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# ONLINE EDUCATION – WHERE TO FROM HERE? PANEL DISCUSSION

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## Panel Proposal

SIG Ed – IAIM 2014

### Online Education – Where to from here?

Participants:

Mary Granger – George Washington University

Andrew Urbaczewski – University of Denver

Geoffrey Dick – Georgia Southern University

Mirroring technological development and the expectations that come with it, is online education. Whether this be a vast 100 000 + student enrollment MOOC with its high reliance on data analytics, crowd sourcing and participatory grading; a new way of presenting material via publisher-driven web sites; and/or academics developing resource rich learning sites on Learning Management Systems; or just making material available in the way of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the technology is posing challenges for university administrations.

This panel is intended to be highly participatory. Geoff Dick will lead off with his experience of using MOOCs in business school classes and discuss the implications of a model that may facilitate their (more) widespread adoption, Mary Granger will discuss the pros and cons of publisher driven material against “in house” development and Andrew Urbaczewski will provide an administrative perspective of the difficulties of delivering and assessing online classes. The audience is expected to contribute individual experiences, plaudits and brickbats. Ideally the discussion will contribute to a research agenda for examining the future of online education.

In April 2012, the dean of the Honors College at the City University of New York wrote a provocative article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* challenging educators to use technology to innovate or face irrelevance and possible extinction (Kirschner 2012)<sup>1</sup>. In the same month, Coursera was launched after a remarkable trial of massive open online courses the semester before. Coursera, EdX and Udacity, along

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<sup>1</sup> Kirschner, A 2012 “Innovations in Higher Education? Hah! College leaders need to move beyond talking about transformation before it's too late” *Chronicle of Higher Education* April 8

with many others, have now grown substantially, to the extent that it is now possible to complete the requirements for an entire “degree” online, via MOOCs, for free. Technology has continued to develop in other ways too – students come to class with their cell phones and tablets as extensions of their arms, with automatic updates from their social networking sites taking place while they sit in the classroom. Outside (hopefully) the classroom, students play games, engage in virtual reality experiences and seek whatever information they need to go about their daily lives (and perhaps, jobs) by tapping some keywords into Google. How many of our classes employ mobile apps, game-based learning or even collaborative tools such as wikis and blogs?

There is little doubt that the technology is proving to be “disruptive”. As such, this brings many challenges for university administration and departmental management – course design and delivery, assessment of learning outcomes and comparison with traditional offerings, compensation for delivery, the wide(r) use of adjuncts, courses not being suitable for all students, online help and assistance, and even knowing when and how to move on introduction.

The technology is going to force change in how we offer education. Industry is littered with failed businesses due to an inability to cope with a disruptive technology. This panel is intended to progress the debate – right now, as educators and university administrators, we need to be managing the direction.