



Governor's Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning

UMassOnline

Website: <http://www.umassonline.net/>

Summary of Innovation: UMassOnline, established in 2001 by the University of Massachusetts President and Board of Trustees to “meet the online educational needs of people locally, nationally and internationally by offering accredited educational programs via interactive, Internet-based learning systems,”¹ is the online consortium of the University of Massachusetts’ five campuses.

UMassOnline currently hosts 157 degree and certificate programs, spanning liberal arts, education, management, nursing, public health, IT, and more. Currently, 145 of the programs are fully online, while the rest are blended programs which combine online learning with traditional classroom instruction.²

The programs are administered by the individual campuses through a decentralized approach: each campus can freely offer degrees in any subject, even if one of the other four campuses already offers a similar program.³ UMassOnline, meanwhile, “provides marketing, technology and other support services for [the] online programming.”⁴

UMassOnline offers 24/7/365 access to coursework and technical support, enabling distance learners to attend the same classes and learn from the same faculty as learners who attend the physical campuses.

Learners: UMassOnline aims not only to make a UMass education available to more students within the Commonwealth, but also to expand UMass’ global presence. As UMass President Marty Meehan stated, “UMassOnline [provides] innovative, flexible offerings that make a world-class UMass education more accessible to more students... UMass has been a pioneer in online education, which expands our reach globally while making critical contributions to workforce development right here in the Commonwealth.”

Bringing Innovation to Scale: Over the past five years, online enrollment at UMass has risen by 39 percent to 75,565 for FY17, while online revenues have risen by 46 percent to over \$100 million for FY17. The true number of unique online enrollments may be lower than the reported 75,565, however— “because UMass Online represents five individual campuses rather than existing as a separately accredited entity... each campus’s online enrollment numbers are counted separately,”⁵ leading to some duplication when an individual learner registers for multiple courses.

Three to five degree programs are added to UMassOnline’s 160-odd current offerings each year, according to officials.

¹ <https://umasscenteratspringfield.org/umassonline-achieves-record-high-enrollment-and-revenue>

² <https://www.massachusetts.edu/education/campus-profiles/umassonline>

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/08/30/umass-online-surpasses-100-million-annual-revenue-enrollment>

⁴ <https://umasscenteratspringfield.org/umassonline-achieves-record-high-enrollment-and-revenue>

⁵ <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/08/30/umass-online-surpasses-100-million-annual-revenue-enrollment>