

Expanding the Role of Online Learning to Increase the Number of Baccalaureate Degree Holders in Wisconsin

In July of 2001, the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents adopted the following vision and mission statement for the University of Wisconsin Online:

Vision: The University of Wisconsin System will develop a coordinated and collaborative approach to online learning with the goals of extending its educational reach, enhancing program quality, enriching on-campus education, and preparing all students, faculty and staff for learning in the future.

Mission Statement: In the 21st century, Wisconsin residents and students will increasingly expect the University to provide online opportunities as part of its core mission. In order to meet these expectations, UW institutions will work collaboratively to leverage their faculty expertise and other elements of online leadership to provide broadened access to world class education in a seamless fashion.

As the University of Wisconsin System looks to increase collaboration with the Wisconsin Technical College System to increase the number of baccalaureate degree holders in Wisconsin and enhance the Wisconsin economy in the 21st Century, online learning can play a valuable role in providing educational resources in an efficient and effective manner during this time of decreasing state resources.

The following Goals for Online Learning are presented to the Committee on Baccalaureate Expansion (COBE) for its consideration:

- 1. Meet high priority state workforce needs:** Online Learning should focus scarce resources on high priority workforce needs such as nursing and other health care areas, business and engineering.
- 2. Utilize resources in an efficient and effective manner to increase the number of bachelor's degree holders within Wisconsin:** The UW System shall develop a systemwide approach to online learning that seeks to maximize and provide greater access to UW resources, and work with the Wisconsin Technical College System to coordinate online learning to best meet statewide degree completion needs.
- 3. Improve retention rates and reduce time to degree thereby improving efficiency and increasing the number of bachelor degree holders within Wisconsin:** The UW System will use online learning to facilitate timely degree completion.

1. Meet high priority state workforce needs

- a. Focus scarce resources for online learning on new and expanded programs directed at meeting Wisconsin's high priority workforce development needs.
- b. Increase collaboration with Wisconsin Technical College System to provide online degree completion programs focused on state workforce needs.
- c. Provide mechanisms for identifying and supporting the development of new programs influenced by market-place needs as an alternative to solely relying upon internally driven initiatives.

2. Utilize resources in an efficient and effective manner to increasing the number of bachelor's degree holders within Wisconsin:

- a. Make maximum use of available capacity across UW online learning courses to ensure that learners have access to any available opportunities across UW System institutions.
- b. Enhance collaboration which in turn provides the mechanism whereby resources from across the UW System can be brought to bear to address state needs if they are available.
- c. Enhance collaboration with the Wisconsin Technical College System to avoid duplication of online efforts and ensure further opportunities for smooth transition from two year programs to baccalaureate degree completion programs.
- d. Draw upon linkages to other programs as a means of minimizing potential course and program duplication by identifying areas where courses already available through other venues can support and benefit from new initiatives.

3. Improve retention rates and reduce time to degree thereby improving efficiency and increasing the number of bachelor degree holders within Wisconsin

- a. Expand the online learning options available to students as one means of removing barriers to continued study, such as closed sections, scheduling conflicts, and the need to be away from the campus at various times during their program of study.
- b. Provide convenient, one-stop access to information regarding the online courses that are available.
- c. Provide linkages between online learning opportunities and the needs of individual students as identified by students, faculty and staff.