

Studien und Berichte der Arbeitsstelle Fernstudienforschung  
der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

**Volume 8**

Michael F. Beaudoin

**Reflections on**  
**Research, Faculty and Leadership**  
**in Distance Education**



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## Series' Editors Foreword

The Arbeitsstelle Fernstudienforschung (ASF) – the unit for distance education research at Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg – is a joint venture of the Center for Distance Education and the School of Education. In supporting research and developments in distance education one of the significant outcomes was the creation of the ASF Series contributing to the overall scholarship in the field of distance education.

Volume 8 with Michael Beaudoin's *Reflections on Research, Faculty and Leadership in Distance Education*, in addition to being of general interest to practitioners and scholars in the field, also serves as a reader for students in the course *Management of Distance Education 2: Leadership in D.E.* in the online Master of Distance Education (MDE) program, jointly offered by the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) and Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg.

Distance education is a complex approach to provide education for learners in their homes or at their workplace. It includes operational functions such as (i) identifying the target population and their needs, (ii) choosing, managing, and administering the type of system as well as the appropriate technology for the presentation of the course materials and their delivery, (iii) recruiting, enrolling, tutoring and supporting students, (iv) assessing students, (v) evaluating and assuring quality. Successful distance education practices are predominantly large-scale operations and are a significant component of educational and training systems in both developed and developing countries.

In order to allow large numbers of learners to achieve their goals in a distance teaching and learning environment, the provision of this type of educational opportunity indispensably requires strategic planning, leadership and effective management. The rapidly evolving field of distance education has increased the importance and role of leadership in order to overcome barriers and obstacles to change. Despite the relevance of effective leadership it is surprising how few contributions have been made to the literature that address the critical area of leadership in distance education. Michael Beaudoin is one of the few distinguished scholars in this field. From his early works on *The Instructor's Changing Role in Distance Education*, published in the American Journal for Distance Education in 1990 and his *Researching Practice and Practicing Research: A Critique of Distance Education Research and Writing*, published by the American Center for the Study of Distance Education in its Research Monograph series in 1991 the bow can be spanned to his most recent publications *From Campus to Cyberspace: The Transition of Classroom Faculty to Distance Education Roles*, published in Educational Pathways in 2002 and *Distance Education Leadership for the New Century*, published in The Handbook of

Distance Education, edited by Moore and Anderson in 2003. The ASF Series' editors are grateful for Michael Beaudoin's compilation of these important contributions and making them available in this volume, along with several recent additional works and commentaries.

Michael Beaudoin is Professor of Education at the University of New England in Portland, Maine, USA, where he was previously founding dean of a new college offering graduate, continuing and distance education programs and courses. He has held senior administrative positions at institutions in Maine, Massachusetts, Washington, DC and Germany and has written extensively on distance education issues and related topics, has presented at conferences and frequently serves as an evaluator of distance education programs and courses. He is on the editorial board of two distance education journals and is the book review editor for the American Journal of Distance Education. Since 2001 Michael Beaudoin has taught as an adjunct professor in the online Master of Distance Education program.

His contributions on research in distance education, faculty transition from the classroom to distance education environments, and critical leadership issues in distance education invite students as well as all interested practitioners to take part in his elaborated approach to conducting research and reflecting on distance education practices.

Franziska Vondrlik deserves our – the series' editors as well as the author's – gratitude for her enduring editorial assistance.

The Editors

May, 2004

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