



Crossing Borders through Open and Online
Learning:
Collaborative Strategies for Learner Success

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Overview

- The College's and its International programs
- Cross-cultural issues
- Collaborative solutions
- Towards an international strategy
- Discussion

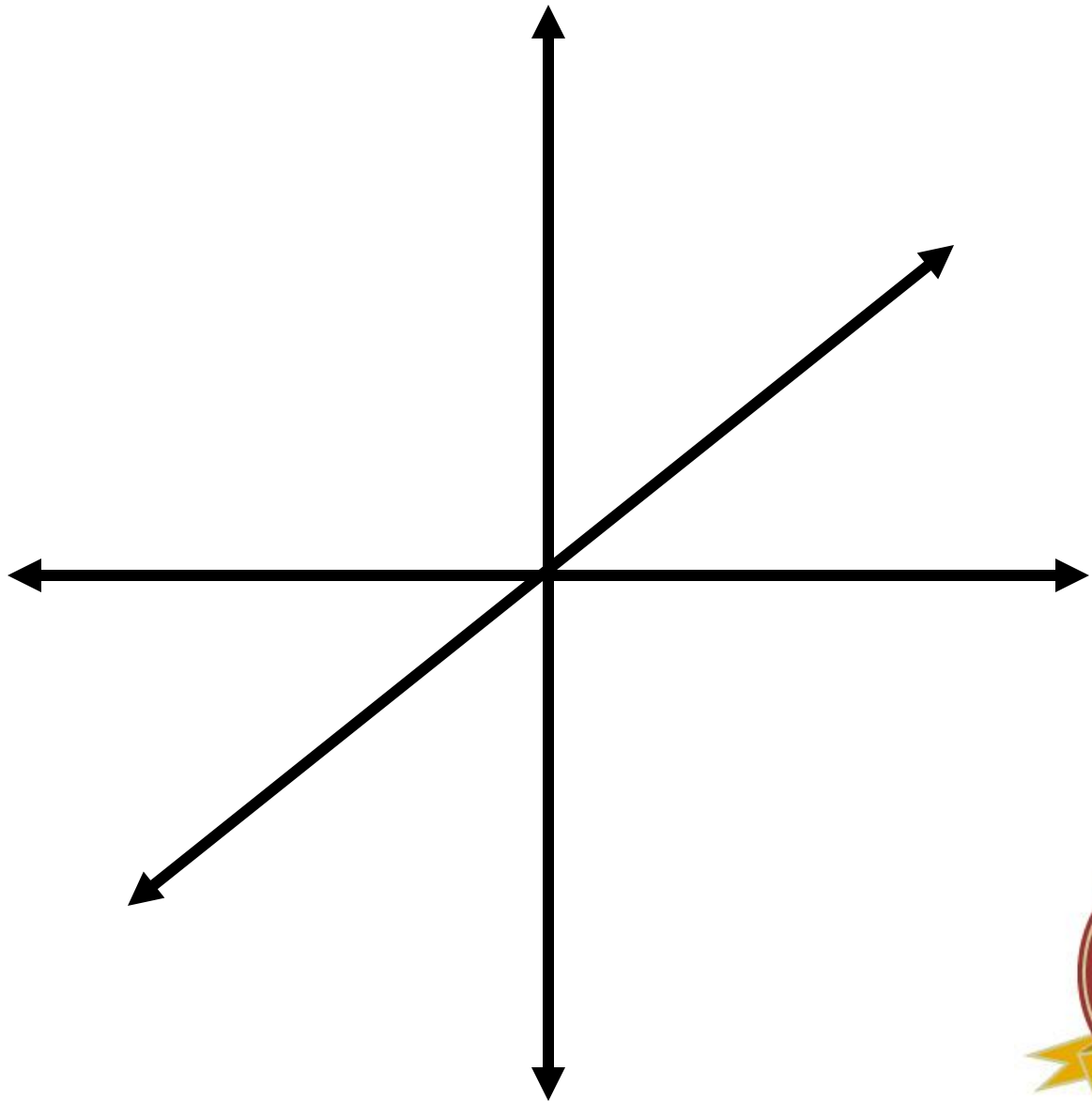


SUNY Empire State College

- 40th anniversary in 2011
- 4-year plus masters, university-college
- New York's open university
- 20,200 learners served each year, 800 internationally
- 35 locations in NYS, 12 abroad
- SUNY's largest online provider
- Multiple modes of delivery
- "Open" undergraduate curriculum
- Learning accreditation

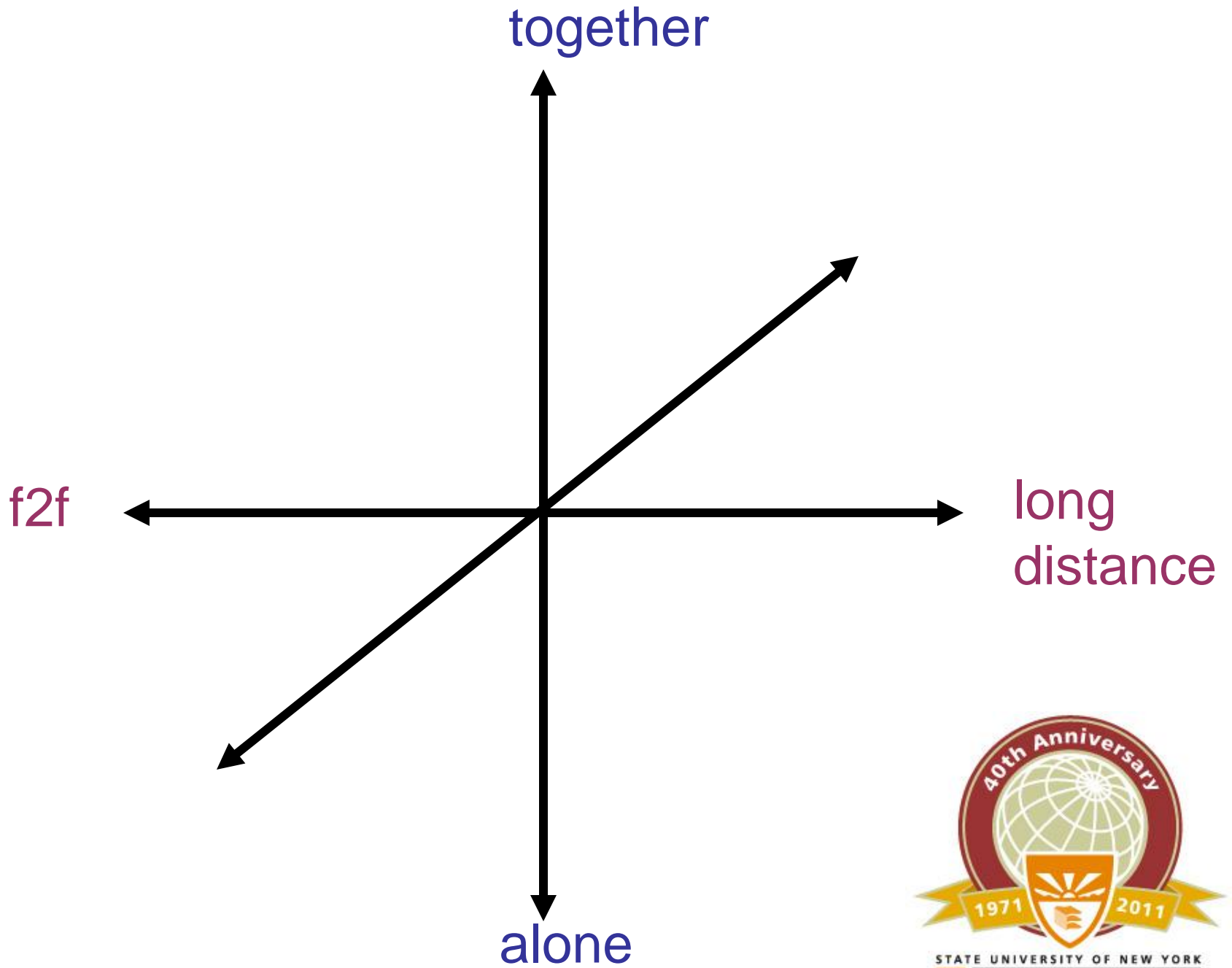


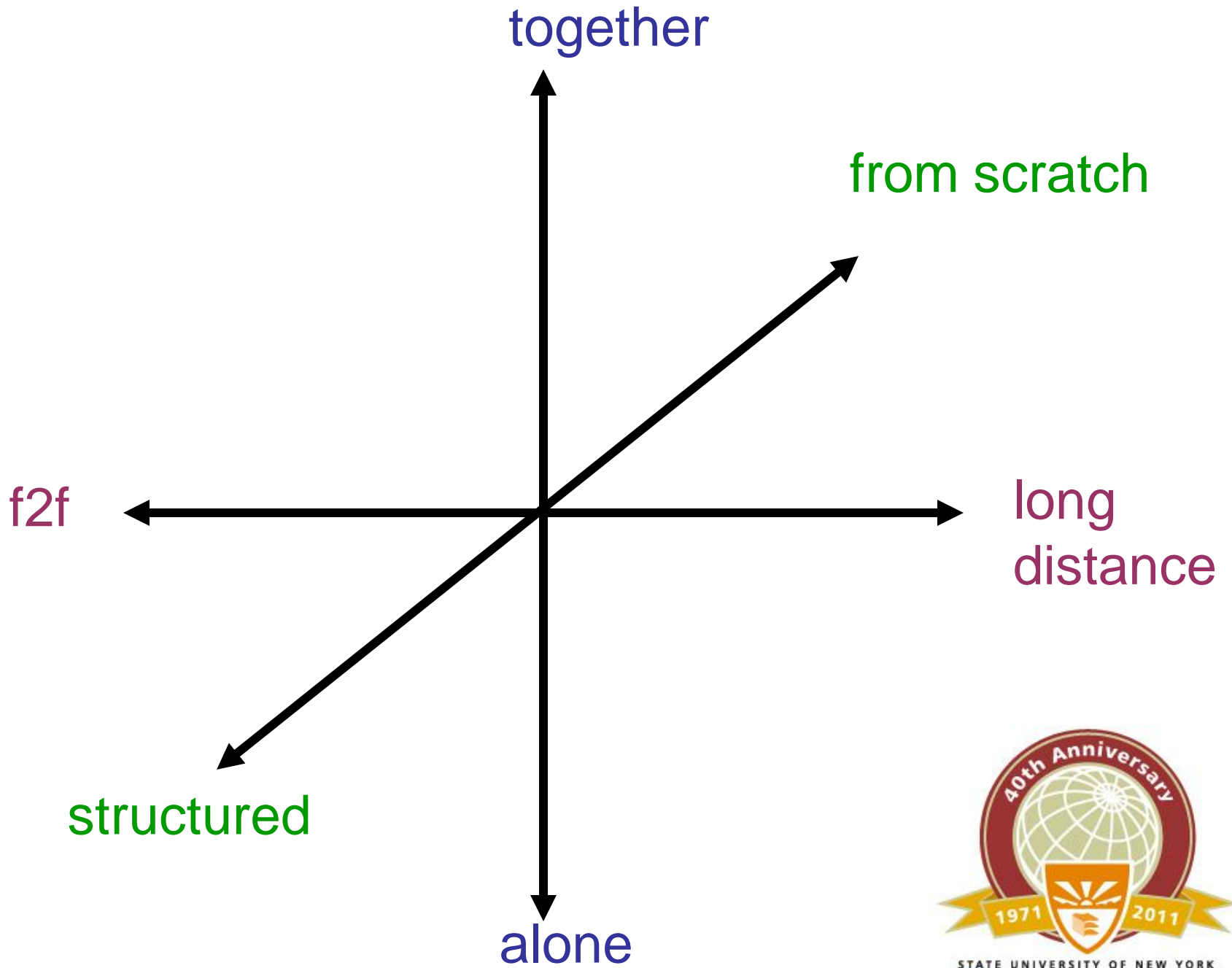
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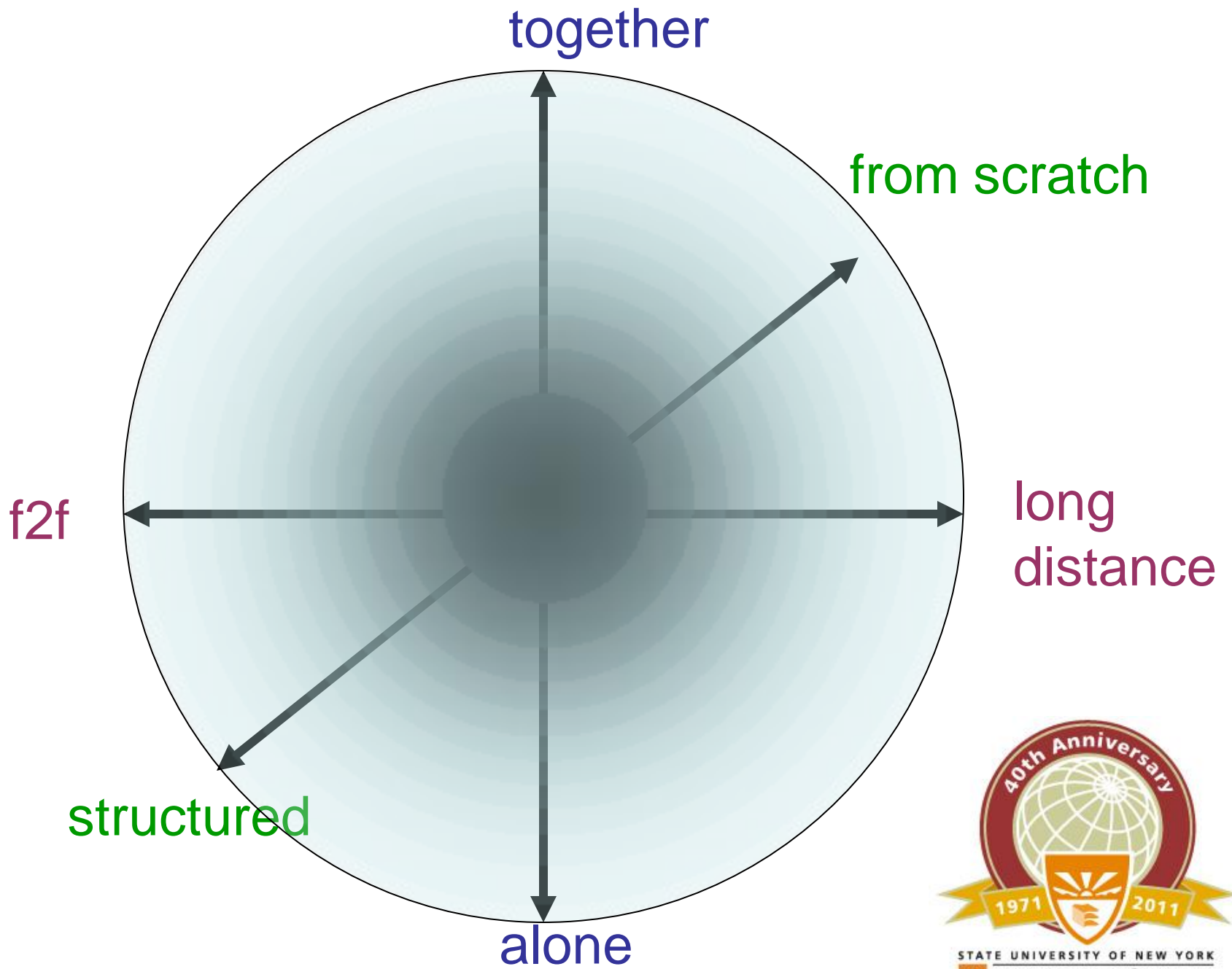


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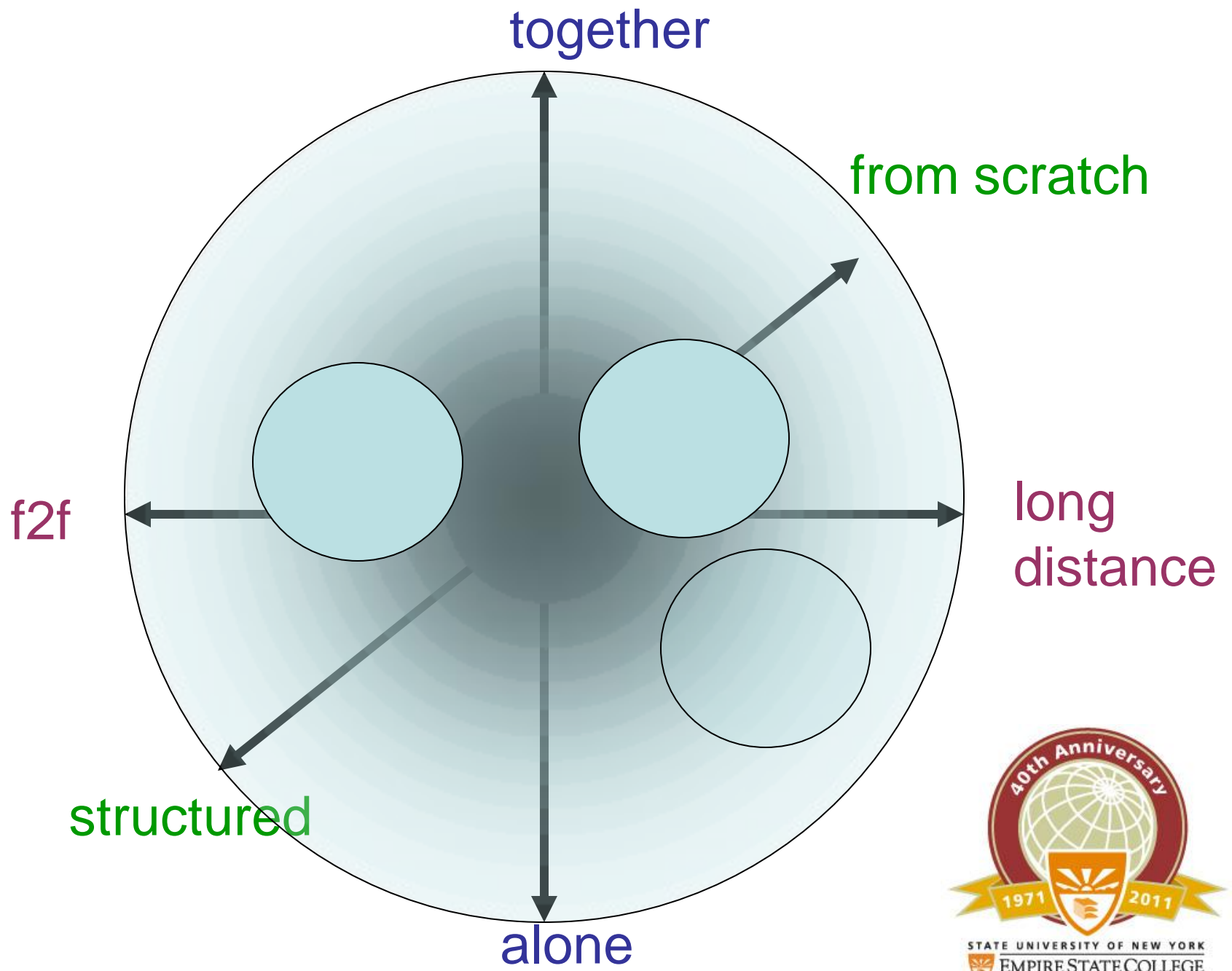




International Programs

- On site in Europe, Middle East, Central America, Caribbean, (Asia)
- Much delivery is on-site, traditional delivery, plus some blended and residence options for the Empire State College courses
- On line to cohorts in Russia
- Online to independent learners in dozens of countries







Cross-cultural issues...

...Collaborative solutions

Gender

- Traditional societies
- Women do not leave home for college
- Often accompanied to classes or single-sex classrooms
- Business handed from father to son beginning to change with globalization



Religion

- Intimately tied to lifestyle, culture, even politics and government
- Often view classroom-based learning as taking place in single-sex contexts
- Holidays and holyday observances differ
- Online global classroom is adaptable: crosses gender, religious and cultural borders to create an open forum for learning



High tech vs. high touch

- American society: instant, mobile with constant change; very “wired” for the next innovation in technology
- Other societies are mobile, but have significant social components based on personal relationship to promote buy-in; technology infrastructure often less robust.
- Isolated areas benefit from technology as a learning tool



Language & Learning Delivery

- All classes taught in English
- Team teaching (SIL) orients students to online study
- Instruction can be shared across faculty and blended online
- Synchronous/asynchronous: cultural assumptions (“*My mentor’s online to chat!*”) versus practical reality (well...not at 3am.)
- System of checks and balances to respond to student/faculty needs



U.S. Education

- Promotes divergent ways of thinking: “in your own words” rather than rote learning
- Values original ideas and critique
- Promotes feedback in classroom and online
- Challenges acculturated beliefs
- Students work in teams (business edge), with internships and in residencies—gain competitive edge and valued skills.



A SUNY degree

- Future employment in the culture/context where the student lives
- American-style education* avoiding educational colonialism
- Respect across gender & religious lines with independent thought and questioning
- Faculty contact and cross-cultural learning by students and instructors



Faculty

- Adapt to cultural and global circumstances (wars & volcanoes)
- Open to technology, travel, experiencing new cultures
- Familiar with mentoring model
- Partner with students, provide personal relationship, often learn local language



Faculty

Seek greater knowledge:

- teach themed residencies/summer sessions, get to know students & partners
- use web 2.0 tools
- instant messenger w/in student time zone
- explore the culture
- learn local language: Arabic, Czech, Spanish, Russian



International Strategy and Plan

- There is none: *ad hoc* list of partnerships
- Opportunistic, reactive
- Not much link back to our mission and values (open, social justice etc.)
- Nothing intentional about our online activity
- No geographic nor programmatic themes
- Very good success: graduation rates, satisfaction, faculty opportunities, job creation



Towards a strategy

a) Why?

- Enrichment for learners everywhere
- Faculty and staff enrichment
- Ability to share our knowledge and competencies with others
- Share our mission with others



Towards a strategy

b) What?

- BA, BS in Business Management and Economics
- 10 other areas of study
- Structured programs for specific needs
- Adaptation and relevancy to each community:
to what extent?



Towards a strategy

c) How?

- Traditional classes
- Blended
- Online
- New technologies to link across borders
- Residences



Towards a strategy

d) Quality

- Some variability based on student preparation/English skills etc.
- No stated intended outcomes for our degrees
- SUNY has established criteria and approval process for new endeavors



Towards a strategy

e) Partnerships

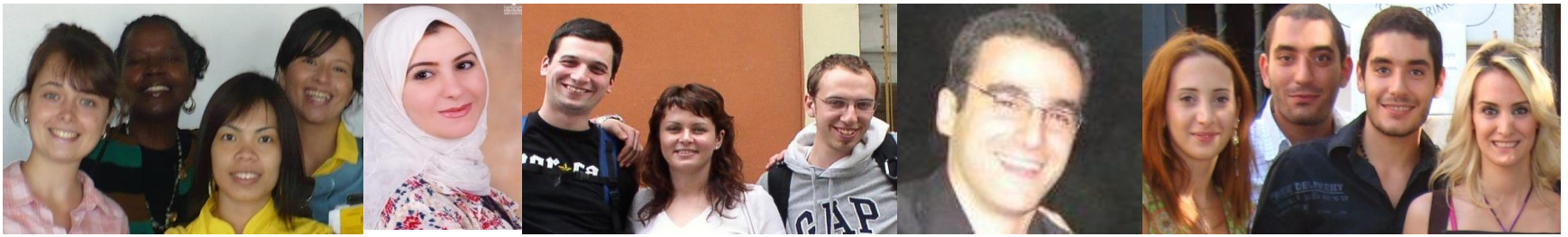
- New policy under discussion with criteria
- Legalities
- Relation to missions of both partners
- Quality assurances
- Financial viability



Future

- SUNY Global: good resource
- Different types of partnership: sharing our expertise and capacity for others to deliver
- Develop a “prospectus” in order to search for appropriate partners
- Emergent technologies
- Wider engagement of faculty as we grow
- Bi-lingual offerings





“I am convinced that it is a central obligation of our colleges and schools to help create in the minds of our...students an understanding of the human commonalities and interdependency of our world....”

In the end, the future of the human family will be made secure not by putting weapons systems in space, but by building better human understanding here on earth.”

Ernest L. Boyer, Address at Association of American Colleges, 1988.

