Supporting Online Faculty Holistically:
Developing a Support Website Resource

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Abstract: Current trends in post-secondary education enrollment indicate that colleges and universities are likely to experience an increase in the number of online students. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the type of resources and support features online faculty need, desire, and expect in a support website. The method used to collect research findings was an online survey. The participants for this study consisted of the online faculty population at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. Participants were invited by email to participate in a 13 question survey which asked participants to rate the importance of the questions listed. Of the 2,522 survey invitations e-mailed to potential participants, 380 responded with completed surveys, providing a response rate of 15.06%. Although this was a relativity low response rate, researchers felt the demographics of the respondents provided an accurate representation of the population studied. Findings from the survey indicated participants agree there is a need to implement a support website. Participants indicated the support website should provide support resources, communication forums, and resources to increase connectivity to the institution. The authors note providing online faculty with support websites could be a differentiation strategy to recruit and retain quality online faculty.

Keywords: Online faculty, online resources, faculty support, faculty needs, communication, connectivity

Introduction

Institutions of higher education are increasingly using online modalities to deliver education services to respond to changes in the marketplace. The changing demographics of the student population are a primary cause for increased demand for online courses (Dykman & Davis, 2005). With a large increase in non-traditional students, colleges and universities need to develop educational services to meet the needs and demands of non-traditional students (Sutherland-Smith & Saltmarsh, 2010), as many students find online education more convenient than traditional ground-based education (Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Schroder, 2013). Colleges and Universities are increasingly offering online courses and programs to respond to changing student populations, provide convenience to students, and increase enrollment. These developments are likely to increase the need to move toward an online faculty-centric model.

An important development in the growth of online education has been the emerging position of online faculty. The increased use of online faculty poses challenges to colleges and universities, as colleges and universities are increasingly reliant on adjunct faculty to teach online courses (Dykman & Davis, 2008). This creates new issues for these institutions regarding how to attract, retain, and support quality online faculty. Unlike ground-based faculty, online faculty may be geographically disparate from the main campus of the institution, creating problems of integration into the institutions' culture and standards (Hewett & Powers, 2007). This can often

lead to feelings of isolation and disengagement by the online faculty, which can hurt the quality of instruction for students as well as the institutions' reputation (Hawkins, Graham, & Barbour, 2012). Colleges and universities face critical questions of how to provide support resources to online faculty to attract and retain said faculty, and improve online student success rates.

Colleges and universities may need to develop programs and resources to help support online faculty to provide optimal educational services to their students. This will require colleges and universities to develop support systems and programs that incorporate the unique issues present in online education and, more specifically, to online faculty (Simmons, Shumack, & Carpenter, 2011). There are several relevant issues with designing programs and support systems for online faculty. Colleges and universities need to examine the type of resources online faculty need to perceive support as well as the type of resources online faculty believe add value to his or her instruction (Orr, Williams, & Pennington, 2009). The central question for this study was to ascertain the type of resources and services within a support website colleges or universities could implement to help attract and retain online faculty.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the resource and support needs of online faculty at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. Although previous studies have indicated training and monitoring were important aspects to developing effective online faculty (Al-Salman, 2011; Green, Alejandro, & Brown, 2009; Herman, 2012; Vaill & Testori, 2012), a central purpose of this study was to determine the services colleges or universities could provide to faculty through a support website, to establish a holistic understanding of the wants and needs of online faculty. Given the increasing propensity of colleges and universities to develop and operationalize online programs, understanding the support and resource needs of online faculty is important. An additional purpose of the study was that the higher learning institution had recently developed a support website dedicated to faculty, and there was a need to understand the material a support website should contain to improve online education. The newness and flexibility of the website provided an opportunity for online faculty to participate in creating an online resource to meet the diverse needs. Garnering an understanding of support and resource needs of online faculty, the higher learning institution, as well as other colleges and universities with online programs, can better meet the needs and desire of their respective online faculty.

Literature Review

The following literature review contains two sections based on the general themes of current literature. The first section concerns issues of communication and connectivity as online faculty often perceive there is a lack of communication with their respective colleges and university. Improving communication and connectivity between online faculty and their colleges and universities may help improve the quality of education received by online students. Section two relates to supporting online faculty, as online faculty frequently indicate there is a lack of support from their colleges or universities.

The advent of online education will likely increase the importance for colleges and universities to develop strategies to support online faculty. A review of the literature concerning supporting online faculty was instrumental in developing the questions used in the survey. General themes of the literature related to support as well as communication and connectivity. As such, the literature was useful in developing questions to elicit responses from participants

relating to their thoughts regarding how colleges and universities can improve online faculty support, and engender increased communication and connectivity. Findings from questions cornering communication and connectivity received separate headings within the results section to help organize the diverse nature of responses.

Communication and Connectivity

Communication is a salient issue relating to supporting online faculty. Colleges and universities are struggling to communicate with online faculty, and online faculty often have issues communicating with each other. This can lead to feeling of discontent, disconnection, isolation, and a perceived lack of support by online faculty (Hawkins et al., 2011). Implementing organizational change, disseminating pertinent information, and ensuring adherence concerning teaching standards and practices requires constant communication, and online faculty are often not included in such communication (Meloncon, 2007). The breakdown of communication can have a negative effect on students, as they may perceive disconnect between the faculty and the institution, which could have a negative effect on student retention (Bekmeier-Feuerhahn & Eichenlaub, 2010). Lack of communication can produce negative results for online faculty, the colleges or university, and the student as the failure to communicate might engender negative perceptions.

There is a need to create a centralized meeting point where online faculty can communicate with the college or university and with each other, and where the college or university can communicate with online faculty (Orr et al., 2009). To meet the unique needs of online faculty, communication support systems should be web-based, as online faculty are often geographically remote (Inalhan, 2009; Junk, Deringer, & Junk, 2011). A critical aspect of creating a website to support online faculty is the site must align with the specific and unique needs of online faculty. The format should be online to connect with the intended population (Simmons et al., 2011). This differs from traditional knowledge-sharing communication settings where face-to-face meetings are the primary mode of information dissemination (Sutherland-Smith & Saltmarsh, 2010). Support websites should provide multiple communication options and services to mitigate the lack of face-to-face communication while still providing substantive resources and information (Schallock, 2009). An asynchronous style of communication is most likely the best option for online support forums (Wen, Cuzzola, Brown, & Kinshuk, 2012).

Providing multiple communication forums can help ensure online faculty have an adequate support network, which can generate increased support for the college or university. Developing better relations with online faculty can help the college or university build its brand as well as its reputation as a leader in online education and online faculty support (Dykman, & Davis, 2008). Creating areas for online faculty to communicate can help build trust within the online setting, which is necessary for knowledge sharing (Folkers, 2005). Given the diverse and often large number of online faculty many colleges and universities employ, allowing a setting for knowledge sharing could help improve the quality of online education of the college or university. Online faculty often perceive a lack of support from their colleges and universities, by developing communication areas where online faculty can receive information about the college or university and interact with their online colleagues, to mitigate feelings of isolation and the potential for burnout.

Providing Support

One of the salient issues facing colleges and universities with online programs is providing support and resources to online faculty. Providing online faculty with support and resources can

help improve educational outcomes, retain faculty, and improve the institutions' image (Maddix, 2013). The ability of colleges and universities to provide support and resources to online faculty has proven problematic as support and resource needs differ between traditional ground-based faculty and online faculty (Hewitt & Powers, 2007). Colleges and universities need to develop online support and resource sharing websites to help meet the needs and demands of online faculty.

Creating support systems that can provide support and resources is crucial toward improving perceived support by online faculty. Developing and maintaining support systems with resources oriented to faculty needs is essential to ensuring the system is beneficial (Murdock & Williams, 2011). The support system should also allow faculty to provide feedback and make suggestions about the resources and support they need (Wen et al., 2011). This can help to meet proactively the needs of online faculty and might eliminate the guesswork about the type of resources and support needed.

Developing resources to help online faculty engage in scholarly pursuits should be another primary component of an online support website. Online faculty frequently perceive their obligation in the classroom as limited to the role of facilitator, and their connection with the college or university is limited to the parameters of their contract (Simmons et al., 2011). Colleges and universities are missing a potentially rich resource to produce scholarly work, and online instructors lack areas to produce and disseminate their scholarly work, based on these perceived limitations (Way & Austin, 2012). Providing scholarly development opportunities, colleges and universities can encourage faculty engagement with the institution, and receive the benefit of a more committed online faculty population.

Colleges and universities could supply online faculty academic resources and training to help improve teaching performance. Establishing and communicating best practices and providing forums within support websites for online faculty to communicate their best practices can improve educational results (Bekmeier-Feuerhahn & Eichenlaub, 2010). Another crucial area about academic resources involves implementing media and technology resources for the classroom. To help assuage online faculty concerns about implementation, colleges and universities should make emerging technologies and media resources easily accessible for their online faculty to use in their respective classrooms (Bao, 2009). Improvements in the areas of media and technology faculty support could help increase student performance and enhance online faculty connectivity to the college or university.

Methods

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of the online faculty population at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. This population was appropriate for this study as they are familiar with teaching in the online environment. The diversity of the population provided the opportunity to receive holistic feedback from survey findings, which could provide useful for developing a support website. As indicated in Table 1, most participants indicated their highest level of education was a Master's degree and the majority of participants were adjunct faculty.

Table 1. *Demographic and Employment Status Information about Participants*

Education Level	Responses	%	Employment Status	Responses	%
Masters	220	67	Full-Time	29	9
Doctorate	112	33	Adjunct	305	91
Total Responses	332	100		334	100
Average Years Teaching		10.03			

Materials and Procedures

The method used to collect research findings was an online survey. All current registered online faculty in the research sites' contact database received an invitation to participate in the survey through the institution's e-mail system. The e-mail invited participants to participate in a 13 question survey listed in Table 2, which asked participants to rate the importance of the questions listed. Of the 2,522 survey invitations e-mailed to potential participants, 380 responded with completed surveys, providing a response rate of 15.06%. Although this was a relativity low response rate, the demographics of the respondents provided an accurate representation of the population studied. Based on literature regarding online education, the survey consisted of questions related to themes of communication, connectivity, and support. The survey used a Likert-scale format asking participants to rate the importance from 1 to 5 (1 being the least important and 5 being the most important) of potential support service and resources. Participation in the survey was voluntary; no names were required to protect participant confidentiality, and participants completed the survey using Survey Monkey to avoid internal conflicts of interest.

Table 2. *Survey Questions*

Survey Questions
1. Easy access to the website from your classroom(s)
2. Connecting with fellow online faculty
3. Tips for effective online teaching
4. Access to content forums (forums specific to fields of study)
5. Access to University resources (Journals, resources for your students, professional development opportunities)
6. Access to websites and resources relating to online teaching
7. Postings of conferences and/or presentation opportunities
8. View best practices
9. View stories from other online faculty
10. Post my own best practices and stories
11. Receive information about Grand Canyon University Events
12. Contact information exchanges
13. Postings of seminars/professional development workshops

Results

The results from the survey indicated participants believed there was a need to develop a website to provide support and resources for online faculty. These findings add to literature concerning the need for colleges and universities to develop supporting resources for online faculty. The results from the survey questions presented three separate themes as indicated by the direction of the survey questions. The first theme concerned communication between online faculty and the college or university, the second theme related to developing connections relating to online faculty and the college or university, and the third theme involved providing institutional support to online faculty. Results presented below represent the mean scores participants gave to survey questions through a Likert-scale measurement in which 5 indicated strong agreement, 4 represented agreement, 3 indicated a natural response, 2 indicated disagreement, and 1 represented strong disagreement. (See Appendix A for survey questions results).

Table 3. *Survey Results*

Question	Theme	Responses	Mean Score
Easy access to the website from your classroom(s)	Support	366	4.3
Access to content forums (forums specific to fields of study)	Support	367	4.22
View best practices	Support	360	4.2
Access to University resources (Journals, resources for your students, professional development opportunities)	Connectivity	361	4.18
Tips for effective online teaching	Support	366	4.13
Access to websites and resources relating to online teaching	Support	366	4.08
Postings of seminars/professional development workshops	Connectivity	357	3.98
Postings of conferences and/or presentation opportunities	Connectivity	365	3.97
Connecting with fellow online faculty	Communication	367	3.87
View stories from other online faculty	Communication	360	3.84
Contact information exchanges	Connectivity	361	3.82
Post my own best practices and stories	Communication	369	3.71
Receive information about University Events	Connectivity	360	3.61

Support

Online faculty frequently cite a lack of support from their college or university. This can have a negative effect on education services as online faculty who perceived lack of support are less likely to be engage fully in the classroom, and have an increased rate of attrition (Murdock & Williams, 2011). Having a disengaged online faculty population and needing to replace continually online faculty creates inefficiencies for colleges and universities and harms educational services (Junk et al., 2011). Providing support services can benefit online faculty, as they perceived less isolation and greater incorporation, which can allow colleges and universities to provide higher quality online education. The results from the support section of the survey questions indicated participants desired and expected to receive support from their institution, as questions relating to support issues yielded the highest mean score at 4.18.

The ability to efficiently access support websites is important to online faculty, and ease of access can increase use of the support website (Wise, 2011). The results from the survey indicated participants strongly agreed access issues to a support website were important as the question had the highest mean score as participants scored this question at 4.3. Including an access prompt from the online classroom to the support website could help increase ease of access and use by online faculty. Given the heavy workload experienced by faculty (Simmons et al., 2011), convenience to the support website might be a principal concern for colleges and universities developing support websites.

Online faculty have a strong desire to increase their knowledge within their respective disciplines (Wen et al., 2011). The result from the survey question about having access to content specific forums seems to correlate with previous research. The results to the question yielded a mean score of 4.22, which indicated strong support toward accessing content specific forums. This result might indicate participants want to engage with other online faculty from similar academic backgrounds, to increase knowledge in his or her academic discipline (Bakare, Zamzami, & Olowolayemo, 2011).

Accessing information about best practices had a mean score of 4.2. Interestingly, this question had the highest number of agree or strongly agree responses possibly indicting an intense desire by participants regarding this resource as compared to other resources. These results may relate closely to the question about receiving information regarding effective online teaching as faculty continually strive to improve his or her performance in the online classroom. A crucial finding for colleges and universities developing and operationalizing support websites could be online faculty has a strong desire to receive information to improve their teaching within the classroom to provide optimal educational services.

Receiving information about effective online teaching indicated a 4.13 mean score based on survey results. This result indicated participants had a strong desire to improve their online teaching methods, and expected their respective college or university to provide teaching resources. The result additionally signified participants viewed their position in the classroom as extending beyond a facilitator toward an educator position. Results from this survey seemed to contradict the perception online faculty are minimally involved in the classrooms (Peltier, Schibrosky, & Drago, 2007), but rather have a strong inclination to produce edifying and tangible results.

The growth of online resources to help online faculty education their students has grown exponentially (Way & Austin, 2012). The results from the survey question concerning having access to websites and web-based resources received a mean score of 4.08, which indicated

participants expected the support website to provide diverse online resources. Survey results indicated participants believed the institution should provide such resources to improve learning outcomes, and support websites should provide access to external resources when applicable.

Providing adequate support for online faculty is a crucial element for colleges and universities developing and implementing online programs. Support websites can provide an opportunity for colleges and universities to develop and disseminate support services to online faculty (Wise, 2011). The results from the survey indicated participants' desired support is similar to services provided to traditional ground-based faculty, but in addition desire resources unique to the online setting. Colleges and universities developing support websites, as the survey results implied, need to ensure the resources meet the demands of faculty teaching in both ground-based and online formats.

Connections

Developing connections between online faculty and universities and colleges is a salient issue to improve educational results. Faculty who perceive a close connection with their institution are more likely to spend more time in the classroom, and extend their efforts beyond specified requirements (Orr et al., 2009). The results for questions relating to increased connectivity yielded a mean score of 3.91.

The question concerning accessing institutional resources had a mean score of 4.18, which was one of the highest mean scores. This result indicated participants have a desire to use and access institutional resources to improve their teaching performance. In addition, the results indicated participants expect their institution to provide access to academic resources. These resources could include journals, teaching resources, and professional development opportunities (Sutherland-Smith & Saltmarsh, 2010). This finding suggested colleges and universities implementing support websites should provide faculty with academic resources.

Receiving information about seminars, professional development opportunities, and workshops received a mean score of 3.98, which suggested a relatively high rate of support for including this information within a support website. The results indicated participants want access to information to improve their online teaching abilities continually. Developing learning resources for online faculty could help colleges and universities improve their educational services.

The question regarding receiving information about conferences and presentation opportunities received a mean score of 3.97. This result indicated participants want access to traditional ground-based academic venues to present their research. Results implied participants perceive similarities between their position and ground-based faculty, and expect access to academic opportunities. Given the growth of online education and the growth in the number of online faculty, providing opportunities for online faculty to present research at academic conferences could allow colleges and university to improve name recognition (Marek, 2009).

The results from the survey indicated participants have a desire to exchange contact information with fellow online faculty. The question concerning contact exchanges received a mean score of 3.82. Although lower than other scores within the connection portion of questions, the results indicated participants believe there are potential networking opportunities through teaching online, and expect their institutions to provide areas to network within a support website.

Information about institutional events had the lowest mean score based on the survey results at 3.61. This might indicate participants are more concerned with day-to-day functionality within their classrooms than receiving information about the institution, as this question yielded the second highest number of neutral responses. The results, however, still indicated participants in general wanted to receive information about institutional events. Part of the reason for the relativity low score could be an issue of proximity to the institution, given that online faculty are often geographically remote.

The results from the connections portion of the survey indicated participants agreed or strongly agreed about the need to increase their connection to the institution. Increasing connections between online faculty and the college or university can help online faculty reduce perceptions of isolation and build professional networks (Hawkins et al., 2011). This increased connection between colleges and universities and online faculty might develop a more engaged online faculty population, which could produce improve educational results.

Communication

A difficult issue facing colleges and universities with online programs is developing effective communication with online faculty. The lack of communication between colleges and universities can lead to ineffective classroom teaching, disengaged faculty, and increased rates of attrition by faculty (Wise, 2011). Support websites can help increase frequent and effective communication with online faculty, provided the support site incorporates communication resources and forums (Bekmeier-Feuerhahn & Eichenlaub, 2010). Increased communication function within a support website can help colleges and universities provide support, resources, and increase engagement among online faculty. Results to questions relating to communication resources yielded an aggregated mean score of 3.78.

The question concerning connecting with other online faculty yielded a mean score of 3.87, which based on general results, indicated a moderately strong agreement. Participants indicated there was a desire to connect with other online faculty through a support website, and this might relate to a desire to create connections between fellow online faculty. Connecting with other online faculty may indicate a desire to decrease the isolation many online faculty perceive (Hawkins et al., 2011), to develop support networks (Huang & Hsiao, 2012), and access advice of experienced online faculty members (Wen et al., 2011).

Response to the question about viewing stories from other online faculty had a 3.84 mean score. The response of participants indicated a desire to view stories and experience posted by online faculty, which might indicate a desire to find commonalities. Storytelling and other forms of non-prescriptive communication can be a crucial aspect of both personal and professional development (Schallock, 2009). A storytelling and experience-sharing communication format could allow online faculty to develop deeper connections with fellow online faculty (Bao, 2009). In addition, a personal narrative forum could allow online faculty to receive edifying information in an informal manner that could reduce stress levels and increase interaction among online faculty.

The question about posting personal stories, experiences, and best practices yielded a mean score of 3.71. This implied a moderately strong desire to share personal information with other online faculty in a support website forum; however, this question yielded the highest number of neutral responses that could indicate ambivalence to this type of resource. An important aspect of this result may be online faculty find sharing personal stories, experiences, and best practices to be a cathartic release, given the somewhat socially parochial nature of online teaching

(Murdock & Williams, 2011), though this may not be applicable to many online faculty given the high number of neutral responses.

In general, the results from survey questions relating to communication opportunities provided by a support website indicated participants desired to have a support website with communicational features and opportunities. Participants have a strong desire to communicate with fellow online faculty and reduce the isolation an online classroom can present. Providing different communication forums or channels yielded a crucial finding from the survey results. The survey results indicated participants want both passive communication channels to view other online faculty stories, experiences, and best practices, and active forums to post their own stories, experiences, and best practices. A salient finding from the survey result is universities and colleges need to provide faculty with diverse communication opportunities within a support website.

Table 4. *Mean Scores of Central Themes*

Theme	Mean Score
Support	4.18
Connectivity	3.91
Communication	3.78

Discussion

The responses to the survey questions indicated participants believed there is a need to develop a support website that provides holistic resources to meet the unique needs and desires of online faculty. Participants indicated the support website should provide support resources, communication forums, and resources to increase connectivity to the institution, which constitutes a desire for a more holistic approach to support than previous research has indicated. The mean score for questions relating to support resources was 4.18, which was the highest mean score. Survey results for questions relating to increased connectivity yielded a mean score of 3.91. Participants rated questions relating to communication resources at a mean score of 3.78. The mean for all questions in the survey was 3.96, which indicated a strong level of agreement relating to the type of resources and support desired within a support website.

These findings signified participants believed there is a pertinent need to develop a support website, and the support website should provide diverse resources. Questions relating to support resources yielded the highest mean score, which might indicate that participants believed the primary function of a support website is to provide support resources. Given that literature about online faculty and online education has indicated online faculty perceive a detachment between themselves and their institution (Maddix, 2013), these results were not surprising. The participants rated questions about the need to provide resources to increase connectivity with the college or university second highest, indicating strong agreement. This result aligned with literature that indicates online faculty perceive isolation from their institutions (Hawkins et al., 2009). Online faculty have a strong desire to increase connectivity with his or her institution, and a support website might help increase connectivity. Responses to questions concerning providing communication resources yielded the lowest mean score, although the results still indicated agreement with the need to provide such resources. Literature relating to online faculty has indicated communication issues are present between online faculty and their colleges or universities (Wen et al., 2011).

Several factors might have affected the strong agreement to the research questions as indicated by the survey results. The population consisted almost entirely of online faculty who may intrinsically be positive about creating a support website specifically for online faculty. A majority of the participants were adjunct faculty, and the literature indicated online faculty frequently perceive a lack of communication, connectivity, and support from their respective institutions. The mean years teaching as indicated by the participants was 10.03 years. Given the relative newness of online education, participants likely had face-to-face teaching experiences and might desire to recreate the experience in an online format in terms of connectivity, communication, and support. There is also the issue of faculty continually seeking to improve their teaching abilities through contact with their peers (Marek, 2009), and participants might perceive the services provided by a support website could allow them to emulate traditional face-to-face commutation with peers. The questions in the survey concerned providing services to online faculty, which may have yielded overtly positive responses, as participants were unlikely to deprecate additional resources.

A support website could help ameliorate communication issues, and improve online faculty perceptions regarding their colleges or universities. Although past studies indicated that faculty monitoring and training were crucial elements to developing effective online education (Al-Salman, 2011; Green et al., 2009; Herman, 2012; Vaill & Testori, 2012), a critical differentiation in this study was the focus on providing holistic support and resources for online faculty, and the level of intensity faculty held toward particular resources or support systems. The results from this survey indicated a high level of engagement by participants with their institution, and participants have a desire to increase such engagement. To help increase engagement, colleges and universities can develop and implement support websites that include resources to provide support, increase connectivity, and improve communication with service extending beyond training and monitoring. By providing these recourses to online faculty, colleges and universities can build holistic support and resource websites, which can help attract and retain high quality online faculty. This in turn can improve both institutional and student performance, and help the institution establish a superior reputation in the post-secondary online education milieu. The findings of this survey can help colleges and universities design the resources available through support websites to meet the diverse needs and desires of their online faculty population.

Limitations

The population of this study was from a single institution, which might present a limitation relating to issues of transferability. The response rate was low at 15.06%, which might present issues of receiving response representational of the overall population. Using a survey data collection instrument may also present limitations in the results garnered. The ability of the participants to comprehend the intention of the question is a possible limitation, as the data collection process did not provide an opportunity to provide clarification about the questions. An additional limitation is the questions may not have generated a holistic understanding of online faculty needs and desires. The accuracy of the results required participants to provide honest answers, which might present a limitation, as strategies for ensuring participants answered honestly were not included in the data gathering process. A lack of available follow-up questions, and opportunities to gather in-depth explanations to the questions might have limited the depth of the results, as participants were not able to expand upon their answers.

Future Research

Although the results aligned with much of the previous research, possible future research could include a more in-depth analysis of the needs and desires of online faculty, beginning with an examination of whether the discipline or area of expertise of online faculty has an effect on the type of support and resources they need. Further research could extend into a detail examination of each of the survey questions exploring predictive percentage sources and possible causations. Future researchers might also focus on how the type of courses online faculty teach could influence the type of resources and support they perceive to need. The number of courses taught by online faculty might affect the type of support and resources they perceive to need, and an area for future research could be to discover whether the amount of classes taught concurrently affect support and resource expectations. Additional research areas might include the effect of demographics on support and resources needs as issues of age, gender, and experience teaching online may be salient toward resource and support needs and could produce interesting areas for research. In addition, future researchers could examine the differences and similarities concerning resource and support needs, desires, and expectations between ground-based faculty and online faculty.

Conclusions

Current trends in post-secondary education indicate there will likely be an increase in the number of online students enrolled at colleges and universities. As such, the need for online faculty will increase, as well. This will probably intensify the competition between colleges and universities to recruit and retain highly skilled online faculty. Providing online faculty with a support website operated by the college or university that provides holistic support and resources can be a differentiation strategy to help recruit and retain quality online faculty. The results from the survey indicated a website should provide support resources, increase connectivity between online faculty and the institution, and provide opportunities for increased communication. This might signified participants wanted support and resources from their college or university that extended beyond training and mentoring toward a more holistic paradigm of support and resource options.

Providing holistic support resources and understanding the type of support and resources desired by online faculty could help colleges and universities to improve the quality of teaching provided by online faculty, which might improve education results and the student experience. Integrating a connectivity component within the support website could help to build an online community within the online faculty population.

Colleges and universities that implement communication resources in support websites are likely to decrease the amount of isolation perceived by online faculty as well as increase the quality of online education. The development and operationalizing of support websites can be a difficult process given the diversity of online faculty and their various needs and desires, and the diverse collection of possible resources and support services to provide through support websites. Colleges and universities that can successfully establish support websites that meet the needs and demands of online faculty, however, can achieve a competitive advantage over competing institutions and improve educational results.

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Appendix A

1. Easy access to the website from your classroom(s)

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	5	7	33	151	170	4.3	366
						Answered Question	366
						Skipped Question	14

2. Connecting with fellow online faculty

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	4	14	88	180	81	3.87	367
						Answered Question	367
						Skipped Question	13

3. Tips for effective online teaching

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	3	6	51	187	119	4.13	366
						Answered Question	366
						Skipped Question	14

4. Access to content forums (forums specific to fields of study)

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	3	4	40	181	139	4.22	367
						Answered Question	367
						Skipped Question	13

5. Access to University resources (Journals, resources for your students, professional development opportunities)

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	3	5	42	185	126	4.18	361
						Answered Question	361
						Skipped Question	19

6. Access to websites and resources relating to online teaching

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	3	7	54	196	106	4.08	366
						Answered Question	366
						Skipped Question	14

7. Postings of conferences and/or presentation opportunities

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	6	10	73	176	100	3.97	365
						Answered Question	365
						Skipped Question	15

8. View best practices

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	2	4	36	196	122	4.2	360
						Answered Question	360
						Skipped Question	20

9. View stories from other online faculty

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	2	12	98	176	72	3.84	360
						Answered Question	360
						Skipped Question	20

10. Post my own best practices and stories

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	2	14	128	158	57	3.71	359
						Answered Question	359
						Skipped Question	21

11. Receive information about University events

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	10	19	125	154	52	3.61	360
						Answered Question	360
						Skipped Question	20

12. Contact information exchanges

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	3	13	97	181	67	3.82	361
						Answered Question	361
						Skipped Question	19

13. Postings of seminars/professional development workshops

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	Response Count
	5	11	58	196	87	3.98	357
						Answered Question	357
						Skipped Question	23