The certificate will consist of approximately 15 credit hours of hands-on courses, covering such areas as systems administration, network administration, database administration, security administration, and distributed systems. All courses will be offered online, using a variety of collaboration tools and teaching techniques that reflect the best of current practice. Students will take courses taught by both UNO and UiA instructors and will have the opportunity to work with students residing in a country other than their own.

The program is currently under development at both universities. Market research indicated that there is high current and future demand for the skill-set offered by the IT administration certificate. However, neither UNO nor UiA has the resources or capabilities of offering the full certificate on its own. By combining their resources, the institutions are able to expand their offerings not only to their own student population, but to those in other countries as well. By being a completely online offering, the certificate is available to students in multiple countries in delivery modes that are flexible and accessible.

The online international collaboration behind this certificate will offer many opportunities for pedagogical research, blending teaching and research to create a learning environment in which students both learn from and participate in teaching and research processes. The courses are intensely technical, requiring hands-on access, often by teams of students, to sophisticated systems. Enabling the access and the real-time staff support that accompanies it is a challenge that must be met. Contemporary technologies of cloud computing, virtualization, and remote collaboration offer opportunities for creative solutions. Administratively, the two institutions have worked through issues of reconciling differences in credit production (student credit hours vs. European Credit Transfer System), course payment, semester schedule reconciliation, time zones, and teacher workloads.

Presenter Bio

Peter Wolcott, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Management Information Systems at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He has long-standing research interests in the international dimensions of information technologies, and has taught database courses in both English and Norwegian at UNO and at the University of Agder. His current research projects are in the areas of IT for development.

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