

An Overview of E-Learning in the State University System of Florida

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Office of Academic and Student Affairs

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Enrollment in e-learning (distance and technology-mediated instruction) has seen strong growth in Florida's public universities over the past ten years. For the purpose of this brief overview, *distance education courses* are defined as those that do not require scheduled classroom instruction, and *technology-mediated courses* are those that include a mix of classroom and instructional technology. The technologies used for delivery of instruction have also evolved considerably over the same period of time, moving from predominantly videotaped lectures to predominantly online instruction, and more recently to use of a combination of technologies to deliver courses. Information about e-learning in the State University System is captured using two data elements in the Instruction and Research Data File, with information provided by the universities for each individual course section offered.

Observations derived from the 2008-09 data and university sources include the following:

- *57% of the SUS total headcount for fall 2008 or a non-duplicated headcount of 168,673* was reported for students taking at least one distance education course in 2008-2009, compared to 56,198 in 2000-2001.
- *8% of the SUS total headcount for fall 2008 or 24,048 students* appeared to be pursuing their studies only through distance education, a *13% increase* over 2007-08.
- *71,708 students* enrolled in technology-mediated courses, an *increase of 45%* from 2007-2008.
- *92 % also enrolled in on-campus courses* for 2008-09. This percentage level has remained fairly constant over the past nine years, hovering around 90 percent.
- *Web-based* instruction (including Internet, Intranet, and e-mail) is the most common method of instructional technology used for course delivery (Table 2).
- *Instructional Materials* (combination of such items as video tape, CD-ROM, DVD, print) is the second most common method of instructional technology used for distance education. (Table 2).

Table 1: Growth of Distance Education Headcount in the State University System of Florida

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-03	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
DIST ED ONLY HEADCOUNT	1,511	3,375	5,305	4,687	7,101	8,849	9,061	10,691	13,595	17,514	21,257	24,048
DIST ED ALL HEADCOUNT	34,563	40,449	49,398	56,198	76,098	111,327	109,172	119,441	131,386	152,137	152,709	168,673
SUS TOTAL HEADCOUNT	218,290	223,922	232,794	240,753	251,984	262,354	271,337	277,582	292,403	294,016	301,136	302,513

Chart 1: Growth of Distance Learning in the State University System of Florida

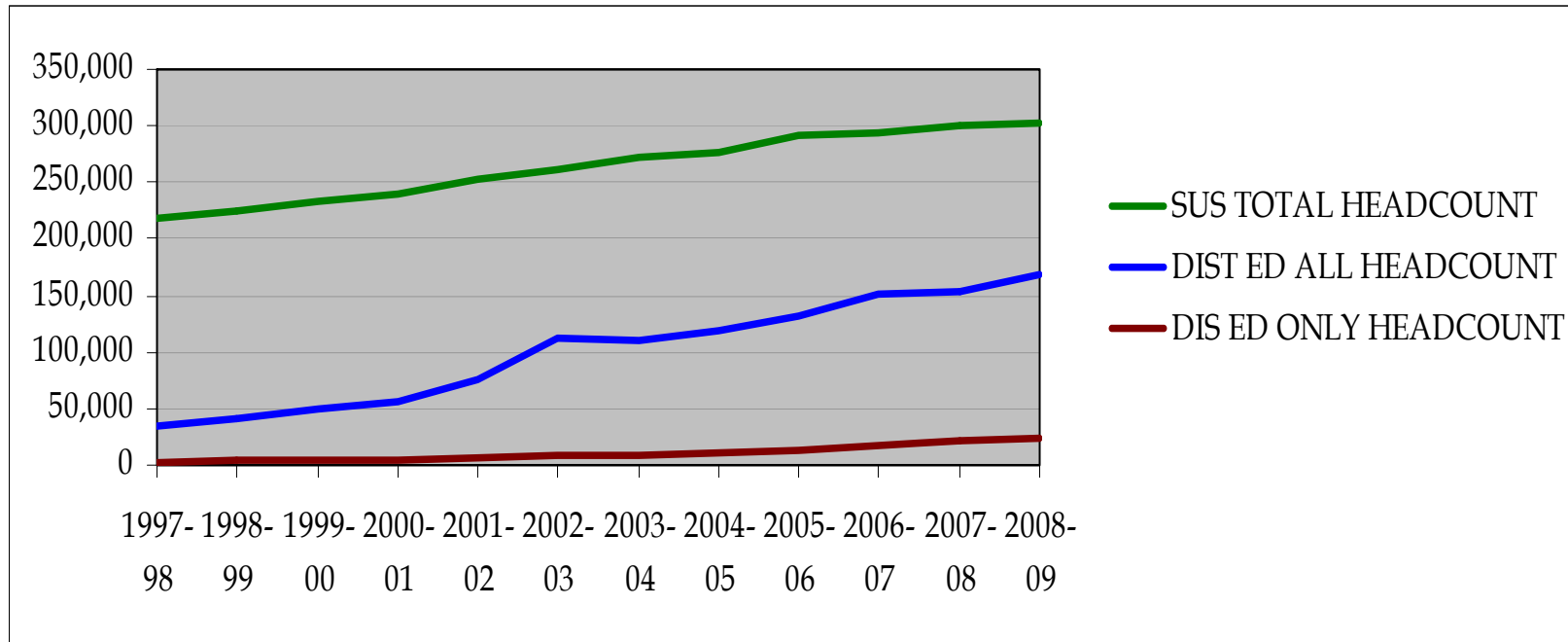
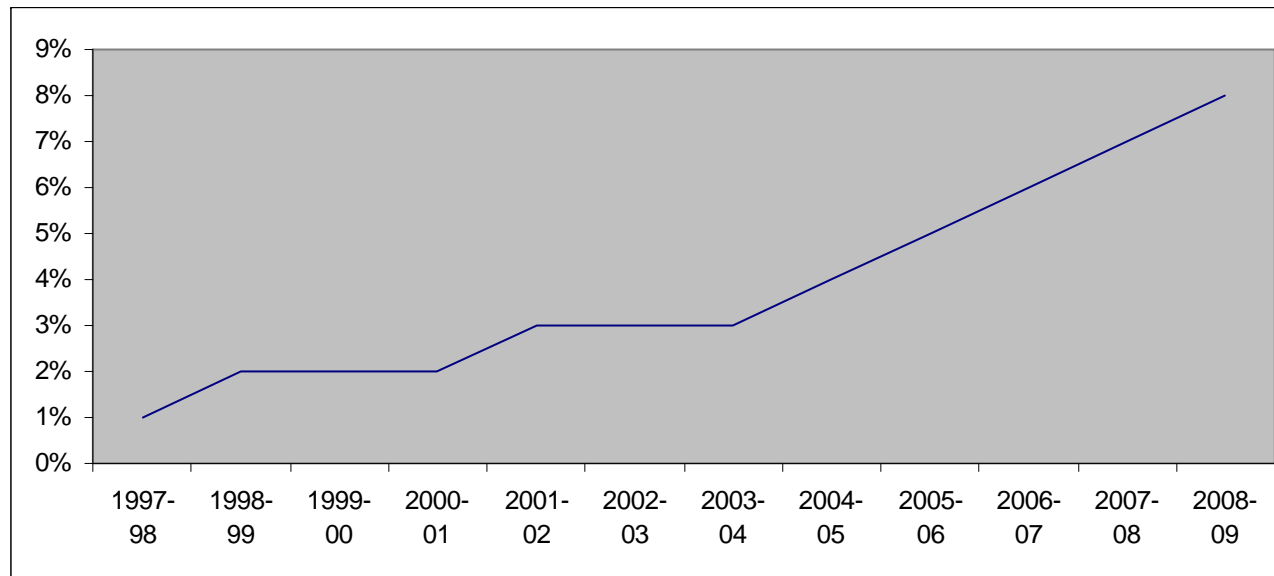


Table 2: E-Learning Course Sections by Primary Data Indicator in SUS - 2008-09

<i>Primary Technology Indicator</i>	Lower-Division Undergraduate	Upper-Division Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Audio Tape	5	10	13	28 (.1%)
Instructional Materials	762	951	869	2,582 (12%)
Video-Based	98	1086	815	1,999 (9%)
Web-Based	1,282	4,335	3,343	8,960 (41%)
None	2,900	4,033	1,423	8,356 (38%)
Total Course Sections	5,047	10,415	6,463	21,925 (100%)

Chart 2: Percentage of Total Student Headcount Enrolled Only in Distance Learning Courses



Academic Year 2008-2009 State Fundable Credit Hours via E-Learning

Table 3: E-Learning Courses (Instructional technology is the primary method of instruction.)

UNIVERSITY	LOWER-DIVISION UNDERGRADUATE	UPPER-DIVISION UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE	Grand Total Fundable SCH
FAU	2,786	17,291	10,430	30,507
FGCU	63,017	62,786	12,019	137,822
FIU	32,548	75,257	8,096	115,901
FSU	4,446	9,341	13,724	27,511
UCF	33,595	151,960	24,397	209,952
UF	66,398	90,873	34,795	192,066
UNF	79,064	105,844	12,171	197,079
USF	47,865	104,295	27,709	179,869
UWF	47,491	74,003	12,694	134,188
Grand Total Fundable SCH	377,210	691,650	156,035	1,224,895

Technology Mediated (Mix of classroom and instructional technology)

UNIVERSITY	LOWER-DIVISION UNDERGRADUATE	UPPER-DIVISION UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE	Grand Total Fundable SCH
FGCU	105,492	87,480	12,060	205,032
UCF	16,204	18,188	4,473	38,865
UF	42,387	52,309	16,707	111,403
UNF	85,393	121,126	14,595	221,114
USF	0	90	102	192
UWF	32,758	39,218	3,076.5	75,052.5
Grand Total Fundable SCH	282,234	318,411	51,013.5	651,658.5

Distance Education Degree Programs

Growth in the number of full degree programs offered through distance education has been strong, but has been dominated by graduate-level degrees and post-baccalaureate certificate programs. In the fall of 2008, there were 46 distinct programs offering 62 degrees through distance education (up from 5 in 2000), primarily targeting workforce areas such as business, information technology, healthcare, paralegal, and emergency management. There are impediments to offering certain critical-need baccalaureate programs through distance education. These challenges include professional accreditation standards, requirements

for extensive supervised clinical training or practica, and sufficient student demand to warrant the individual course development costs. Disciplines most affected by these impediments are those leading to licensure such as Engineering, Teacher Education, and Nursing (initial nurse licensure programs). Conversely, it is these same program areas that are targeted most heavily with graduate programs and certificates, because each has some requirement for continuing professional development. Adult students often are more successful in distance education, and their time restraints demand the flexibility offered by distance education.

Distance Learning Degree and Certificate Programs (February 2010 data; complete list is provided)

60 Baccalaureate	136 Graduate	154 Certificates
- 26 fully DE	- 61 fully DE	- 90 fully DE

Florida Distance Learning Consortium

The Florida Distance Learning Consortium (FDLC), authorized in statute (section 1004.091, F.S.), is a member service organization that provides opportunities for collaboration, resource sharing, and achieving economies of scale in procurement of instructional technology resources. A primary FDLC goal is to coordinate and encourage the use of technology-enhanced educational resources that support the mission of Florida educational institutions and ensure maximum access to education for all Florida residents by eliminating the barriers of distance, time, and place. The FDLC also serves as an advisory committee to the State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors and is supported by state appropriations in each of these entity's budgets. Membership includes public universities and colleges, as well as independent colleges and universities accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The FDLC maintains on its Web site (www.distancelearn.org) the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog, a searchable database of distance education courses and programs available from member institutions, along with links to other important educational technology initiatives and resources. The FDLC has been charged with enhancing this catalog to enable transient registration among Florida's postsecondary institutions for students already admitted to any of these institutions.