
Accountability: The Latest (and Greatest) Challenge for Online Learning?

WCET 18th Annual Conference

2006

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The eLearning Revolution

- Overall Percent of Schools Identifying Online Education as a Critical Long-Term Strategy Has Grown from 49% in 2003 to 56% In 2005
- Overall Online Enrollment Increased from 1.98 Million in 2003 to 2.35 Million in 2004
- In 2005, Only 31% of Chief Academic Officers Believed that Their Faculty Fully Accept the Value and Legitimacy of Online Education
- Moving Away from Comparative Studies (or Are We?)

– *Growing by Degrees: Online Education in the United States, 2005*
(Sloan-C)

The Spellings Report

- “We want postsecondary institutions to adapt to a world altered by technology, changing demographics and globalization, in which the higher-education landscape includes new providers and new paradigms, from for-profit universities to distance learning.”
- “Only 66 percent of full-time four-year college students complete a baccalaureate degree within six years. (This reflects the percentage of students who begin full-time in four-year institutions and graduate within six years.)”

A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education

UT System Board of Regents

- UT Academic Institution Presidents Charged with Aligning Institutional Policies to Maximize Their Positive Impact on Graduation Rates
- UT Academic Institution Presidents Developed Specific Targets Last April to Meet or Exceed National Averages for Four-Year, Five-Year, and Six-Year Graduation Rates for Full-Time, Part-Time, and Transfer Students

A Semi-Serious Question

- Presidents Are Feeling the Challenge Regarding Improvement of Graduation Rates
- The UT TeleCampus Continues to See Substantial Enrollment Growth Across the UT System
- One President Asks...

“Will Your Online Courses Help Me with Student Engagement and Graduation Rates?”

TeleCampus Survey

- Sent to Students Who Had Taken One or More Undergrad GenEd Courses Through the TeleCampus
- ~2500 Recipients, 241 Responses
- Survey Asked About Personal Experiences and Motivations

(continued)

TeleCampus Survey (continued)

- Convenience a Primary Reason Students Opt for Online (76.6%)
 - ❖ 27.1% Prefer Online to On-Campus
- Most Respondents
 - ❖ Are 24 Years Old or Older (69.3%)
 - ❖ Are Female (72.2%)
 - ❖ Have Attended More Than 1 Institution (79.6%)
- Progress to Graduation
 - ❖ 15.8% Used Online Courses to Speed Progress
 - ❖ 53% Say Online Helped Them Stay on Schedule

(continued)

TeleCampus Survey (continued)

- Most Respondents Not Traditionally Engaged on Campus
 - ❖ Little Participation in Organized Social or Athletic Groups
- Most Are Good Students
 - ❖ 76.1% Have 3.0 GPA or Better
- Online Courses Were Harder Than They Thought

Broader Surveys

- Collaboration among NCHEMS, SREB, UT TeleCampus
- Investigating Perceptions and Motivations About the Role of Online Learning in Student Engagement with Institutions and Progress to Degree

(continued)

Broader Surveys (continued)

- Key Questions

- ❖ Role of Online in Institutional Mission

- ❖ Does Online Have an Effect on Graduation Rate?

- Will It Have an Effect in the Future?

- Search for Evidence

- ❖ What Types of Evidence Support Perceptions?

- ❖ Share Evidence?

Broader Surveys (continued)

- Two Separate Surveys with Similar Questions (Underway)
 - ❖ Institution Leaders
 - SREB Effort
 - Sloan-C Effort
 - ❖ Students
 - Reliance on Institutions to Administer Surveys

Additional Data Gathering and Analysis Planned

- Work With Several Campuses That Feed Students Through the UT Telecampus
 - ❖ Gather Student Unit Record Data
 - ❖ Create Model For Determining The Extent To Which Online Learning May Or May Not Influence Student Progress To Degree And Graduation
- Expand To Other Postsecondary Institutions
 - ❖ Must Have Student Unit Record Systems That Record Student Enrollment And Grades For Online Courses As Well As Traditional Courses

SREB's Interest in Accountability

- A New Report on Accountability in June 2006
- Encouraging State Policy Leaders to Ask the Right Questions
- Laying Out the Facts...
- Reporting on Findings Annually
- Creating and Aligning Data Systems to Allow for Real Analysis and Assessments

SREB

Holding Colleges
and Universities
Accountable for
Meeting State Needs

2006

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

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CHALLENGE TO LEAD SERIES

Available in pdf from
www.sreb.org,
then click on
Challenge to Lead Goals

The Questions

- Do Sufficient Numbers of First-Year Students Graduate from State Institutions?
- Are Graduation Rates Improving?
- Are Different Groups of Students Graduating at Different Rates?
- Are Investments in Postsecondary Education Paying Off?
- Is Online Learning Making a Difference?

The Backdrop in the South

Increases in Number of Degrees Awarded in SREB States Outpaces the Nation, but:

- Too Few Complete Degrees in 150 Percent of Normal Program Time
- Too Many Students Leave After Their First Year
- Minority Student Awards Are Growing but Lag
- Student “Swirl” Is Undocumented (and at Present Can’t Be Tracked)

Online Learning in the Mix

- SREB's Commitment to Increasing Access Using Technology/
Online Learning Is Working
- Sloan C Report "Growing by Degrees" (Southern Edition)
Indicates:
 - ❖ SREB States Growing at Rates Higher than National Rates (18.2%)
 - ❖ SREB Institutions Are More Positive About Online Learning and
Importance in the Future
 - ❖ Almost Two-Thirds of SREB Institutions Offer Some Form of Online
Learning, with Growing Number Offering Complete Degree Programs

But No “Hard” Supportive Data

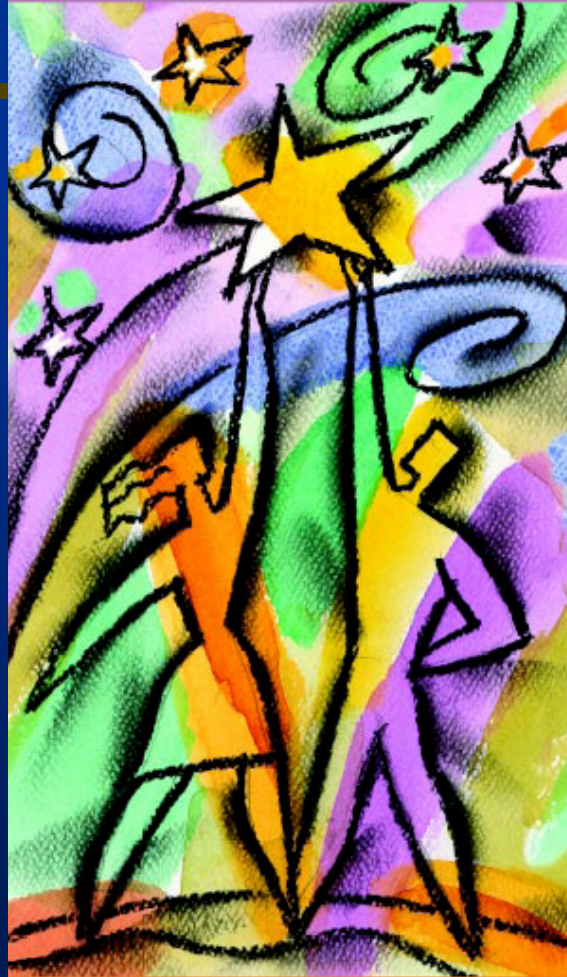
- Is Online Learning Reaching Students We Would not Otherwise Serve?
- Is Online Learning Helping Students Reach Their Degree Goals?
 - ❖ Get Ahead, Catch Up or Get Courses They Need
- Is the Investment in Technology Paying Dividends?
- How Can We Make a Stronger Case?

Framing the Public Agenda

- Kentucky “Model” Is A Helpful One
- They Raise Five Central Questions, Have Specific Indicators And Outline Benefits
- Most Importantly, These Are Not Internal Questions That Are Not Reported On But Public Questions, Reported On Regularly And Driving Policy Directions And Funding

Kentucky's Five Questions

- Are More Kentuckians Ready For Postsecondary Education?
- Is Kentucky Postsecondary Education Affordable For Its Citizens
- Do More Kentuckians Have Certificates And Degrees?
- Are College Graduates Prepared For Life And Work In Kentucky?
- Are Kentucky's People, Communities And Economy Benefiting?



FIVE QUESTIONS ONE MISSION

BETTER LIVES FOR KENTUCKY'S PEOPLE

A PUBLIC AGENDA
FOR POSTSECONDARY AND
ADULT EDUCATION
2005 - 2010

Kentucky
UNBRIDLED SPIRIT™



Available in PDF from
www.cpe.ky.gov ,
then click on
“Kentucky’s Public
Agenda in
Postsecondary and
Adult Education,
2005-2010”

An Important Effort

- The Current Study and Survey Effort Is Viewed as an Initial Step to Answering These and Other Important Questions
- We Need to Move Beyond “No Significant Difference” and Start to Document Our Efforts and the Value of Online Learning (and to Head Off the Accountability Challenge Which Is Fast Approaching...)