



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGES ONLINE

Response to Colin Diver Report on Online Learning

April 26, 2015
Massachusetts College Online Membership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2014, the Task Force on For-Profit Institutions issued a report on the state of online learning in Massachusetts. Dr. Colin Diver was tasked with the following:

- Survey the work of our campuses in the area of online learning.
- Summarize the most salient trends in online learning and speak with practitioners and specialists in this area.
- Make recommendations regarding a possible System role for bringing cohesion, alignment, and best practices to the community colleges and state universities in the area of online education.

Massachusetts College Online (MCO) 22 institutional members (see Appendix A) convened in AY2014-2015 and discussed the report as part of their regularly scheduled liaison meetings. This document is a result of their collaboration to correct perceived inaccuracies or omissions regarding MCO, and to further explain the organization's work to support online learning in Massachusetts. The MCO membership applauds the efforts of the committee and looks forward to finding opportunities to support the task force if/when the recommendations are put forward.

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGES ONLINE BACKGROUND (MCO)

In the late 90s, prior to the formation of MCO and UMass Online, there existed several formalized consortiums in the state's public community and college system. In 1997 Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State College formed the Northeast Distance Learning Consortium to offer online courses. The Massachusetts Distance Learning Consortium was formed as an advisory board to coordinate and publicize the video education efforts of its members and the use of PBS telecourses. UMass Dartmouth was one of the members.

A third consortium MassCode was built to share live video transmission of courses between Middlesex, Northern Essex, and Bunker Hill Community Colleges, and UMass Lowell.

While attending the Instructional Technology Council Teletraining Conference in Atlantic City in October 1999, MWCC President Daniel Asquino noted the emergence of Harcourt Brace University and saw the threat to Massachusetts public institution's distance learning efforts by the private sector. At the conference he began developing a plan for the Massachusetts Community Colleges to form a consortium to share their courses and offer a high quality, low cost alternative to the state.

At the ITC meeting, President Asquino had the opportunity to meet with Candy Center, then of Bristol Community College, who served as director of the Massachusetts Distance Learning Consortium. This was a loose confederation of state and community college involved in the emerging concept of distance learning. That conversation convinced Asquino that a new, more formalized organization was needed just for community colleges.

In November 1999, President Asquino lobbied the other community college presidents to gain support for his plan and send representatives to planning sessions.

The initial organizational meeting of two-year colleges interested in setting up a distance learning consortium was held in January 2000. Larry Reeves, the former Acting President of North Shore Community College was selected to chair the first meeting.

President Asquino in his role of the President of the Community College President's Council worked to lobby support for the consortium. In June 2000, the initial agreement was signed to form a community college distance learning consortium originally called The College eLearning Network. The presidents appointed Dr. Larry Reeves to serve as the consortium's executive director. At subsequent meetings the issues of brokering, registration, payment exchanges were worked out by the organization. Consortium models from other states were examined and repurposed to meet the needs of the Commonwealth's Community Colleges.

In August 2001 Acting Chancellor of Higher Education Judith Gill met with the Executive Directors of the Councils of Presidents to form a partnership of the community colleges, state colleges and the Board of Higher Education.

The College eLearning Network applied for and received capital bond funding from the Commonwealth's Information Technology Divisions with the proviso that organization include the state's colleges. Massachusetts Colleges Online was chosen as the name for the organization in April, 2002, Dr. David Kelley was appointed Executive Director, and the MCO portal was developed.

Following David Kelley's retirement, MCO membership made a decision to continue the organization as a collaborative of state higher education institutions involved in the design, delivery, management, and assessment of online, blended, and other technology-mediated learning formats. The collaborative provides opportunities for members to address the issues and challenges arising from professional practice, and the pooling of financial and intellectual capital toward the development and enhancement of services. Michael Badolato, Dean of Academic Technology, North Shore Community College, was elected chair and served for two academic years. Robin Robinson, Director of Education Technology and Interactive Media was elected chair in the fall of 2013 and is currently filling this position.

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGES ONLINE (MCO) TODAY

Massachusetts Colleges Online (MCO) is a collaborative of public state higher education institutions involved in the design, delivery, management, and assessment of online, blended, and other technology-mediated learning formats. The collaborative provides opportunities for all members to address the issues and challenges arising from professional practice, and the pooling of financial and intellectual capital toward the development and enhancement of services.

The initial organizational meeting of two-year colleges interested in setting up a distance learning consortium was held in January 2000, before the launch of UMass Online. In August 2001 Acting Chancellor of Higher Education Judith Gill met with the Executive Directors of the Councils of Presidents to form a partnership of the community colleges, state colleges and the Board of Higher Education. Following the retirement of David Kelley and loss of funding, MCO membership made a decision to continue the organization as a collaborative of state higher education institutions involved in the design, delivery, management, and assessment of online, blended, and other technology-mediated learning formats.

The 22 State University and Community College institutional MCO liaisons meet four times during the academic year to share best practices and identify new opportunities for collaboration. The benefit of these meetings is not only the collegiality built among institutions but also opportunities to build consortium pricing for Quality Matters and Atomic Learning.

The hallmark event for MCO is the annual conference on Best Practices in ELearning where faculty members from each member institution are recognized with a Course of Distinction Award for their online or blended learning courses. The expenses associated with the conference are supported by membership volunteers who organize the event, host the conference on their campuses or present their online learning experiences. This past year over 350 faculty and administrative attended the 10th annual conference at Bridgewater State University. The keynote speaker was Jay Bhatt, Blackboard CIO.

State Universities and Community Colleges were early adopters of online learning. Most institutions started their programs in the late 1990's. The MCO portal mentioned in the report was originally built in early 2000 for the purpose of supporting course brokering among the Community Colleges and highlighting which institutions offered courses online.

The portal is currently hosted by North Shore Community College as a courtesy. The MCO portal is a legacy system that not all institutions use and does not clearly identify the many opportunities for online learning at the state and community college level.

The nature of MCO is collaborative as demonstrated by the recent association with CTDLC and UMass Online. Together we co-sponsored an Open Educational Resources (OER) event with Cable Green and organized the New England-New York (NENY) Blackboard user group meetings at national conferences. Other initiatives with UMass Online are in the early stages include (but not limited to):

- Promoting public higher education in Massachusetts specific to online and hybrid/blended learning
- Designing professional development opportunities that support both faculty and staff development as it relates to online learning; scheduling webinars, training classes and other events
- Negotiating vendor pricing for public higher education institutions across the state – that are not offered through NERCOMP or other affiliations
- Leveraging consortium agreements across the state such as QM; Streaming servers; OER platforms
- Increasing access and promote public awareness of online education at public institutions in Massachusetts
- Fostering partnerships to increase capabilities and efficiencies
- Promoting innovation in using technologies to enhance learning
- Maximizing revenue by cutting costs through collaboration (i.e. technology and consortia discounts) and generate new revenue by offering new products and related services (i.e. workforce development training; a statewide agreement with Blackboard currently under review).

MCO CORE VALUES

Membership currently operates under these core values:

COOPERATIVE Membership in the MCO is voluntary, as is participation within its programs, offerings, initiatives, and shared resources. Membership is open to all state-supported public higher education institutions through representation of their academic technology and online learning officer administrators or designees. The Chair is nominated by membership for up to two academic years. This role has no decision making power other than to set meeting agendas or to voice the decisions of the collaborative with outside organizations.

RESOURCEFUL MCO is not a top down collaborative. All members have an equal voice. MCO is envisioned as an organization where professional and programmatic objectives can be met within a context of mutual support and combined, directed effort. MCO makes decisions collaboratively and by majority agreement. The chair may represent MCO at external organizational meetings, but no decisions are made independent of the group.

COLLEGIAL MCO Membership is open to all public higher education institutions. Each member institution may appoint one liaison. This individual is experienced in the delivery or administration of online courses and related models; and/or general academic technology services. Support for specific resources, programs and initiatives shall be through the voluntary participation of individual members, with fees and other appropriate shared contributions to be determined by the specific requirements of participation.

MCO RETREAT JUNE 2015

In June 2015 membership will meet for a Retreat to form a strategic framework that may be used to respond to both internal and external changes and make optimal use of the talents and resources shared by MCO membership with the goal to meet these objectives:

- Provide a shared understanding of the history of the organization
- Assessment of the current culture of collaboration among MCO membership
- Analysis of the forces of change at the organizational, state, regional and national levels
- Identification of organizational priorities and areas of focus for the next 2-5 years
- Refinement of the current organizational mission and core values
- Assessment of the current organizational governance structure and charter
- Articulation of short-term and long-term organizational goals
- Creation of an organizational strategic plan

The date of the MCO Membership Retreat is June 11 – 12, 2015 at the [Colonial Hotel](#) in Gardner, MA.

APPENDIX A:
THE STATE OF ONLINE LEARNING AT MCO AND AFFILIATE INSTITUTIONS

BERKSHIRE CC	<p>Berkshire Community College is a public community college offering Associate Degrees, Certificate Programs, as well as other educational opportunities, primarily to the residents of Berkshire County and surrounding areas. Berkshire currently offers a fully online Liberal Arts AA degree, and 60+ online and hybrid course sections per semester. The LMS is used for enhancements and online teaching by over 75% of the full-time faculty. Academic Technology offers pedagogical and technology training and support for the campus.</p>
BRIDGEWATER SU	<p>Bridgewater State University began offering online courses in 1999 and has had exceptional growth of the number of courses sections. The fall 2014 semester online total course credits are 5525. Currently 182 different courses are offered with a total of 304 sections offered.</p> <p>Since 85% of full time and adjunct faculty use a Learning Management System (LMS) in their classrooms, Bridgewater has built a pool of experienced LMS users and online instructors. Online learning assistance to faculty and students at Bridgewater is offered through Continuing and Distance Education, the Teaching and Technology Center and Division of Information Technology.</p>
BRISTOL CC	<p>Bristol Community College (BCC) has been offering distance learning courses since 1999. Of the 285 eLearning sections running in the fall 2014 semester 172 are fully online, 89 are hybrids, 7 are student option enrollment courses, and 17 are eHealth sections. 148 faculty members are teaching fall 2014 eLearning sections and as of the end of the drop/add period on September 10th the unduplicated eLearning headcount was 3,339. Total eLearning enrollments (duplicated headcount) were 5,342.</p> <p>BCC is currently in the process of migrating from the Angel Learning 8.0 platform to the Blackboard Learn 9.1 platform. The migration will be complete for the start of the fall 2015 term.</p>
BUNKER HILL CC	<p>Bunker Hill Community College offers numerous programs of study that lead to Associate in Arts (A.A.) degrees, Associate in Science (A.S.) degrees and certificates. All programs of study include courses from three required areas: general education requirements, career and/or liberal arts electives, and program requirements.</p> <p>Using the internet, videoconferencing technology, and conventional postal services, BHCC Online courses offer a flexible, convenient option to motivated learners seeking an alternative to traditional classroom education. Every BHCC Online course contains the same content as traditional classes and are fully accredited and transferable to many other institutions.</p>

CAPE COD CC

[Cape Cod Community College](#) has created a model for growth in online learning by offering fully online, and hybrid courses leading to degree programs that include Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Business Administration, Health Sciences, and Information Technology. All courses provide students and faculty an opportunity to interact online, and build strong communities using the mobility of the LMS, Moodle™, an open-source, highly customizable, student-focused environment in place since 2010.

As part of the strategic goal of creating operation and academic excellence through continuous improvement, Starfish EARLY ALERT™, Starfish ADVISING™, and Starfish INSIGHT™ Retention Systems was launched campus-wide in early 2013 as a tool to provide wrap-around support for students. Cape Cod Community College has created a consistent, and collaborative system of support for students in over 25 degree programs that allow for at least 50% completion online. Currently, over 100 different online and hybrid courses are available to be offered each semester. With an upgrade to Moodle 2.8 this fall, students will have a more engaged experience using features that model current social networks, and faculty developers will have more options to create fully online programs.

FITCHBURG SU

[Fitchburg State University](#) offered its first online courses in 1998, with 12 courses offered online. In 2006 there was significant growth with 48 courses offered online. The following year there were 99 courses offered online. During this period, to help support the interest and growth in online offerings, the University hired a part-time distance education coordinator whose main responsibilities were to support faculty in course design, provide faculty training and oversee a process to ensure quality. It quickly became evident that this position was vital to the university's online future, and the position became full-time in 2007.

In the fall of 2008, the University launched its first two fully online programs: the Master of Science in Forensic Nursing and the Master of Business Administration. Currently, the University offers 17 programs and certificates online or in a hybrid format.

In 2012-2013 alone, the university offered more than 550 online/hybrid courses with more than 7,800 enrollments.

Technical assistance and training for students and faculty support the quality of distance education offerings. The University offers 24/7 technical support for students and faculty. There is a physical helpdesk on campus with normal operating hours and an additional outsourced system to ensure that all campus users have access to support through the dedicated support line. This 24/7 support system was implemented in 2008 to support the launch of our first two fully online degree programs.

Through the collaborative efforts of Distance Education, Graduate and Continuing Education, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Information Technology department, students and faculty are trained and supported to be successful in the online setting. Both parties have access to online resources where they can receive on-demand training for most topics and tools needed for teaching and learning online. There are also regularly scheduled trainings offered on campus.

INSTITUTIONS

STATE OF ONLINE LEARNING

FRAMINGHAM SU

Providing opportunity, a sense of community, and a road to student success are central goals of the FY2012-17 Strategic Plan at [Framingham State University](#) (FSU). The continued growth of online learning plays a critical role in supporting these goals. Online learning maximizes access to educational opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; it promotes a sense of community through online interaction among students and professors; and it fosters independent and collaborative learning skills that are essential for student success throughout life.

Online Learning became a part of the educational framework at Framingham State University in 1998 when the first course was offered on the web through the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE). From the beginning, the program was shaped by market demand for flexible scheduling, convenience, data from student satisfaction surveys, and research on best practices in online instruction. Blended learning (or hybrid) courses, combining face-to-face meetings with online learning, were first offered by DGCE in 2003.

This learning format has become increasingly popular over the years; in 2009 college governance approved a log allowing full-time faculty to teach a blended learning course in the Day Division as part of their load.

Framingham State University asynchronous and hybrid programs meet the same academic and accreditation standards as any program offered on campus. Students who participate in FSU programs pay the same tuition, follow the same semester calendar, and receive the same diploma as our on-ground students. Courses are offered in over eighteen subject areas and students may earn both a Masters and Bachelors degree as well as Graduate Certificates through the Graduate Studies and Continuing Education Framingham State University Degree and Certificate Programs.

GREENFIELD CC

[Greenfield Community College's](#) online courses allow students to complete all course requirements from their home or office. Students trying to balance work, family and education can fit online college courses into their own schedule, allowing them to pursue their education.

Regular interaction with instructors is possible through online chat or video chat, email, phone, and online discussion areas dedicated to class questions and conversation. Regular access to a computer and the internet is required to complete an online class from GCC, as well as a basic understanding of computer usage and how to send and receive email.

Fully online classes offer 100% of instruction online. You never need to visit GCC's campus to complete your coursework (but a lot of our online students love coming here anyway, to study or work in our library or take advantage of our student services).

Hybrid classes may require occasional meetings on campus, but generally 50%-99% of course work can be completed online. If you're considering an online class, but you're not sure if it's a good fit for your learning style, a hybrid class might be a great place to start!

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HOLYOKE CC

[Holyoke Community College](#)'s online courses began in Fall 1999. WebCT was the first learning management system adopted by Holyoke Community College. In Spring 2011, WebCT was replaced by Moodle the current LMS.

During Fall 2014, 124 different courses were offered online with a total of 230 sections - 28 blended and 202 online. Fall 2014 online courses were up 14.4% in credits with a credit total of 12,630. Total FTE in online courses for FY 14 was 826.1, which represents a 9.6% growth from FY 13. During Fall 2014 over one-third of students (35%) were enrolled in at least one distance course.

There are currently 13 complete degree and certificate programs offered online. In addition there are numerous programs that allow a student to complete at least 85% of the course work online. In fall 2013 the first three fully online A.S. degree programs were offered: Liberal Arts, Business Administration and Criminal Justice.

Moodle is widely used at Holyoke Community College for all class formats, online, blended and on-campus. The college continues to make important investments on faculty development opportunities as well as student support systems.

The Dean of Online Programs and Academic Initiatives coordinates the online learning program. The dean is part of the Academic Affairs team and works in close collaboration with different offices on campus.

MA COLLEGE OF
ART AND DESIGN

[Massachusetts College of Art and Design](#) **Professional and Continuing Education semester offerings** include over 100 art and design classes and workshops on the MassArt campus in over twenty disciplines four times a year: fall, spring, summer and winter intersession. MassArt also offers professional certificate programs in fashion, graphic, industrial and furniture design, as well as specialized intensive programs, which include the four week summer film school and Creative Continuum, a Mini-MBA for Artists.

MASS BAY CC

[MassBay Community College](#) offers a growing selection of credit-bearing, academic online courses for highly motivated and tech-savvy students. Our academic online courses cover the same material as campus-based courses. Our skilled teachers use the Blackboard Learn™ system to conduct online classes. Some of the technologies used by instructors and students include discussion boards, online videos, podcasts, blogs, and wikis to build an online community of learners. Students participate in online class discussions and complete assignments and projects (with deadlines) just as in a campus-based course. Completing an online course is just as challenging as taking a face-to-face course, but students can contribute to discussions and complete assignments any time of the day or night each week. In return for the flexibility and convenience of online education, students must schedule their study time and take control of their own learning.

INSTITUTIONS**STATE OF ONLINE LEARNING**

MASSASOIT CC

[Massasoit Community College](#) began offering online courses in 2000 and has experienced steady growth in enrollments since then. There are currently over 100 courses taught in the online format. In 2013-2014, the college offered 316 online and hybrid sections with more than 5,000 enrollments.

There are currently 6 complete degree and certificate programs offered online. In addition there are 11 programs that allow a student to complete at least 75% of the course work online.

Canvas has been the learning management system used at Massasoit since 2012. Every course has a Canvas shell and the majority of faculty use the system to enhance their classes. The Office of Online Learning offers professional development opportunities for faculty and staff interested in using instructional technologies.

MIDDLESEX CC

[Middlesex Community College](#) is a **leader in Online Learning**. For more than 15 years, MCC has offered online courses, as well as hybrid courses, which combine online and face-to-face instruction. Students who take courses online complete the same high-quality coursework as those who take courses on campus – and online students earn the same course credits. Middlesex now offers:

- [11 Online Associate Degree Programs](#)
- [6 Online Certificate Programs](#)
- [Hundreds of Online Course Offerings](#)

MT WACHUSETT CC

[Mount Wachusett Community College](#)'s online courses began in 1998 with a consortium formed with Fitchburg State College. In 1999 both institutions adopted Blackboard and this has been the MWCC's learning management system ever since.

The fall 2014 semester online course credits are up 5.9% with a credit total of 7,442. Currently 104 different courses are offered with a total of 150 sections. In the 2013-14 academic year, MWCC had 5,743 registrations which was a 6% increase over the previous year.

There are currently 11 complete degree and certificate programs offered online. In addition there are over 10 programs that allow a student to complete at least 85% of the course work online. In fall 2014 the Health Information Management A.S. degree program is being offered for the first time, and it is the college's first online-only degree program.

Since 85% of on-campus and adjunct faculty use Blackboard in their classrooms, MWCC has built a pool of experienced Bb users and online instructors. The college's Title 3 grant has allowed retraining for veteran online instructors, and offers opportunities for new faculty to improve the pedagogy of online courses.

The Dean of Academic and Institutional Technology coordinates the online learning program and is responsible for IT. This close collaboration allows MWCC to batch load seamlessly student registrations from the Banner student management system into the college's Blackboard installation that is hosted by Blackboard. Students using Blackboard also have 24/7 outsourced helpdesk services contracted with Campus EAI Helpdesk.

NO SHORE CC

[North Shore Community College](#) began offering online courses in the fall of 1999. Since 1999, online (and hybrid) courses have steadily grown, numbering over 120 course sections per semester today. Students may complete an associate degree in Fire Protection and Safety Technology as well as a certificate program Web Development by taking all of their course online. There are also 11 blended degree programs and 3 certificate programs where students can complete 50% or more of the course requirements online.

In the fall 2014 semester, NSCC offered 128 online and hybrid course sections with an unduplicated headcount of 1,759 students. The duplicated headcount was 2,557 students.

NSCC is currently in the process of migrating from the Angel Learning 8.0 platform to the Blackboard Learn 9.1 platform. The migration will be complete for the start of the summer 2015 term. Every course has a shell in the Learning Management System and the majority of faculty also use the LMS to enhance face-to-face classes.

The College's Instructional Technology and Design (ITD) department coordinates the online learning program and arranges for ongoing support for faculty in the pedagogy and design of online courses. ITD also provides support to students in using the LMS as well as with resolving technical issues through an email Helpdesk."

QUINSIGAMOND CC

[Quinsigamond Community College](#) began offering online courses in the fall of 2000; at that time five courses were offered in the areas of English, history, humanities, mathematics, and psychology. Since then online courses have steadily grown, numbering over 100 today. Students may complete an associate degree in several College programs including Criminal Justice, Business Administration, and General Studies, by taking all their courses online. Four certificates may also be completed online.

Blackboard Learn has been QCC's Learning Management System since 2013. Every course has a Blackboard shell and the majority of faculty also use the system to enhance on ground classes. The software allows for asynchronous communication via discussions, blogs, and wikis as well as synchronous communication through its conferencing component, Collaborate. Turnitin, the writing and grading software with originality checking for research, is integrated with Blackboard along with content from publishers of many college textbooks.

The College's Dean of Distance Learning and Staff Development coordinates the online learning program and arranges for ongoing support for faculty in the pedagogy and design of online courses. Contextualized help with eesysoft is available in every course and workshops are scheduled weekly on campus. Students may also access the eesysoft contextualized help or 24/7 telephone help via Blackboard. In addition, QCC integrates Starfish Retention Solutions with Blackboard, providing individualized support for students.

ROXBURY CC

Roxbury Community College made the institutional decision fully embrace online education when it created and filled the position of Dean of Academic Technology in 2006. Moodle was designated in 2007 as the institutionally endorsed virtual learning platform. RCC's vision for integration of technology into teaching and learning states, "[A]ll initiatives must improve teaching and learning, engage students, increase retention, and improve the quality of and access to education in a direct and concrete way."

RCC's current short term online goals center on developing digital academic content and interactivity which best serves the specific needs of its student population. While development of fully online courses and certificate-bearing programs remains an objective, content-rich online course sites which extend campus-based learning in web-companion or blended/hybrid format are at present considered the most effective format for successful student learning. Since its inception as a department, Academic Technology has placed its greatest emphasis on faculty professional development in support of integration of educational technology. As the expertise of RCC faculty with technology and its applications has increased, students have begun to reap the rewards of enhanced learning in a more technology-rich education environment.

Growth of online course presence has increased markedly across disciplines since 2009. From Fall, 2009 to Spring, 2014, online course presence grew across all disciplines (Liberal Arts/Professional Studies, 14 → 93; STEM, 3 → 53; Nursing, 1 → 11). In the Spring semester of AY 2014, 79 RCC faculty (40% of total Spring faculty) were using Moodle as a component of their classroom instructional strategy (mainly as web-companion for traditional face-to-face courses). Of the 159 Spring, 2014 courses with a Moodle presence, 91 (57%) included a significant level of interactivity between faculty and students: 10 courses were fully online, 5 were blended/hybrid, and 76 were web-companion. Of the 195 teaching faculty in Spring, 2014, 99 faculty (51%) had received between 2 and 20 hours of direct Moodle training either individually or in small groups.

Transformational individual and institutional change is at the crux of achieving relevance in the 21st century world of education. Participation in the MCO collaborative has been invaluable for RCC as a source of perspective, experience and insight as it gradually embraces technological innovation over time. The initiative of technology-focused faculty professional development has begun to yield positive results at RCC as it grapples with the challenges of technology integration in its ongoing efforts to provide the best possible learning opportunities for RCC students.

SALEM SU

[Salem State](#) Online offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs, certificates, and courses. The courses offered by Salem State Online offer the same quality and interaction as our face-to-face courses. We are excited to share the online learning experience with our students. Not only do online courses offer flexibility and convenience, but they also offer a unique way to interact with your professor and your classmates.

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WESTFIELD SU

[Westfield State University](#) (January 10, 2012) was ranked as one of four Honor Roll schools named to *U.S. News & World Report's* first-ever edition of Top Online Education Program rankings. Westfield State's online bachelor's degree completion programs were ranked in three different categories: faculty credentials and training (#1), student services and technology (#16), and teaching practices and student engagement (#42). Westfield State offers four online bachelor's degree completion programs in business, liberal studies, history and sociology. Under President Dobelle's leadership, Westfield State University began offering online degrees in 2008. Since then, online student enrollment soared 115 percent as of last year and is projected to increase by a total of 300 percent this year.

The Westfield State University Community Education department offers online career training courses in partnership with Gatlin Education Services. These are career-focused online courses designed to give you the latest in learning, and to provide the skills necessary to acquire professional caliber positions in many in-demand occupations.

Westfield's instructor-facilitated courses are available anytime, anywhere. All you need is a web-enabled computer and a desire to learn skills that will prepare you for a new career or update current skill sets. And even though you don't have to attend class, you won't be on your own. A team of available online professionals, anytime scheduling, and educational textbooks combine to give you a relevant, interactive learning experience.

WORCESTER SU

[Worcester State University](#) initiated Blackboard as its learning management system in approximately 1998; online course offerings began simultaneously with this initiation.

Although we do not offer completely online programs or certificates, as of the fall 2014 semester, we created approximately 2,000 Blackboard course shells to accommodate our ~250 full time and ~250 adjunct faculty. We offered 93 completely online courses in the undergraduate and graduate levels, but realize that many of our faculty use Blackboard to add some online components to their face-to-face classes. Additionally, we offer on-site Blackboard administration, help desk services and training classes.

AFFILIATE MEMBER

UMASS ONLINE

[UMassOnline](#) is an entry into the University of Massachusetts' online courses, certificates, degree programs, and corporate/professional education opportunities. Recognized as one of the top universities in the United States, the University of Massachusetts has been a leader in distance education for over 25 years. UMassOnline students are UMass students and receive the same benefits as their on-campus peers:

- An internationally recognized faculty, including winners of the world's most prestigious awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, Nobel Prize, National Book Award for Poetry, and the Draper Award in Engineering.
- A fully accredited university with highly ranked schools and colleges.
- A 330,000 alumni network, including successful, highly respected industry leaders, scientists, authors, astronauts, hi-tech entrepreneurs and entertainers.
- A staff and faculty committed to meeting the needs of students, whether on campus or off.
- Rigorous academic requirements that guarantee a degree or certificate of great value.