

Central Penn's online classes have evolved little since 2003 when we first began offering them. We have achieved moderate success with this model, but we haven't seen the awards or explosive growth other schools in our sector have seen. We can take online education to the next level by adopting a bold new strategy. This strategy can be developed by a skunkworks, a small, loosely-organized group working quietly behind the scenes with a high level of autonomy and minimal bureaucracy.

### Charge to skunkworks

Develop a new strategy for online education at Central Penn to achieve:

- Great learning outcomes
- A fantastic student experience
- Significantly increased enrollment

### Skunkworks members

Dr. James Beeghley, IT Education Specialist (group lead)  
Erika Wilkinson, Online Education Coordinator  
Kristen Horn, Director of Enrollment  
Stephen Juliano, Web Content Specialist  
Sam Morgan, Professor

### Duration

8 weeks, with each member devoting 10 hours per week

### Resources needed

- Support from management
- A room for brainstorming and to store confidential materials
- 400 hours of dedicated employee time (5 people x 10 hrs/wk x 8 weeks)
- \$6,000 budget for expenses (software, consulting, office supplies, research, subscriptions, tuition, mileage, etc.)

### Reporting

Brief weekly report to Melissa Vayda and Steven Birmingham listing major topics being explored and any resources the team needs to be successful

### Final deliverable

A formal proposal recommending the new strategy and how to implement it

- Executive summary
- Details of strategy and rationale for strategy
- Changes or deletions to existing policies, procedures, staffing, infrastructure, strategic objectives (if applicable), annual objectives (if applicable), and action steps required to implement the strategy.
- New policies, procedures, staffing, infrastructure, strategic objectives (if applicable), annual objectives (if applicable), and action steps with recommended OPFs and RPs required to implement the strategy.
- Implementation timeline
- Detailed 6-year financial analysis
- Talking points to explain the strategy to students, faculty, staff, etc.

## Skunk Food

(some ideas that have been raised and could be explored)

1. Better training / certification for online instructors
2. Better, high quality content (audio, video)
3. Synchronous options
4. Student collaboration opportunities beyond the discussion board
5. Training / support for online students on how to be an effective online student
6. Opportunities for online students to engage in on ground activities
7. Cross curricular activities
8. Incorporate more simulations, learning games, and interactive activities
9. More subject matter experts
10. Compete for recognition from objective bodies like chea.org, imbglobal.org, etc.
11. More courses and / or electives
12. Consider building our graduate school fully-online from scratch
13. Seek accreditation from detc.org or other body
14. Consider implementing the Quality Matters (QM) peer review process
15. More high-quality content from publishers
16. Use current research to drive strategy and decisions (Educause, ies.ed.gov, etc.)
17. Shop the competition (enroll Central Penn faculty and staff in courses at other schools)
18. Enter many sections in the Blackboard exemplary course competition
19. Build on the Online Standards for Delivery and Online Equivalency Standards
20. Hire instructional technologists and other support personnel
21. Draw knowledge from our faculty who also teach at other schools
22. Engage experts from Blackboard (they have offered to send 2-3 experts onsite for a day)
23. Hire some professors who are online education gurus
24. Launch a second international brand for Central Penn and market it only overseas?
25. Establish metrics to measure the success of teaching and learning

