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Behind the Scenes: Directors' Perspectives of Designing and Implementing New Online Degree Programs

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ABSTRACT

The landscape of higher education is changing in many ways, including the continued growth of online courses, certificates and degree programs. As a result of this exceptional growth, concerns have arisen regarding the quality and rigor of such programs. The formation of these programs often requires online offerings to be subjected to rigorous institutional and state approval. Program need, development, implementation, and numerous other related matters are only a few possible issues faced by those who are tasked to cultivate the offering for approval by formal accrediting entities and the universities for which they will be implemented. Both presenters were given the opportunity to develop new graduate degree programs at their respective universities. While designing different topical graduate programs simultaneously, the presenters found that several similarities emerged during the development process. In addition, notable differences were observed. It is the intent of this presentation to inform others about the challenges, protocols and occasional surprises of this arduous, yet rewarding process of designing and implementing new online degree programs. It is also the intent to educate others regarding the process for adaptation at other academic institutions.