

AASCU Members at Forefront

A recent survey shows that AASCU institutions are overcoming barriers—and reporting pedagogic improvements and increased enrollments and revenue by offering online programs.

Although total college enrollments declined the last two years, enrollment in online courses and programs continued growing. It is estimated that 14 percent of college students are enrolled in fully online programs,¹ while 30 percent take at least one online course.² Over the past 15 to 20 years, the U.S. higher education system has developed an alternative pathway to a college degree: online study. Even traditional-age college students are going to class online because it fits their lifestyles.

True to their missions of access, AASCU institutions have been at the forefront of the movement to provide online courses and degrees. In a recent membership survey (www.learninghouse.com/2013aascureport) of AASCU chief academic officers, conducted in conjunction with The Learning House, Inc., an online education services provider, more than half of respondents reported that their institution offered five or more fully online programs. In fact, the percentage of AASCU institutions reporting this level of online programming is twice as high as the percentage reported in a similar survey of private colleges and universities administered to Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) chief academic officers (www.learninghouse.com/2013cicreport).

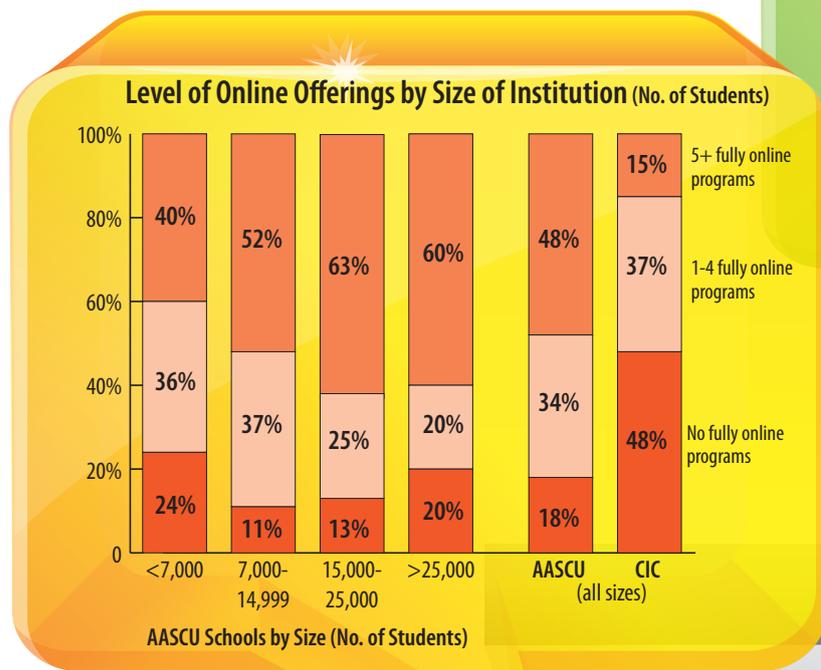
Level of Online Offerings by Size of Institution (No. of students)

Unsurprisingly, the level of online programming increases with the size of the university; however, even 40 percent of those AASCU member universities with fewer than 7,000 students offer five or more online programs.

The chief academic officers reported a number of barriers to offering online programs, the most frequent being “greater faculty time and effort is required to teach online,” “a lack of

acceptance of online instruction by faculty,” and “students need more discipline to succeed.”

While the majority of institutions still experience these hurdles, some are learning how to successfully navigate the



challenges. Experience seems to play a part in this transformation—significantly more institutions with five or more online programs reported overcoming these barriers. This is true of AASCU institutions of all sizes, from the smallest to the largest.

of Providing Online Education

By Susan C. Aldridge, David L. Clinefelter and Andrew Magda

Barriers to Online Program Development

Barriers Experienced and Overcome	Did Not Experience	Overcame	Still Experience
Students need more discipline to succeed	15%	15%	70%
Greater faculty time and effort is required to teach online	11%	37%	53%
A lack of acceptance of online instruction by faculty	13%	34%	53%
Online courses cost more to develop	26%	42%	32%
Ownership of the intellectual property	26%	42%	32%
Online courses cost more to deliver	43%	34%	23%

Barriers to Online Program Development

A variety of self-reported positive outcomes demonstrate that significant benefits accrue to those who develop online programs. In addition to increasing access and attracting students from outside the traditional service

Institutional Outcomes from Online Programs*

Outcomes	Percent Reported
Increased student access	87%
Attracted students from outside the traditional service area	77%
Provided pedagogic improvements	58%
Increased revenue	57%
Increased enrollment	57%
Grown continuing and/or professional education	50%
Enhanced value of college/university brand	47%
Shifted enrollment from on-ground to online	45%

*Members could choose all that applied.

area, the average AASCU institution reported pedagogic improvements and increased enrollments and revenue. Institutions with five or more programs reported significantly higher results on each of these outcomes.

Institutional Outcomes from Online Programs*

Survey respondents expressed a strong interest in learning more about how other AASCU member institutions develop online programs. More than 80 percent want more information about “strategic use of online learning,” “opportunities for executive-level sharing,” and “state and federal regulations.”

How Members Want AASCU to Help in Online/Hybrid Education*

AASCU Offering	Percentage of Schools Selecting
Monitoring of state and federal licensing and regulatory requirements for online education	89%
Knowledge of comparable institutions' strategic use of online learning	84%
Opportunities for executive-level sharing of models and experiences	81%
Training in how to grow and develop online programs	61%
Information resources applicable to strategic use of online education by my institution	59%
Availability of leaders in the field to advise in strategic planning for online education	58%
Leadership training	44%

*Members could choose all that applied.

How Members Want AASCU to Help in Online/Hybrid Education

It is clear that AASCU member institutions are leading the way in providing online access to students who want to earn their degrees. These colleges and universities overcome significant barriers while realizing a variety of benefits and fulfilling their missions to expand access to higher education. **P**

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(Endnotes)

1 Eduventures, Inc. (2012). *Online higher education market update 2012/13: Executive summary*. Retrieved from www.eduventures.com/insights/online-higher-education-market-update/download/

2 Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2013). *Changing course: Ten years of tracking online education in the United States*. Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group. Retrieved from www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf

The survey was a joint project of Learning House and AASCU. To download a copy of the complete report, visit www.learninghouse.com/2013aascureport. A free, public webinar discussing the survey results will be held on November 7, 2013, from 2 to 3 p.m. EST. To register, visit www.learninghouse.com/2013aascuwebinar.