

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **UIS has the ability and the proven track record to lead the UI efforts in providing affordable access to quality higher education for those in Illinois and beyond.**
- **Given additional resources, the campus is prepared to entertain the opportunity to accelerate enrollments in our current programs, and to expand degrees and certificates. Expansion, however, must be consistent with the UIS model of online education.**

UIS: A DECADE OF EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Online learning started at UIS in the fall of 1997. Over the past decade, UIS has built the online program to its present quality, breadth and scale with the infusion of approximately \$3.5 million in grants from an assortment of foundations, government agencies, and central administration. While that is no small infusion of money, in the context of funding that the University of Illinois has pursued, the return on the investments by those foundations and agencies has been impressive. UIS online programs are self-sustaining and continue to expand at a deliberate pace. Our collective experience in this area has brought us requests for consultations from scores of colleges and other entities and we have received national awards for excellence. The fact is that we are nationally recognized leaders in online learning.

Online education, highlighted in the UIS Strategic Plan, is consistent with our mission of excellence, innovation and access. The UIS Campus Senate just approved the creation of the Center for Online Learning, Research, and Service. The UIS model for online learning is founded on the “Quality Framework and Five Pillars” of the Sloan Consortium.¹ The Five Pillars are learning outcomes, access, faculty satisfaction, student satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness.

<http://www.sloanconsortium.org/publications/books/qualityframework.pdf>

The UIS approach to online learning has two characteristics that are at the root of our success. They speak directly to learning outcomes, access, faculty satisfaction, student satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness.

- **UIS online programs are integrated with existing campus offerings**
 - Same degree requirements²
 - Same courses, including semester format
 - Same faculty
 - Same governance approval jurisdiction
 - Separate admission requirements (generally higher for online programs)
- **UIS online programs are intended to enhance on campus programs, not overwhelm them**
 - Enhance quality, diversity, and size of student population
 - Enhance the base of faculty expertise
 - Enhance the depth and breadth of curricular offerings
 - Enhance economic resources by self-sufficiency or modest gains

¹ The Sloan Consortium is the premier association in the field, focusing on delivery of high quality online and blended learning programming. Their membership includes more than 1500 colleges and institutions. They publish the leading journal in the field, the Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks.

² Due to the national demand, some of our online programs set higher entrance requirements for admission to the online program than for the on-ground program.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION: A LEADER IN ONLINE EDUCATION

UIS is a recognized national leader in quality online programming. Evidence can be found in the many awards we have won and the leadership role in the field we have assumed. See **Appendix 1**.

QUALITY FIRST AND FOREMOST

We briefly discuss the most important components of the UIS model of online education below. They center around the “Five Pillars:” learning outcomes, access, faculty satisfaction, student satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness.

Faculty

Faculty at UIS are enthusiastic supporters of quality online education. Nearly 50% of the faculty taught online AY 2007-08. Most teach the same courses online that they teach on the ground. Every College offers online degrees and programming.

Assessment

Since the implementation of Banner in 2004, UIS has closely assessed the quality of its online programs. Overall, we find online programs do at least as well as on campus programs and sometimes better.

Measures of the effectiveness of online education include:

- Course completion rates
- Persistence towards degree
- Grade distribution in courses
- Student evaluations
- Enrollment patterns and course demand
- Program application patterns

Program Coordinators and Peer Mentoring

One reason UIS does well on measures of student satisfaction, retention and time to completion of degree is our innovative model of online program coordinators and peer mentors to help assure that students succeed. Dedicated academic professionals serve as program coordinators who work with faculty members, admissions, records, financial aid, and other UIS offices. The peer mentors serve as liaisons between the faculty member and students by modeling excellent student postings in the discussion board, following up with students who have not posted regularly, and answering questions that students are not comfortable asking the instructor.

Library, Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and Bookstore Services

Brookens Library provides a wide array of online resources including a 24 hour online reference desk (*Ask Away Chat*), scores of full text online journal databases, online book search, and electronic library reserves. The staff of the Center offer online workshops and tutoring to online students to assist in areas of writing, math, and science while the Bookstore takes online orders for textbooks and ships both used and new books to students.

Career Services Center

This office provides support to online students seeking to advance their careers. Staff of the Center hold certification as online career counselors.

Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning (OTEL) and Information Technology Services (ITS)

OTEL is the central support unit for faculty who teach online. Seven FTE staff members provide instructional design, pedagogical support, innovative resources, and daily assistance to faculty members. It provides nearly 350 contact “appointments” with faculty each month. Additional services include reviewing scholarship, funding faculty development, and consulting.

The ITS office supports the online initiative by providing technology support to faculty and students. It explores emerging technologies, and the integration of technology with the curriculum.

Community of Practice for E-Learning (COPE-L)

Faculty and staff initiated the creation of the COPE-L group in 2006. They meet regularly to discuss research, best practices, and innovations in technology-enhanced, blended, and online learning environments.

BREADTH

Online learning at UIS offers a good mix of professional and liberal arts programming from every college. These students are part of the fabric of our community. Their needs are considered in decisions at the program, department, college, and administrative levels. As of the fall semester 2008:

- UIS offers 8 baccalaureate completion degrees, 8 Masters degrees, and several certificate programs delivered entirely online (out of a total of 21 baccalaureate and 21 graduate degrees).
- Each of the four academic colleges delivers online degree programs.
- Online courses are offered in 28 of UIS’ 40 academic units’ course prefixes.

ACCESS

Our online programs mainly serve non-traditional students outside the geographical boundaries of the campus.

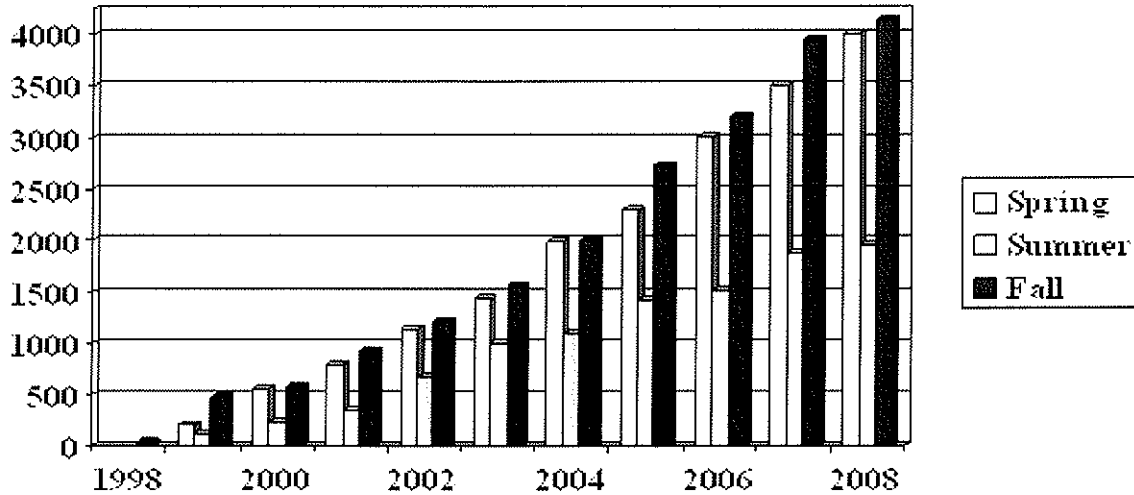
- Online Baccalaureate majors are older than their on campus peers by almost 10 years.
- The average age for online graduate and undergraduate majors is about the same: 34.6 for undergraduates and 35.5 for graduate students.
- 84.8% of the Illinois students have mailing addresses outside Sangamon County.
- Online majors have mailing addresses in 76 of 102 Illinois counties.
- Nearly 2 of 5 online majors (38.1%) have mailing addresses outside Illinois, including 41 states, three Canadian provinces, and 10 foreign countries.

SCALE and REVENUE

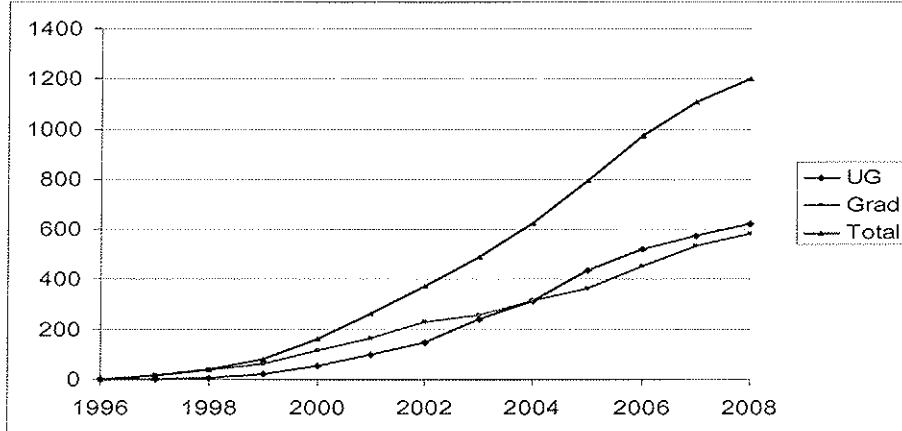
Growth of UIS online degree programs has been purposeful, centering on quality and scale in proportion to the number and interest of qualified students. For 20 consecutive terms, including summer, UIS has increased the number of online credit hours over the previous term. See below. At census for the fall semester 2008:

- Online majors made up 25.5% of all UIS headcount enrollment.
- Online majors increased by 10.9% from Fall 2007
- 30.3% of UIS credits were generated in online courses
- 48.4% of UIS students took at least one course online
- About one half of the UIS faculty taught online in AY 2007-2008
- UIS offered over 200 online courses and many more in blended format

UIS Online & Blended Enrollment



UIS ONLINE HEADCOUNT GROWTH³



Every proposed online program must file a business plan showing full cost recovery, that no state appropriated funds will be required to add the program to the existing on-ground degree.

- Business plan projections have been met within three years
- Degree programs were moved online in staged steps. Usually three courses were offered within the first semester, with three more the following semester.
- For AY 07-08, online classes generated approx. \$9 M in tuition and fees

³ Numbers prior to 2004 implementation of Banner are estimated.

UIS AND THE GLOBAL CAMPUS

We provide this background about our online program as context for understanding our relationship to the Global Campus. UIS is the lead campus for excellent online programs; we are the campus that has already increased access through quality but affordable online learning. Yet it would be fair to say that the Global Campus has not taken advantage of our expertise and that we have had and continue to have serious concerns about the Global Campus model.

Two years ago, when GC discussions began, we argued for a model of online education that would balance quality, accessibility, and affordability. The Global Campus proceeded with a model that most UIS faculty simply could not support. First and foremost, our experience convinced us that educationally, the model being proposed had severe limitations, particularly putting undergraduates at risk of not being able to succeed. It is clear that the GC model has not inspired the confidence of the faculty. We know that student success and faculty satisfaction are essential to quality online education. Additionally, UIS is dependent on online students for enrollment and resulting tuition dollars. Partnering with the GC jeopardizes those enrollments and dollars. As a campus without the resources of our Research I sisters, we can not afford to divert scarce resources away from campus programs into the GC. As a result of our educational and resource concerns, only one UIS program has come forward to partner with GC. As we contemplate the Global Campus becoming a fourth degree granting campus, our concerns remain, and are exacerbated by this approach.

The Board of Trustees has said that the *“single most important reason for launching the Global Campus was to offer (at scale) low cost, career enhancing degrees in high demand disciplines, especially at the undergraduate level.”* Despite our difficult relationship to the Global Campus, we believe, as we always have, that there is another option, one that has never been explored, but can result in success. **How can we build upon the significant strengths of UIS online course development and delivery experience in ways that promote the goals expressed by the Board of Trustees?** Whether this is a campus based model or an alternative to a fourth degree-granting campus, we do not believe this area has been fully explored.

UIS has the capability and the track record, but not the resources to provide accelerated growth in affordable access to high quality online education. We believe we have demonstrated that we can offer career enhancing, high demand, high quality degrees, including undergraduate; the only issue is scale. Given additional resources in the form of seed funding or a carefully-crafted venture-type loan from the Foundation, the campus is prepared to entertain the opportunity to accelerate our expansion of current enrollment in programs, degrees, and certificates. Any such acceleration or expansion, however, must be consistent with the UIS model of offering online programs so that we maintain the quality that is the basis of our national reputation for excellence. That is, resources would be allocated to existing programs to expand in the mode and method that they are currently using; new programs would follow the same initiation, approval and implementation as those that preceded them – mainstreamed in the UIS academic organizational structure, in the same semester-based offerings, with UIS faculty members who teach both online and on campus.

UIS has achieved excellence, accessibility, and affordability in online education with relatively modest resources. We can do more, but require expanded resources. This option is a viable response to the Board’s concerns about quality, access and affordability. It is in keeping with the tradition of excellence and innovation of the University of Illinois.

APPENDIX 1 UIS NATIONAL AWARDS & CONSULTANCIES for ONLINE LEARNING

- 3rd Annual Award from the Society for New Communications Research: Excellence in New Communications Award for “Online Reputation Management.” (Nov. 14, 2008)
- One of 11 educational institutions recognized as a “Center of Excellence in the U.S. and Canada,” awarded by Elluminate, Inc, for programs that “are the best in developing live eLearning programming.” (2008) http://www.elluminate.com/community/best_in_class_2008/
- Inaugural recipient of the Sloan Consortium Ralph E. Gomory Award for Quality Online Education (2008) (The University of Central Florida will be a co-recipient.)
<http://www.sloan-c.org/awards/rgomoryaward.asp>
- Sloan Consortium Award for Excellence in Institution-Wide Online Teaching and Learning Programming (most prestigious university-wide online learning award in the US) (2007).
http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/books/pdf/2007awards_complete.pdf
- UIS professor featured on National Public Radio’s “Morning Edition: “Online Courses Catch On in U.S. Colleges” (2007) See also <http://www.elluminate.com/sales/casestudies/uis-cordell.jsp>
- UIS online initiative featured in the Wall Street Journal along with two large online powerhouses, the University of Massachusetts and the University of Maryland. (2006)
<http://www.umassonline.net/news/675.html>
- The “Most Outstanding Achievement by an Individual in Online Learning,” (Highest individual award given by the Sloan Consortium. UIS has three recipients; no other institution has more than one.)
<http://sloanconsortium.org/aboutus/awards.asp>
 - 2002, Ray Schroeder, Director of OTEL
 - 2003, Burks Oakley, Visiting Research Professor, OTEL
 - 2006, Karen Swan, pending appointment as the UIS James J. Stukel Professor of Educational Leadership as of January 2009
- HECA award from the IBHE for the “Effective Practice” of addressing diversity through online teaching partnerships with Chicago State University and Northeastern Illinois University (2006).
<http://online.uis.edu/partners/csu/index.aspx>
- Higher Learning Commission unconditionally re-accredits UIS for 10 years, including online degrees and programs. (2007).
- UIS has received more than \$3.5 million in grants to support for our online efforts since 1997.
<http://online.uis.edu/info/grants.html>
- UIS leads six institutions in The New Century Learning Consortium which “assists with the implementation of high quality, large-scale online and blended learning programs at a limited number of small and mid-sized colleges and universities.” <http://nclc-online.ning.com>

- UIS faculty and staff are conducting research, publishing in the leading journals, presenting papers, and serving as consultants to other institutions on the best practices in online education. Consultancies and hosted visits include:

Indiana University System	Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board
Sloan Consortium	New Jersey Distance Learning Academic Administrators Board
Marquette University (WI)	University of Alaska-Fairbanks
Seton Hall University (PA)	Fairleigh Dickinson University (NJ)
Montclair State University (NJ)	University of Missouri at St. Louis
University of Southern Maine	Louisiana Technical University
California State-East Bay	California State-Fullerton
University of Southern Oregon	University of Massachusetts, Lowell
University of San Francisco (CA)	Oakland University (MI)
Wilkes University (PA)	Youngstown State University (OH)
Lesley University (MA)	Greenville College (IL)
Northern Illinois University	Northeastern Illinois University
Western Illinois University	Southern Illinois University
Chicago State University	Lewis University (IL)
ADM	State Farm Insurance

- UIS faculty led and participated in the national Sloan Semester program which offered online courses to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- UIS has hosted two national conferences: Online Learning in an Emergency: Delivering the Curriculum When the Campus is Closed, and The New Century Learning Consortium.
- OTEL publishes daily blogs on online learning, educational technology and K-12 education that are syndicated on academic web sites around the globe.