



Online Education

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of* FLORIDA Annual Report 2016

BOARD OF GOVERNORS APPROVED 3/30/2017

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Highlights

In November 2015, the Board of Governors approved the *State University System's 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education*¹ to guide the future development of online education in the State University System. The *SUS 2016 Annual Report for Online Education*, the first such report for online education in the System, reflects the progress universities have made in online education, in addition to their opportunities for further improvement.

- Florida continued to be a leader in the provision of distance learning courses, ranking second in the nation in the number of students enrolled in distance learning courses. Texas was ranked first.
- Sixty-one percent (61%) of SUS students took at least one distance learning course in 2015-16.
- System-wide, 24% of undergraduate credit hours in 2015-16 were taken in distance learning courses, ranging from 0% at New College and Florida Polytechnic to 31% at the University of Central Florida and the University of Florida.
- In 2015-16, there were 26,641 undergraduate students who took only distance learning courses, and 175,103 who took a mix of distance learning and non-distance learning courses. There were 107,456 who took no distance learning courses.
- For graduate courses, 25% of student credit hours system-wide were taken in distance learning courses, ranging from 0% at NCF and FPU to 75% at the University of West Florida.
- There were 11,952 graduate students who took only distance learning courses, and 19,458 who took a mix of distance learning and non-distance learning courses. Graduate students who took no distance learning courses totaled 40,009.
- The average number of years to degree for full-time, first time in college (FTIC) baccalaureate students in 120-hour programs was 4.33 for students who took no distance learning courses, and 3.92 for students who took 41%-60% of their courses via distance learning.
- Undergraduates who took only distance courses were older (average age of 30) than students who took no distance learning courses or a mix of distance learning and non-distance learning (classroom and/or hybrid) courses (average age of 23 for both groups). Older students are more likely to be place-bound, working full-time and/or supporting families, making distance learning an ideal way for them to complete their degrees.
- Of undergraduate students who took only online courses, 96% were Florida residents and 4% non-residents.
- A wide variety of student services for online students are available, such as the FloridaShines site that provides such materials and resources as financial aid information, library catalogs, the distance learning course catalog, My Career Shines education and training tool, and the Transient Student Admissions Application.
- SUS institutions offered 210 distinct online majors in 2015-16, and a grand total of 320 majors when all online majors provided by institutions were considered. If two institutions were offering the same online major, it would be counted as one distinct major in the system, but would be counted as two in the grand total of majors in the system.
- UF Online, launched in spring 2014, had 2,191 students enrolled in 2015-16.

¹Online education is one type of distance learning and is the focus of this report. Because distance learning encompasses other modalities when instructor and student are separated by time and /or distance, such as correspondence courses and courses broadcast over television networks, the term is found in this plan when appropriate.

Distance Learning is defined in Section 1009.24(17), Florida Statutes, as a course in which at least 80% of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time or distance, or both.



Introduction

The *State University System 2016 Annual Report for Online Education* provides the System's first comprehensive review of online education.

The Board of Governors believes that online education provides a means to address capacity requirements while providing students with options for completing their education in a timely manner; it allows individuals with family or work obligations to complete their education and on-campus students to accelerate the completion of their degrees and/or engage in co-curricular activities. To advance its focus on online education, the Board's Innovation and Online Committee (IOC) considers policies and best practices for transformative and innovative approaches to the delivery of higher education, including pursuing initiatives such as system-wide cost efficiencies and effectiveness for university programs and services, funding models for online education, online course and/or program collaborations, and meeting workforce needs through online education.

To guide the growth of online education in the System and to ensure quality instruction and services are being provided in a cost-efficient and effective manner, the Board adopted the *State University System 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* in November 2015.

Strategic Plan for Online Education

The *SUS 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* is one of the few system-wide plans for online education in the country. It presents goals, strategies, and tactics organized around the primary elements of Quality, Access, and Affordability, building on the collective strength of institutions in the System. The Plan was proposed by the Task Force on Strategic Planning for Online Education, created by the Board's Innovation and Online Committee and chaired by President John Hitt (see Appendix A for membership). Upon the Plan's adoption, the Board Office immediately worked with institutions to establish a system-wide Implementation Committee that is guided by a Steering Committee of provosts (Appendix B).

The joint organizational meeting of the two committees was held in December 2015, with an Implementation Plan being approved and workgroups being established. Each workgroup invited representatives from institutions in the Florida College System to participate in its deliberations. Numerous workgroup and committee meetings were held throughout 2016 to develop recommendations and/or detailed proposals for implementation of the 49 tactics in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education*. Many of these recommendations and proposals are scheduled to be heard by the Innovation and Online Committee in March 2017.



Florida's Ranking in Distance Learning Enrollments

Florida continues to be a leader in the provision of distance learning courses, ranking second in the nation in the number of students enrolled in distance learning courses, as reflected in the *2015-16 System Accountability Report*:

TOP TEN STATES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING ENROLLMENT IN FALL 2015

[for All Levels Among Public 4-Year, Primarily Baccalaureate-granting Institutions]

	STATE	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS	DL STUDENT HEADCOUNT	DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY	SOME DISTANCE LEARNING	COMBINED TOTAL
1	TEXAS	41	196,586	10%	20%	30%
2	FLORIDA	14*	158,014	11%	35%	47%
3	CALIFORNIA	32	120,438	1%	16%	17%
4	OHIO	17	82,207	8%	20%	28%
5	ARIZONA	7	74,195	17%	28%	46%
6	MARYLAND	13	67,898	26%	13%	39%
7	NEW YORK	16	64,135	10%	19%	29%
8	NORTH CAROLINA	37	63,477	8%	15%	24%
9	PENNSYLVANIA	19	60,154	7%	16%	23%
10	GEORGIA	14	56,906	8%	17%	26%

SOURCE: Board of Governors staff analysis of US Dept. of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) available at the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) website (data extracted 2/16/2017). Notes: IPEDS defines Distance Learning as instructional content that is delivered exclusively (100%) via distance education – Florida statute defines Distance Learning as at least 80%. It is important to note that the percent of students enrolled in at least one DL course for the entire 2015-16 academic year jumps to 61%, because the expanded time period provides more opportunities for a student to take a DL course.

*NOTE: This table shows Florida with 14 public 4yr institutions because USF campuses report separately to IPEDS. (Table included in the 2016 SUS Accountability Report)



61%

of SUS students took at least one distance learning course in 2015-16



Student Enrollments (Headcounts)

2015-2016 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENTS (HEADCOUNTS)

INSTITUTION	STUDENTS WHO TOOK ONLY DL COURSES	STUDENTS WHO TOOK BOTH DL AND CLASSROOM AND/OR HYBRID COURSES	STUDENTS WHO TOOK NO DL COURSES
FAMU	21	1,279	7,402
FAU	1,699	13,679	13,917
FGCU	609	9,176	5,185
FIU	6,244	24,450	17,508
FPU	0	0	948
FSU	1,045	18,103	17,060
NCF	0	0	884
UCF	7,790	38,206	17,164
UF	2,818	28,116	6,182
UNF	656	8,013	7,329
USF	3,561	28,041	10,414
UWF	2,198	6,040	3,463
SUS	26,641	175,103	107,456

SOURCE: BOG SUDS tables, extracted 2017-02-10.

Note: Unclassified students are not included in this analysis. Headcounts are unduplicated.

2015-2016 GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENTS (HEADCOUNTS)

INSTITUTION	STUDENTS WHO TOOK ONLY DL COURSES	STUDENTS WHO TOOK BOTH DL AND CLASSROOM AND/OR HYBRID COURSES	STUDENTS WHO TOOK NO DL COURSES
FAMU	51	86	1,790
FAU	772	2,133	2,570
FGCU	190	569	457
FIU	1,508	2,303	6,692
FPU	0	0	35
FSU	911	1,536	6,328
NCF	0	0	0
UCF	1,843	2,819	4,472
UF	2,861	5,048	8,997
UNF	194	665	1,340
USF	1,869	3,822	6,728
UWF	1,753	477	600
SUS	11,952	19,458	40,009

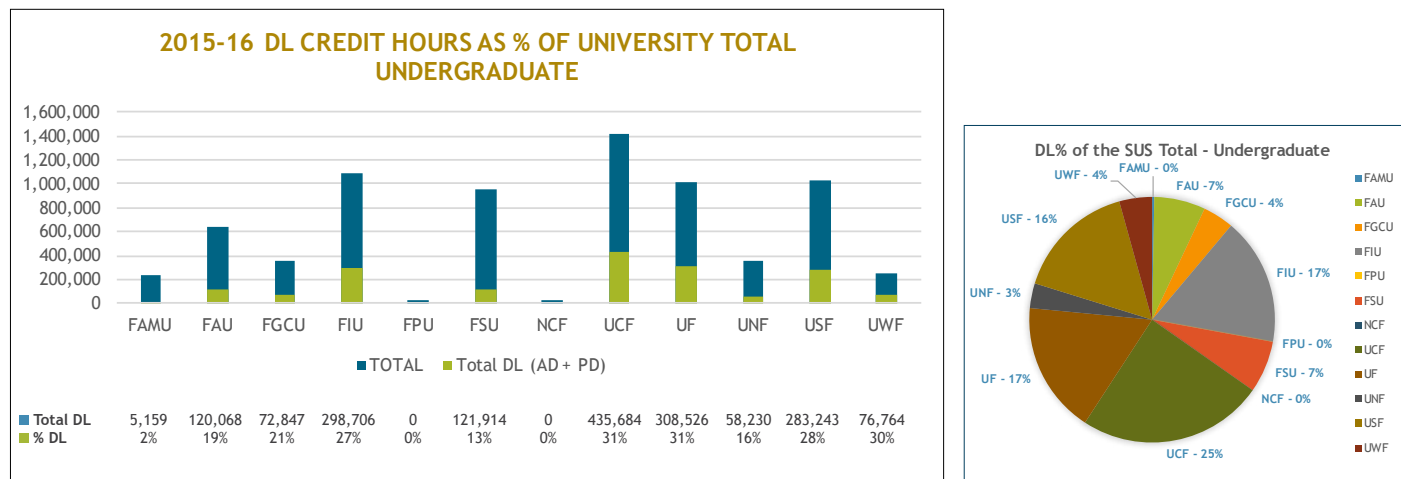
SOURCE: BOG SUDS tables, extracted 2017-02-10.

Note: Unclassified students are not included in this analysis. Headcounts are unduplicated.

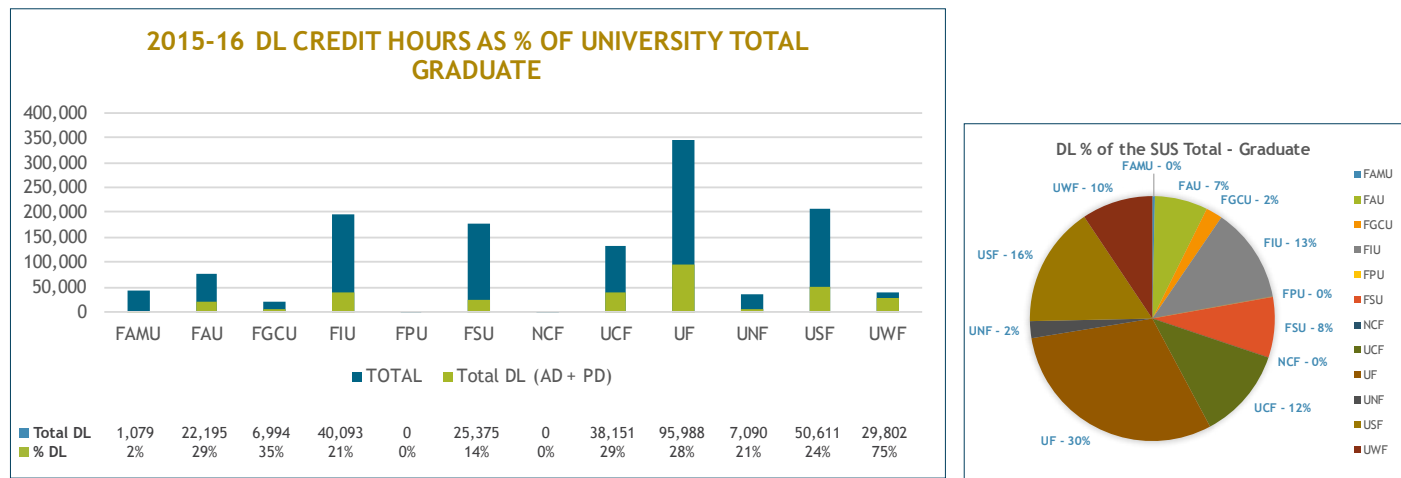


Credit Hours by Delivery Method

System-wide, 24% of undergraduate credit hours were taken in distance learning courses, ranging from 0% at New College and Florida Polytechnic University to 31% at the University of Central Florida and the University of Florida.



For graduate courses, 25% of student credit hours system-wide were in distance learning courses, ranging from 0% at New College and Florida Polytechnic University to 75% at the University of West Florida.



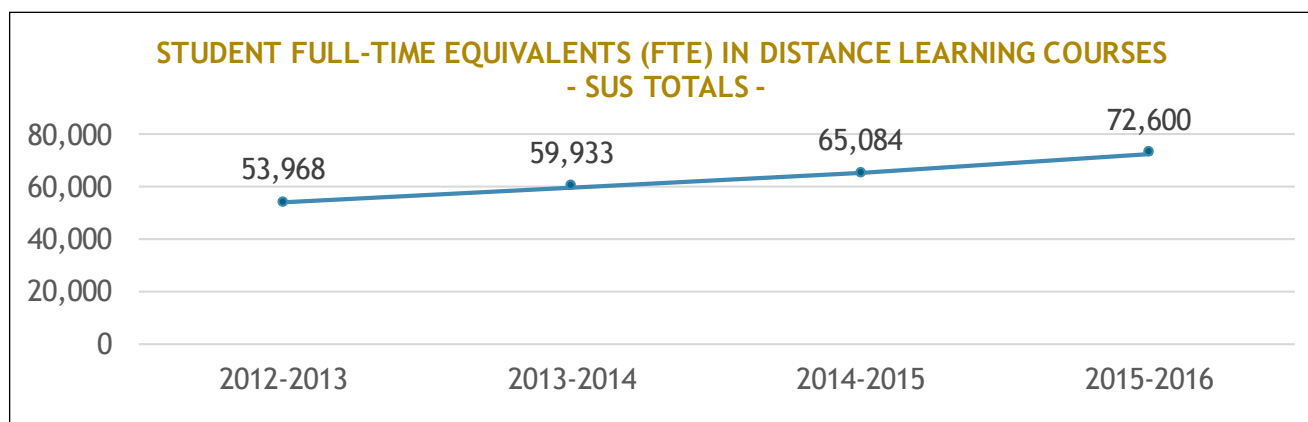
Historical Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) in Distance Learning Courses

A Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) student is a measure of instructional activity that is based on the number of credit hours in which students enroll. Both the number and percentage of FTEs in distance learning courses continue to increase:

STUDENT FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTE) IN DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

LEVEL/YEAR	FAMU	FAU	FGCU	FIU	FSU	UCF	UF	UNF	USF	UWF	SUS
UNDERGRAD											
2012-2013	50	1,876	1,597	7,104	1,982	12,433	6,404	1,054	7,805	2,582	42,885
2013-2014	73	2,164	1,774	8,396	2,854	12,807	8,380	1,389	7,867	2,545	48,248
2014-2015	131	2,388	2,055	9,192	3,476	13,559	8,921	1,722	8,745	2,434	52,622
2015-2016	172	4,002	2,428	9,957	4,064	14,523	10,287	1,941	9,442	2,559	59,375
MASTERS											
2012-2013	82	761	201	1,387	608	1,522	2,027	154	1,657	861	9,258
2013-2014	47	755	182	1,429	751	1,411	2,079	173	1,718	1,017	9,562
2014-2015	49	786	187	1,461	822	1,361	2,336	214	1,921	1,081	10,218
2015-2016	39	863	240	1,625	955	1,429	2,609	214	1,960	1,125	11,058
DOCTORATE											
2012-2013	1	52	29	35	48	185	1,329	10	91	44	1,824
2013-2014		67	35	39	70	183	1,564	13	108	42	2,122
2014-2015	4	73	38	41	79	177	1,608	38	130	55	2,244
2015-2016	6	62	52	46	103	161	1,392	82	149	117	2,167
TOTAL											
2012-2013	134	2,689	1,827	8,525	2,637	14,140	9,760	1,217	9,553	3,486	53,968
2013-2014	120	2,986	1,991	9,864	3,675	14,401	12,023	1,575	9,693	3,604	59,933
2014-2015	183	3,247	2,280	10,694	4,377	15,098	12,865	1,975	10,797	3,569	65,084
2015-2016	217	4,927	2,720	11,627	5,121	16,112	14,287	2,237	11,551	3,801	72,600

SOURCE: BOG SUDS tables



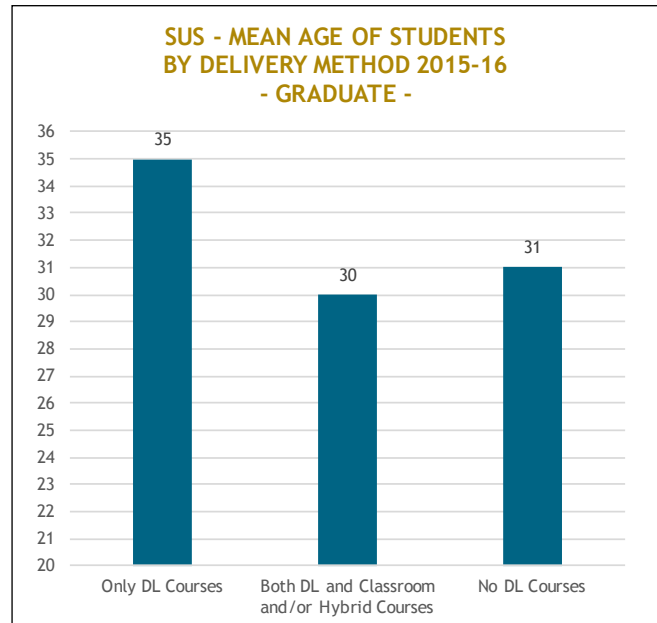
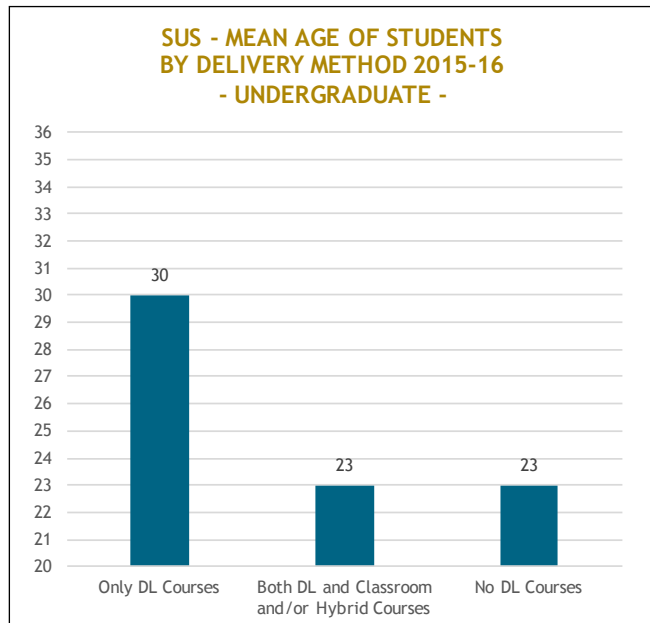
²Total undergraduate student credit hours are divided by 30 to obtain the number of undergraduate FTEs. Total graduate student credit hours are divided by 24 to obtain the number of graduate FTEs.



Student Demographics

Age of Student

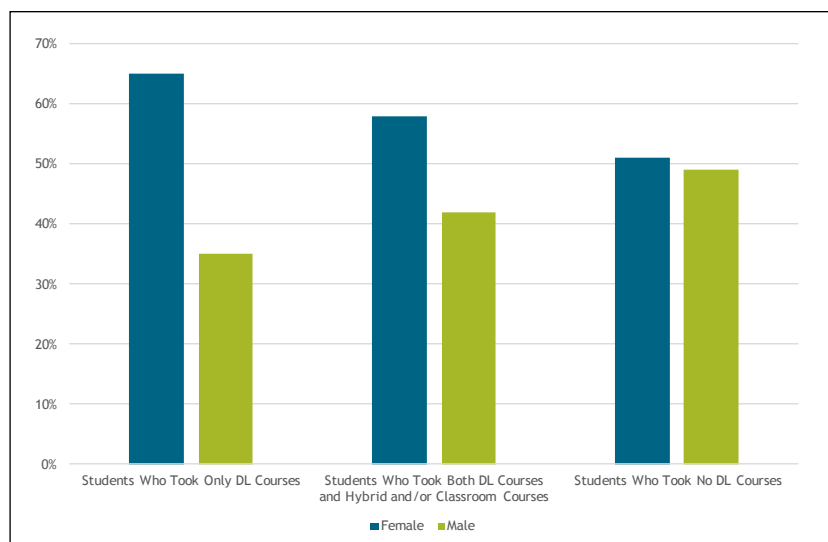
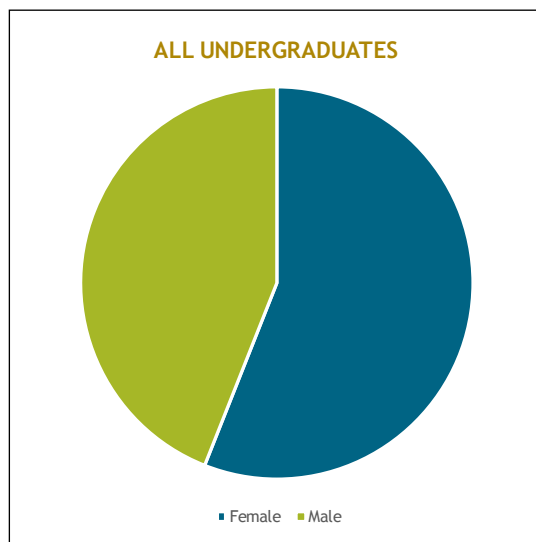
Students who took only online courses were older than students who took both distance learning and classroom and/or hybrid courses and those who took no distance learning courses. Older students are more likely to be place-bound working full-time and/or supporting families, making distance learning an ideal way for them to complete their degrees.



SOURCE: BOG SUDS tables, extracted 2017-02-10. Note: Unclassified students are not included in this analysis. Headcounts are unduplicated.

Gender

Almost two-thirds of students taking only distance learning courses are female. Sixty five percent (65%) of students who took only distance learning courses were female, while females comprised just 56% of the undergraduate student body as a whole.

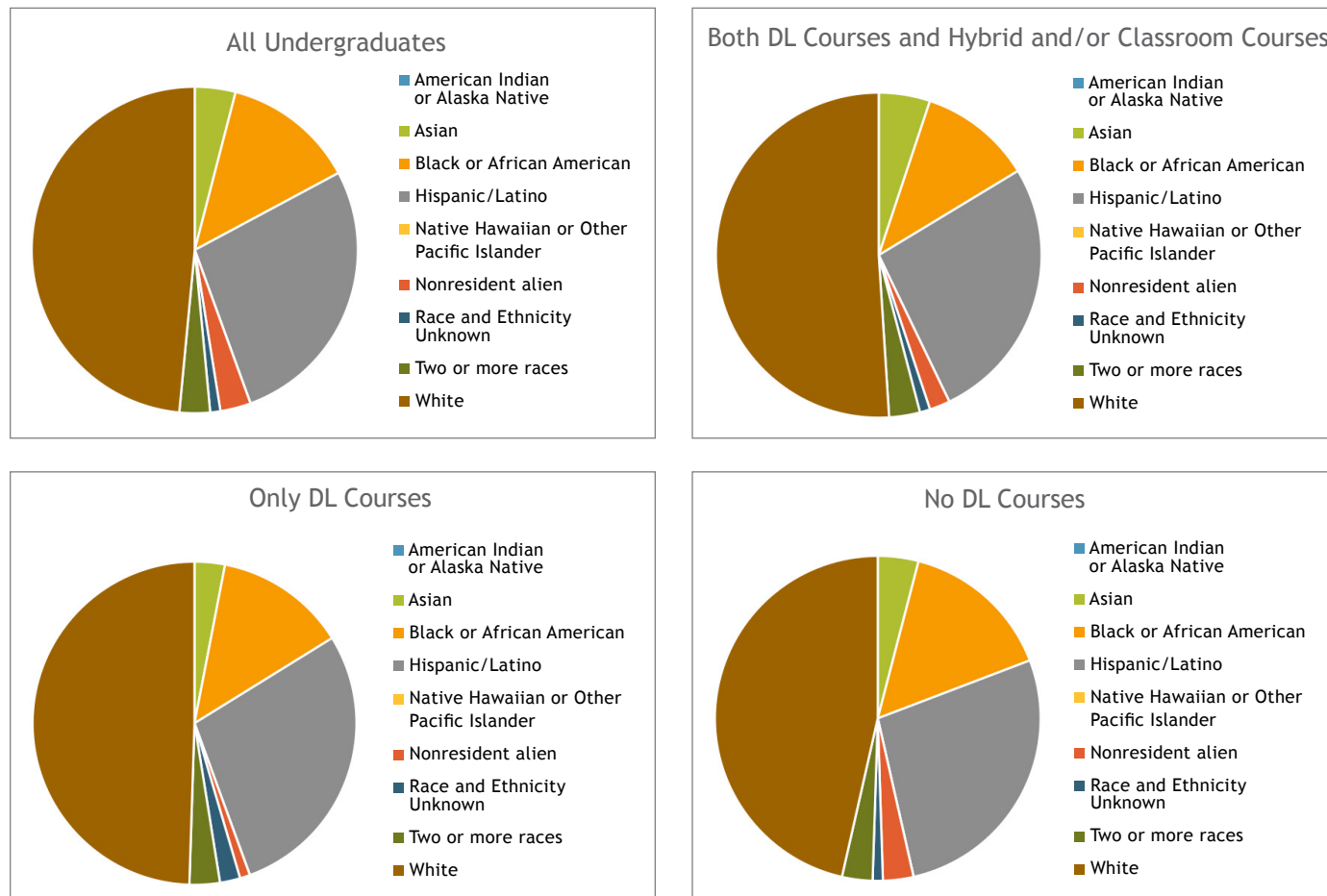


SOURCE: BOG staff analysis, Person Demo, Financial Aid Demo, Enrollments, Courses Taken and Instructional Activity data. NOTE: Undergraduate is defined as Student Class Level = Lower or Upper Division, excluding unclassified students.



Race/Ethnicity

The race/ethnicity of undergraduates who took only distance learning courses closely aligned with that of the undergraduate student body as a whole.



SOURCE: BOG staff analysis, Person Demo, Financial Aid Demo, Enrollments, Courses Taken and Instructional Activity data. NOTE: Undergraduate is defined as Student Class Level = Lower or Upper Division, excluding unclassified students. Fall 2015-16 data.

Residency

Of undergraduate students who took only distance learning courses, 96% were Florida residents and 4% non-residents

RESIDENCY	UNDERGRADUATES WHO ONLY TOOK DL COURSES		UNDERGRADUATES WHO TOOK BOTH DL COURSES AND HYBRID AND/OR CLASSROOM COURSES		UNDERGRADUATES WHO TOOK NO DL COURSES		ALL UNDERGRADUATES	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Florida	19, 815	96%	119, 750	94%	110, 129	93%	249, 694	93%
Non-Florida	899	4%	8, 086	6%	8, 718	7%	17, 703	7%

SOURCE: BOG staff analysis, Person Demo, Financial Aid Demo, Enrollments, Courses Taken and Instructional Activity data. NOTE: Undergraduate is defined as Student Class Level = Lower or Upper Division, excluding unclassified students. Fall 2015-16 data



Florida Virtual Campus



Florida Shines florida.shines.org is a 'student hub for innovative educational services' for students in Florida, with 3,210,000 visitors to the site in 2016. Intended as a one-stop for students K-20 seeking three major areas of support that are legislatively identified as part of the Florida Virtual Campus/Complete Florida Plus Program, identified as:

- college preparation materials,
- resources to support success while in college, and
- connection to careers

Materials and resources included are information about Bright Futures, scholarships in Florida, financial aid information, how to apply to college, library resources, the online course catalog, free online textbooks, transient applications and My Career Shines as a career education and training tool to support students as they build pathways to careers. To highlight major areas of high interest on the website, the **course catalog** is responsible for 40,000 fully online courses listings. **My Career Shines** has over 550,000 active users and the **Transient Student Admissions Application (TSAA)** processed 73,828 applications in 2016.

Florida Shines also highlights Florida's 40 public postsecondary institutions (12 universities and 28 colleges) through institutional profiles and highlights of innovative activity by institution. Statewide events focused on Florida's students are always highlighted on the site. Most recently, the Florida Virtual Campus Florida Shines site is highlighting Virtual College Week for all high school students in Florida in partnership with colleges and universities to share the pathway to admissions.

eTextbooks and Open Educational Resources

Textbook costs in some courses place a huge burden on students in Florida's higher education system. The 2016 Florida Student Textbook Survey (Florida Virtual Campus) reported that 53.2% of students spent more than \$300 on textbooks during the spring 2016 term and 17.9% spent more than \$500. The survey also noted that 77.2% of respondents spent up to \$200 on required course materials. The rising cost of materials seems to be a barrier to successful degree completion. The survey found that, due to the cost of required materials, 66.6% of students did not buy a required textbook; 47.6% occasionally or frequently take fewer courses; 26.1% drop a course; and 20.7% withdraw from a course.

A workgroup was formed to address the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education's* Affordability Goal 2 ("The State University will reduce the costs of educational materials for students"). During 2016, the group researched costs, preferred characteristics of e-textbooks, and e-textbook programs in other states and will present recommendations to the Board's Innovation and Online Committee during its March 2017 meeting.



Tutoring

Many state universities offer tutoring through their own academic units and third-party providers. The *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* recognized tutoring as a service that should be explored for potential sharing to expand the quality of the student online learning experience, while reducing costs (Affordability Tactic 1.1.1). The Infrastructure Workgroup will present to the Board's Innovation and Online Committee at its March 2017 meeting its plans to address tutoring as part of its implementation of Quality Tactic 2.2.2, developing "a structure to facilitate collaboration system-wide in evaluating, recommending, and purchasing software to ensure cost efficiencies and effectiveness."

Proctoring

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges' Policy Statement on Distance and Correspondence Education states that "At the time of review by the Commission, the institution demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification."

Methods to proctor exams in online courses vary by institution and include the use of live remote proctoring services, testing centers, and various software. The Infrastructure Workgroup began developing a system-wide framework for proctoring and will present its recommendations to the Board's Innovation and Online Education Committee at its March 2017 meeting.

Student Services

To provide quality online degrees and to meet accreditation requirements, universities need support services for online students that are equivalent to those offered for on-campus students. Across the university system, institutions are in various stages of implementing those services, using different models. To develop a better understanding of the level of service provided for online students across the system, the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* included tactics to (1) develop a scorecard to assist each university in evaluating the level of service it provides and (2) provide recommendations for best practices in the delivery of those services. Listed below are the tactics for student support services in the *Plan*.

Quality 2.3.1: Ensure that universities use Quality Scorecard or a similar process to confirm that online students, including online students with disabilities, have access to services equivalent to those used by campus-based students.

Access 1.1.6: Retain fully online students by implementing best practice strategies such as academic coaches, success coaches, analytics, and early alert interventions.

Access 1.1.8: Provide a robust set of student support services to support the delivery of multiple, accelerated models.

Access 2.1.4: Secure student support resources to ensure students have access to technology required for online education.

The Student Services Workgroup began addressing these tactics and will present recommendations to the Board's Innovation and Online Committee during its March 2017 meeting.



Student Life

Student engagement is a critical component of excellence in online learning. There are numerous examples of engagement efforts, but one of the most comprehensive is underway in UF Online.

UF Online students have an array of options for extracurricular involvement. Students who live near campus are able to participate in the full array of campus activities. While UF Online students are not required to pay Athletic, Health, Transportation, or Activity & Service fees, they may choose to pay those fees. By doing so, they will have access to all campus services and amenities. Regardless of whether or not a UF Online student pays the Optional Fee Package, he or she is eligible to join any student club or organization.

In an effort to provide more opportunities for engagement for UF Online students not located near campus, UF Online has developed a web-based community called the UF Online Plaza. The Plaza was launched in beta in fall 2016 and will be in full production by fall 2017. Within the site, students have the opportunity to engage with one another as well as with UF staff, advisors, and faculty who have joined the site. Each student is added to a group for his or her major along with advisors and other students in the major. Other campus offices such as the Career Resource Center and the Disability Resource Center can create groups to serve as convenient points of contact and as channels for the dissemination of information. The students themselves can also create their own groups based on geographic location, academic interests, professional pursuits, or any other shared interest. Ultimately, this platform and the groups it hosts provide students with the ability to associate freely with each other and to engage with the institution.

HEALTH AFFAIRS FOR FULLY ONLINE STUDENTS

Student health issues for fully online students present a difficult challenge for any institution. One of the most innovative programs has been developed at UF under the title “U Matter We Care.” This program is designed for students in crisis (mental health), and online students often refer themselves, although faculty and staff also frequently refer students. The U Matter We Care Team sets up a phone call or video conference with the student to help identify and prioritize issues and then develop a plan to address each issue that is a barrier to success. Some students only need one interaction with the Care Team; others meet consistently with the Care Team through graduation.

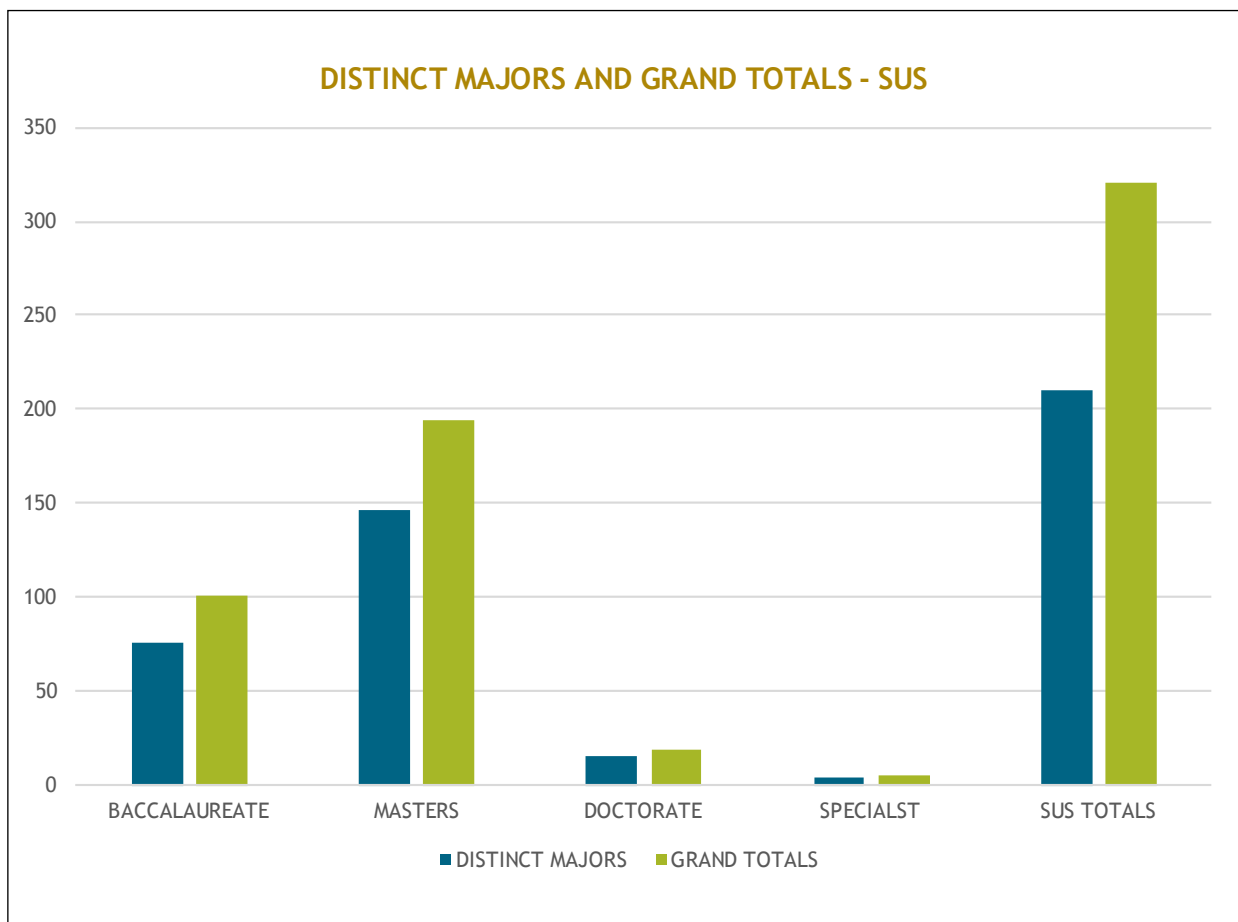
While there is some consistency in issues among all students, online students bring their own unique challenges. For example, many are nontraditional-aged students and have spouses, children, and full-time jobs to balance. They are often caring for aging parents as well as children. Some online students are experiencing divorce, domestic violence, employment issues or a loss of housing, and thus may not have easy access to course work. UF works with local caregivers in the students’ permanent location if students are experiencing mental health issues or have need of other nearby services.



Online Programs

In response to Access Tactic 1.1.2 in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education*, “Offer a broad range of fully online degree programs in most Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes reflected in the Board of Governors Approved Academic Program Inventory,” the Online Programs Workgroup first developed a State University System Online Program Inventory using the Online Program Survey responses received from each of the SUS institutions in 2015. Data from all SUS institutions was merged into a single source, which was then cross-referenced with and validated against a listing of known CIP codes, the Approved Program Inventory, and the list of Programs of Strategic Emphasis.

Degree programs were condensed to distinct online majors by removing concentrations and specializations. SUS institutions offered 210 distinct online majors in 2015-16, with a grand total of 320 online majors.¹ Recommendations for expanding the number of programs in additional CIP codes will be presented to the Board’s Innovation and Online Committee at its March 2017 meeting.



The sum of distinct degrees by level may not tie to the totals in the “Total Distinct Majors” column, because majors that are offered at multiple levels (such as both baccalaureate degrees and Masters degrees) were counted only once in the “Total Distinct Majors” column; however, those duplicate levels are all counted in the “Grand Total” column. Likewise, majors offered by multiple universities are counted only once in the “Distinct Majors” column, but are all included in the “Grand Total” column.

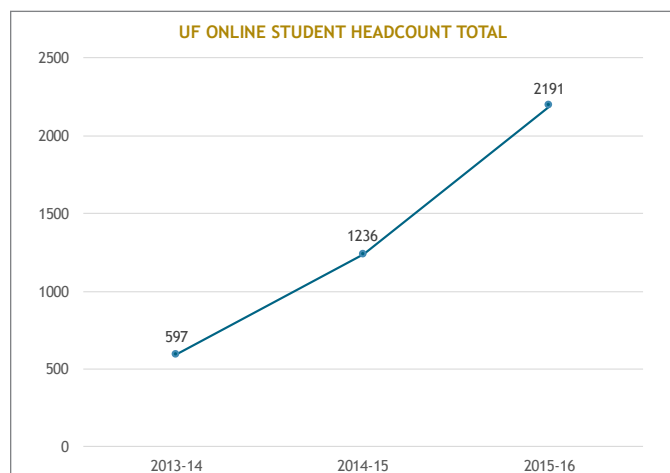


UF Online



UF Online offers fully online undergraduate degrees designed and delivered by UF faculty and rich in student engagement and support. The program was established by statute in 2013 and launched in spring 2014. Some highlights of the UF Online statutory framework include:

- Exceptions for face-to-face lab-based instruction.
- Increasing access to UF while keeping college affordable:
 - > Reduced tuition: 75% in state; market rate for out of state (\$500/SCH)
 - > Reduced fees: UF Online students only pay 3 fees: Capital Improvement, Student Financial Aid, and Technology Fee.
 - > No Distance Learning Fee.
 - > Students may customize their fees through the Optional Fee Package.



Students are supported by a cadre of academic advisors across campus. Courses are taught by over 275 faculty from 12 colleges and over 70 academic departments. By fall 2017, 8 colleges will offer 19 degrees in UF Online. Since launching in spring 2014, over 680 students have graduated from these programs.

PATHWAY TO CAMPUS ENROLLMENT (PACE)

Launched in fall 2015, the PaCE admissions program provides opportunities to first time in college (FTIC) students to begin their undergraduate studies through UF Online. Due to on-campus space constraints, these students would have been denied admissions to UF. Instead they are admitted to UF Online for their lower division course work. Once they have completed 60 hours towards their degree, these students may complete the remainder of their degrees on campus.

Complete Florida



Complete Florida is Florida's degree completion initiative,

established by the Florida Legislature to serve Florida's more than 2.8 million citizens who have earned some college credit, but have not earned a degree. Statutorily, Complete Florida is to recruit, recover and retain students to completion of a degree through partnerships with colleges, universities and Independent Colleges and Universities to offer an array of accelerated offerings to help adult students obtain degrees preparing them for jobs in Florida's most high-demand fields: business and management, education, information technology and healthcare. Complete Florida is working to help Florida increase the number of college degrees awarded, fulfilling state and national goals to increase the number of high quality postsecondary qualified citizens that meet the needs of the Florida economy.

Complete Florida is serving 2,337 adult learners with some college and no degree. Currently, 5,400 prospective students are in process

of completing applications, participating in Back to College Experiences, and working with Complete Florida Success Coaches while working toward admission. Enrolled students in academic year 2015-2016 reached 1,644. Since Spring 2014, 579 adult students have earned a certificate, associates degree, or bachelor's degree.



14

PARTNER SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE STATE



5 UNIVERSITY



6 STATE COLLEGES



3 PRIVATE



Financial barriers are one of the most challenging aspects for the returning adult student. Complete Florida supports students in the return to college through scholarships and information about Financial Aid and support. Over 400 scholarships were awarded to Complete Florida students in 2015-16.

Complete Florida Military

Complete Florida Military was created in 2015 with funding from Florida's Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF) to provide targeted, tailored support to the 75,000-plus members of Florida's active-military and veteran community and their dependents. Helping veterans and military service members overcome the unique challenges they face in returning to college is a primary goal of Complete Florida. The grant facilitated scholarships of \$150,000 (half from resources through the FDSTF and the other half matched from Complete Florida scholarship resources); 93 scholarships were awarded to military students and their families, and 85 military-related students completed Information Technology non-credit courses in preparation for industry certification, Spring 2016-Summer 2016. Florida State College at Jacksonville re-engineered 13 courses to support curriculum for Information Technology programs. There are 597 military-related students in Complete Florida Military.

Innovative Strategies

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

Complete Florida has launched seven competency-based programs through its partnership with 14 public and private postsecondary institutions in Florida (participating SUS institutions are Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida International University, University of Central Florida, University of South Florida, and University of West Florida). The purpose of competency-based education (CBE) for Complete Florida is to provide a pathway for adult degree completion where students demonstrate what they know through guided CBE and assessments. When successful, adult students can accelerate forward using a self-paced CBE approach to reduce time to graduation. A series of convenings were held in partnership with the Lumina Foundation and Complete Florida partners to uncover areas of concern around issues, policies and practices to support successful larger scale implementation of CBE in Florida. Attending also were representatives from the Florida Board of Governors, the Florida College System and the Florida Statewide Common Course Numbering office. To gain perspective from other states, representatives from the University of Texas System and the Kentucky Community College System were invited to present successes and challenges with system-level initiatives and to provide guidance



to the state of Florida. Currently, the Complete Florida coaching team guides prospective student options to select from the 90 degree programs currently offered, with seven competency-based degree programs and one adaptive program (at UCF) to support acceleration to completion. The adult learner is a good audience for CBE. Results of convenings identified areas for consideration for the larger system to meet the goal of 50% of institutions offering competency-based education include: setting tuition for CBE students, data integration to support off-cycle admissions, re-connecting competency-based courses to the recognized transcript, consideration for financial aid and the need to develop policies and practices around each of these areas.

ADAPTIVE LEARNING

Adaptive learning continues to gain attention nationally, with new practices and commercial platforms entering the market on a regular basis. With the promise of improving quality and personalizing a student's learning experience at scale, adaptive learning leverages data to offer custom content, pathways and assessments to meet every student at his/her own ability. For the past several years, UCF has been expanding its use of adaptive learning across a variety of disciplines and courses and UCF staff have served on numerous national panels and advisory boards related to its development. To date, UCF has delivered adaptive learning in 9 courses/ 30 sections, and to over 1,700 students. Other schools within the Florida SUS are also investigating or experimenting with adaptive learning, including UF and FIU. UF is planning to convene a statewide discussion on personalized and adaptive learning, bringing in experts from across the state and country to discuss and share information about its effective design and delivery, in February 2017.

MASTER COURSES

The master course (shared course) concept has found traction in a number of state systems; the motivation has often been affordability with a secondary benefit of quality consistency. The Online Programs Workgroup has been

exploring this concept to assist in addressing Affordability Strategy 1.2, "Develop a common toolset for online course design and delivery to minimize the cost of online education without reducing quality of the instructional experience," in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education*. The Workgroup will present recommendations to the Innovation and Online Committee at its March 2017 meeting.

STEM LABS

The Steering Committee for the implementation of the *SUS 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* approved the creation of the system-wide task force to evaluate options for deployment of STEM labs for online students. The Director of UF Online is leading a one-year effort to inventory current online lab offerings across the SUS, identify gaps and opportunities, and produce findings and recommendations for moving forward. The task force is focusing on undergraduate Chemistry, Biology, and Physics labs and anticipates completing its work in October 2017.

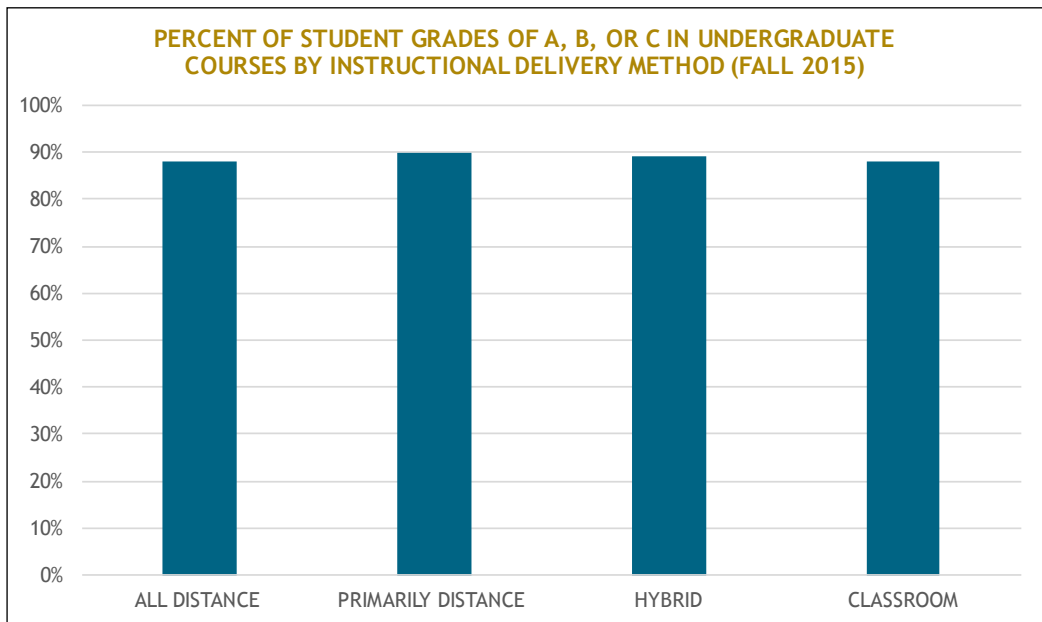
Unizin

In July 2015, Institutions in the State University System became members of Unizin, a consortium established by fourteen major research universities throughout the country, including the University of Florida, to support the direction and development of a digital ecosystem to improve teaching and learning environments. As stated on the Unizin website, the consortium is:

Jointly creating digital tools; working together to negotiate more favorable contracts with learning content providers; utilizing a business model for delivering content that reduces the cost of course materials and promotes low-cost and free alternatives like OER and faculty-generated content; and offering much of the infrastructure and core capabilities at no additional cost to Members.



Grade Comparison

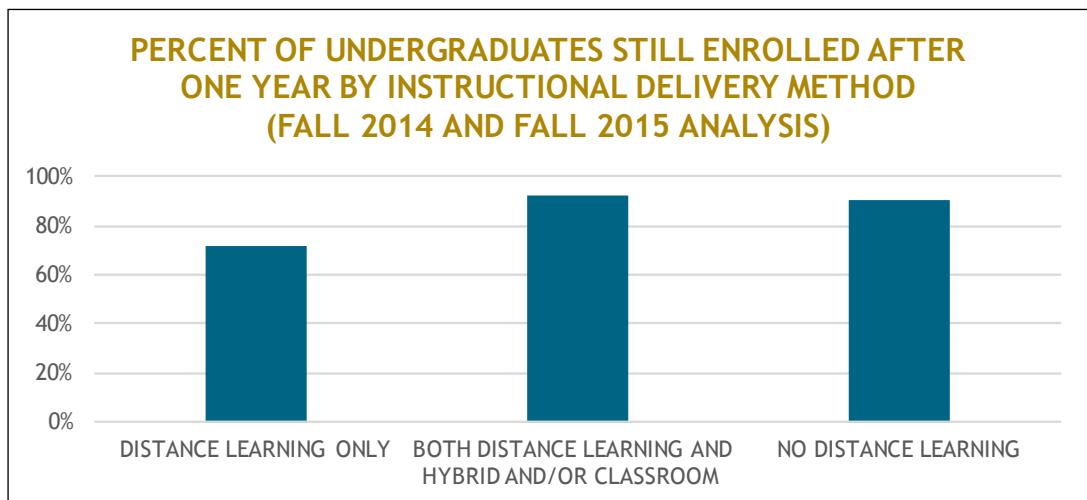


SOURCE: BOG IR staff analysis of SUDS-EGmarts, extracted 2016-07-14.

Notes: Undergraduate courses include Lower- and Upper- division. All plus/minus grades are included. Course grades of "W" (withdraw) were not included in the denominators for calculating percentages. Delivery Method categories are based on element #2052. FIU, FSU and UCF did not report any courses as hybrid during the Fall 2015 term. The SUS includes data for NCF and FPU who were not identified separately because they had no DL enrollments.

Retention

Seventy-two percent (72%) of undergraduate students who enrolled only in distance learning courses in fall 2014 were also enrolled in fall 2015. Additional research is needed to determine if those distance learning students who were not retained in fall 2015 enrolled in a subsequent semester, transferred to another institution, or had been transient students with a different home institution in fall 2014.



SOURCE: BOG SUDS tables, extracted 2017-02-15.

Notes: Includes all undergraduates. Delivery Method Categories are based on their enrollments during the Fall 2014 term.

The percentages report the proportion of the Fall 2014 students who were enrolled during Fall 2015. Students who graduated between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 were deleted from the numerators and the denominators. NCF and FPU had no DL enrollments.



Time to Degree

Students who took both distance learning courses and non-distance learning (classroom and/or hybrid) courses generally graduated faster than students who took no distance learning courses.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS TO DEGREE IN THE SUS FOR 2015-2016 FULL-TIME, FTIC BACCALAUREATES IN 120HR PROGRAMS

DISTANCE LEARNING CATEGORIES	HEADCOUNT	MEDIAN YEARS	MEAN YEARS
0% DL (Classroom/Hybrid only)	2,214	4.33	4.47
1-20% DL	13,515	4.00	4.26
21-40% DL	6,314	4.00	4.12
41-60% DL	1,703	3.92	3.95
61-80% DL	147	*	*
81-99% DL	20	*	*
100% DL only	3	*	*
Total	23,916	4.00	4.22

SOURCE: BOG IR analysis of datamarts, extracted 2017-03-14.

Notes: Years-to-degree is measured as number of calendar years (12 months) from the student's first entry date as a Bachelor's-seeking undergraduate to the last month of the degree term. FTIC status is based on the student recent admit type and includes early admits. Student headcount represent those who earned a bachelor's degree during academic year 2015-16 and graduated from programs that require 120 credit hours. In addition, data only includes 'full-time' students — those with a least half of all the terms in which they were enrolled were at full-time status (fall and spring = 12 SCHs; Summer = 6 SCHs). These students were then designated into groups of online activity based on the delivery method indicator ('DL') for all courses taken throughout their academic career. For courses taken prior to summer 2010, the technology delivery indicator-primary ('W') was used. For courses taken after summer 2010, the delivery method indicator ('DL') was used. The dataset only extends back to students who entered in Summer 2004 or later. Due to low counts of the 61+% groups, results are not generalizable to other populations.



Professional Development

The *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* emphasizes quality in the design, development and delivery of online courses and the professional development of the instructors and staff. To successfully fulfill those goals, the following tactics are being addressed.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS

According to the Quality Tactic 1.2.1, “create a statewide professional development network for instructional designers in order to share best practices and provide guidance in designing and developing online education” was implemented through the design and development of an instructional designer page on the FLVC website. The page went live in December 2016. The tab is monitored and updated by a lead designer from an SUS institution and a lead designer from the state colleges. The site will provide research, reviews on software and products used in course design and development, updates on quality reviews and professional development opportunities specifically for instructional designers in the State of Florida.

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS

In response to Quality Tactic 1.2.2, to “enhance professional development opportunities offered by the Florida Virtual Campus for institutional leaders in online education,” a professional development for online leaders tab was added to the FLVC website to announce opportunities around the State of Florida as well as national opportunities. In addition, a ½ day professional development workshop will be held once a year specifically for online leaders across the State. The first such workshop will be held in June of 2018 at the University of South Florida.

FACULTY CERTIFICATION

The workgroup is in the process of investigating best practices for certifying faculty to teach online and will make recommendations to the Innovation and Online Committee in March of 2017 on which approach should

be recommended for SUS institutions that choose to certify faculty to teach online.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STAFF

In addition, the workgroup is anticipating the launch of Teaching Online Preparation Toolkit (TOPkit), an online toolkit and annual workshop for institutional staff who are responsible for *professional development activities for faculty* who teach online courses (Quality Tactic 1.2.3). On March 2016, the Professional Development Workgroup made recommendations to the Council of Academic Vice Presidents (CAVP), who agreed to fund recurring costs for four years after the first year startup. FLVC agreed to fund first year start-up, nonrecurring costs. The University of Central Florida is the primary developer. The toolkit and workshops will be available in the Spring of 2017.

Quality Courses

Although there is not a system approach for determining the quality of online courses, many universities have some type of process in place for an individual faculty member to have his or her course reviewed, including using proprietary tools, such as those available from Quality Matters or institution-developed rubrics and processes. During 2015-16, a system-wide workgroup was created to address quality issues in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education*, focusing primarily on the development of a quality course review process and a process for identifying quality and/or high quality courses in the Florida Virtual Campus course catalog. Recommendations for these deliverables are planned to be presented to the Board’s Innovation and Online Committee at its March 2017 meeting.

Research

Quality Tactic 2.1.1 in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* states, “Create a statewide online education research consortium with members from Florida institutions interested in sharing and presenting research, determining research needs in online education, and identifying collaborative research projects.” The research consortium was created in 2016 and had its organizational meeting.



Data Definitions

Affordability Tactic 4.1.1 in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* provides that system-wide terms and definitions related to online education should be reviewed and revisions recommended to ensure consistency and relevancy of data collection. Section 1009.24(17), Florida Statutes, defines a distance learning course as “a course in which at least 80 percent of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time or space, or both.” The same definition is provided for the Florida College System in Section 1009.23 (16), F.S.. Distance Learning courses also include modalities other than online education, such as correspondence courses and videotapes, where instructors and students are separated by time or space, or both; however, the term “distance learning” is often used interchangeably with “online education” or “online learning.”

Recognizing that it would be useful to have a more discrete definition of distance learning courses, the SUS split the statutory definition into two data elements: “fully distance learning course” and “primarily distance learning course,” the sum of which equals the statutory definition. The SUS began collecting data using the new data elements during the Fall term, 2015. The full definitions are:

DATA ELEMENTS	COURSES - DEFINITION
Fully Distance Learning Course	100% of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time, space, or both. All special course components (exams, internships, practica, clinicals, labs, etc.) that cannot be completed online can be completed off-campus.
Primarily Distance Learning Course	80-99% of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time, space, or both. There is a requirement for the student to attend campus or another explicit geographic location for a portion of the course.

The SUS also adopted definitions for “Fully Online Programs” and “Primarily Online Programs,” which were needed for development of an inventory of online programs:

TERMS	PROGRAMS - DEFINITION
Fully Online Program	100% of the direct instruction of the program is available using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time, space, or both. All program requirements that cannot be completed online can be completed off-campus.
Primarily Online Program	80-99% of the direct instruction of the program is available using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time, space, or both. There is a requirement for the student to attend campus or another explicit geographic location for a portion of the program.



Cost of Online Education Report

In response to Affordability Goal 4 in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education*, “The State University System will determine the costs of online education campus-by-campus,” the Affordability Workgroup undertook a massive data collection and analysis effort to produce the Cost of Online Education report that found that the average incremental cost of online learning is \$41.48 per credit hour, with 42% of incremental costs for the development of the online course and 58% for the delivery of the online course.

Institutions’ increased costs for developing and delivering online education are from the investment in staffing, the cost of creating online courses with high interaction levels and media rich content, and the technology infrastructure. The report found that the development and delivery of online education requires additional human resources and technology resources that are not necessary for face-to-face education, increasing the cost of online education. Many institutions have implemented a distance learning fee to cover these additional costs.

Alternative cost models were also considered in the report to reduce the cost of online education and to encourage students to graduate in a timely manner. This concept included reducing fees (such as: activity and service, health, and athletics fees), block tuition and fees, partial block tuition and fees, subscription pricing, and flat rate.

Common LMS

During the January 2016 Innovation and Online Committee meeting, members heard the results of the selection

process for a common, opt-in learning management system. At the Committee’s and Board’s direction, Board staff had worked with institutional representatives from the SUS and Florida College System to implement a competitive procurement process for selecting an LMS. FSU lead the procurement process, which resulted in a master agreement that could be used by institutions in both delivery systems. Ten of the twelve universities are now using – or are transitioning to – the common LMS; the remaining two universities are in the review stage. Several colleges in the FCS are also taking advantage of the master agreement.

Reduced Needs for Classrooms

Distance learning FTE are not included in the space needs formula for classrooms. A review of the formula in 2016 showed that if all distance learning credit hours were to be taken on campus, there would be a need system-wide for an additional 641,847 GSF of classroom space for a cost of \$184.3 million.

Infrastructure

Affordability Goal 1 in the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* is “The State University System will enhance shared services to support online program development and delivery costs,” with one tactic directing an exploration of “items for potential sharing to expand the quality of the student online learning experience while reducing costs through efficiency.” The Infrastructure Workgroup will be making recommendations to the Board’s Innovation and Online Committee at its March 2017 meeting to address this charge.



Resources

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Appendix A

Task Force for Strategic Planning for Online Education

Dr. John Hitt, Chair

President, University of Central Florida

Dr. Judith Bense

President, University of West Florida

Marcella David, J.D.

Provost, Florida A & M University

Harrison DuBosar

Student, Florida State University

Dr. Shawn Felton

Assistant Professor, Florida Gulf Coast University

President, FGCU Faculty Senate

Trustee, FGCU Board of Trustees

Dr. Kent Fuchs

President, University of Florida

Dr. Judy Genshaft

President, University of South Florida

Dr. Jim Henningsen

President, College of Central Florida

Dr. Sally McRorie

Interim Provost, Florida State University

Dr. Pam Northrup

Associate Provost, Academic Innovation

Exec. Dir, Florida Virtual Campus and Complete Florida

University of West Florida

Dr. Gary Perry

Provost, Florida Atlantic University

Dr. Mark Rosenberg

President, Florida International University

Dr. Earle Traynham

Interim Provost, University of North Florida

Dr. Nancy McKee

Associate Vice Chancellor, Board of Governors;

Staff Liaison for Chancellor Criser and the Board's Innovation and Online Committee



Appendix B

Steering Committee

Dr. Joseph Glover (Chair)

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Florida

Dr. Gary Perry

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Florida Atlantic University

Dr. Dale Whittaker

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Central Florida

Dr. Martha Saunders

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of West Florida

Dr. Ralph Wilcox

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of South Florida System

Implementation Committee

Dr. Kelley Bailey

Assistant Professor
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Dr. Tom Hull

Chief Information Officer
Florida Polytechnic University

Dr. Vicki Brown

Assistant Provost, eLearning
Florida Atlantic University

Dr. Andy McCollough

Associate Provost, Teaching and Technology
University of Florida

Dr. Cynthia DeLuca (Chair, 11/1)

Associate Vice President, Innovative Education
University of South Florida

Kevin Celebi

Coordinator of Educational Technology
New College of Florida

Dr. Cathy Duff

Associate Vice President,
Academic and Curriculum Support
Florida Gulf Coast University

Dr. Pam Northrup

Vice President, Research and Strategic Innovation
University of West Florida

Dr. Joyce Elam (Chair, through 10/31)

Vice Provost, FIU Online (Emerita)
Florida International University

Joseph Riquelme (11/1)

Interim Assistant Vice President, FIU Online
Florida International University

Robert Fuselier (8/31)

Interim Director, Office of Distance Learning
Florida State University

Dr. Len Roberson

Associate Vice President,
Academic Technology and Innovation
University of North Florida

Dr. Joel Hartman

Vice President, Information Technologies and Resources
University of Central Florida

Dr. Susann Rudasill (through 7/31)

Director, Office of Distance Learning
Florida State University

Board of Governors Office

Dr. Nancy McKee

Associate Vice Chancellor
Board of Governors

