

UW-Stevens Point Annual Report on Distance Education 2015

We are pleased to present the inaugural "Annual Report on Distance Education". During the last year, UWSP has made great progress in supporting online students and providing online instructors with the resources and support they need. Going forward, we will highlight yearly activity, accomplishments and enrollments in this delivery mode, along with an overview of future activities.



HISTORY

In September 2012, the 17-member **Ad-Hoc Committee on Distance Education** chaired by Dean Christopher Cirno assessed distance education efforts at UWSP. In August 2013, when Dean Cirno submitted the “Academic Plan Recommendations for Distance Education at UWSP” to Provost Greg Summers, a major finding in the report was that distance education at UWSP was uncoordinated, inconsistent and too decentralized. The committee presented thirteen recommendations to Provost Summers with the aim that they be used as guidelines for the development of a more robust online education operation at UWSP. Progress relating to each recommendation is as follows:

Recommendation #1: Standardize the terminology and definitions used in reference to distance education at UWSP (Section III, page 9).

Status: Nearing completion. Terminology and definitions can be found in the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Online Instructor Handbook, which is currently under review.

Recommendation #2: Courses should be coded for timetable management and delivery method, with coding as suggested by UW System standards (Section III, page 10).

Status: Completed. Courses are classified by percentage of course that is conducted online, as determined by academic units, and are identified in the timetable as “100% online” or “partially online”.

Recommendation #3: An inventory of all campus distance resources should be an ongoing and transparent process, and updated as technology and suite of course offerings change. This responsibility will reside within the Office of Academic Affairs, but with input from the Division of Information Technology and the University Technology Committee (Section IV, page 12).

Status: Completed/ongoing. The Manager of Distance Education has produced the Campus Technology Resources For Distance Education reference sheet, which details campus resources related to distance education.

Recommendation #4: Work with UW System *eCampus* and other distance education sites to advance and promote UWSP online and distance education courses and programs (Section V, page 18).

Status: Nearing completion. The Manager of Distance Education has reviewed *eCampus* and is working to update UWSP’s listings. The Manager of Distance Education also created the UW-Stevens Point Online website, which promotes UWSP’s online courses and programs.

Recommendation #5: Develop a UWSP Distance Education Handbook modeled on best practices currently used at other universities (Section VII, page 22).

Status: Nearing completion. The Manager of Distance Education submitted the completed handbook to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning, & Academic Programs for review. The handbook is expected to be presented to faculty governance in January 2016.

Recommendation #6: Create a Distance Education Resource Center (DERC) with the specific charge of coordinating logistics for all distance education initiatives, courses and programs at

UWSP. This recommendation includes the appointment of a Director for that Center (Section VIII, page 24).

Status: In progress. UWSP Online continues to work with Academic Technical Services, Tec: hub, Library Services and the CCIT to provide support for online instructors. At the time this report was finalized, a comprehensive Distance Education Resource Center or similar office had not been officially created.

Recommendation #7: Require faculty delivering distance education courses to use the current Course Management System (CMS) as a foundational platform for the delivery of their courses (Section IX, page 27).

Status: Completed. The requirement is described in the University handbook.

Recommendation #8: Create a common syllabus “template” for distance education courses which includes information about minimum expectations of technological information necessary for course completion, in addition to the usual information found in course syllabi (Section IX, page 28).

Status: Completed. An Online Course Syllabus Template, a Welcome Email Template and a Video Welcome Message Template have all been developed. All resources are available to instructors on the [UW-Stevens Point Online-Faculty Resources website](#).

Recommendation #9: Assess all distance education courses for student achievement of learning outcomes as is now done for all UWSP courses which contain a curriculum code and course number. Distance education courses should be assessed as part of normal department reviews as for all other curricula (Section X, page 31).

Status: Completed/ongoing. Assessment expectations are included in the University Handbook and the Online Instructor Handbook. The [Student Evaluation of Online Instruction-Evaluation Form](#) and the [Rubric for Peer-Evaluation of Online and Hybrid Teaching](#) are both available online.

Recommendation #10: Establish clear expectations for appropriate conduct specific to distance education courses, with content in common with student rights and responsibilities at UWSP (Section XI, page 34).

Status: Completed/ongoing. Netiquette resources are available in the Online Instructor Handbook, on the UW-Stevens Point-Student Support website and are included in UW-Stevens Point Online Instructor Training.

Recommendation #11: Involve students and academic advisors in implementing any new procedures specific to distance education courses and involve students in an advisory capacity with the Distance Education Resources Center (Section XII, page 39).

Status: In progress. A Distance Education Advisory Board is being organized.

Recommendation #12: The appointed contact person from Information Technology should be involved in the implementation of any special technologies and strategies used in creating distance education/online courses which meet current online accessibility rules. The Disability and Assistive Technology Center should be informed of any special technologies developed, and inform participating students with disabilities of these technologies (Section XIII, page 41).

Status completed/ongoing. Sean Ruppert, Instructional Technologist, is the designated Information Technology contact person. The Manager of Distance Education has worked with Disability Services to provide support for online students.

Recommendation #13: The University should begin a dialogue on how it wishes to determine the percentage of distance and online courses offered for curricula that are not designated as “fully online.” This discussion will by necessity be disciplinary and major-specific, but should be charged to, and ultimately determined by, the faculty of each department (Section XIV, page 45).

Status: In progress/ongoing. The Manager of Distance Education will continue to lead these efforts by including the Distance Education Advisory Committee and by continuing to engage the Academic Affairs Committee of Common Council in DE discussions.

STAFFING

One overarching recommendation was “the establishment of a centralized unit responsible for all aspects of teaching and learning in the distance education realm.”¹ In August 2014, an Assistant Director (Jack Champeau) was added to the Continuing Education staff to oversee Credit Outreach efforts at the university. Then, in March 2015, a **new Manager of Distance Education** (Eric Simkins) led efforts to centralize Distance Education policy and operations. The two roles work together to provide strategic direction to online programming, audience outreach, instructional design, faculty resources, marketing for online programs, student support and policy to support online growth. The Manager of Distance Education operates the UWSP Online Office and serves as the Program Integrity Coordinator, a role for acquiring authorization to offer distance education programs in other states and ensuring compliance with federal regulations for distance education.

Several other units collaborate with the UWSP Online office to support online instruction at UWSP. The cooperative and coordinated efforts of these units helps UWSP provide consistent, comprehensive support for online instructors and students:

- The **TEC: hub** provides IT and media support for online instructors and students. Support provided by the TEC: hub includes frequent instructional technology training opportunities for instructors, support for D2L and several other instructional technologies and the development of technology tip sheets.
- The **Center for Collaborative & Interactive Technologies (CCIT)** provides training for various technologies that can be used for all types of instruction. The CCIT also provides frequent training opportunities for technology integration and the use of emerging technologies in education.
- **Library Services** supports online instructors by making UWSP resources available to them and by offering training and support on the integration of library resources into online courses.

¹ Academic Plan Recommendations for Distance Education at UWSP, Christopher Cirno PhD, 2013

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In April 2013 UWSP was granted approval by **The Higher Learning Commission** (HLC) to move beyond offering just 5% of the university's academic programs online.² In January 2015, UWSP submitted a monitoring report to HLC that outlined distance education processes and procedures.³ In 2015, HLC outlined new bracket definitions that approve UWSP for a bracket defined as "courses and two or more programs".⁴ The prior definition limited UWSP to 20% of academic offerings online.

UWSP made great strides toward supporting the growth of online programs in 2015. Many of these accomplishments focused on supporting online instructors, providing resources for online students and developing greater consistency in online offerings.

During the 2015 summer, the UWSP Online office developed the **UW-Stevens Point Online website**, a comprehensive website that provides support to all online stakeholders. The UW-Stevens Point Online website promotes the university's online offerings, supports instructors by providing training resources, connects online students with support resources and provides program integrity information. Through the website, online instructors and students can request information and get personalized support.

Many **instructor resources** were developed in 2015. Several templates were developed and made available to instructors including:

- *The Online Course Syllabus Template*
- *Welcome Email Template*
- *Video Welcome Message Template*

The Guide for Approval or Revision of Courses with Online Components Checklist was also updated to assist academic units as they evaluate prospective online offerings. The checklist will help to ensure that learning outcomes can be achieved online and will help promote quality online instruction. All of these templates and resources are accessible to instructors on the UW-Stevens Point Online website.

Through the coordinated efforts of the UWSP Online office, TEC: hub, and CCIT, the UW-Stevens Point Online Instructor Training was completed in August 2015. The **Online Instructor Training** is a comprehensive, self-paced, web-based training. Through the training, instructors complete a thorough self-assessment of their online teaching skills, receive customized feedback and training resources and complete a Federal Regulations Knowledge Check. The training provides resources on 32 topics in three categories related to online instruction. To promote consistency in online instruction, the UWSP Online office and Academic Affairs are working to ensure that all UWSP instructors teaching online and/or hybrid course complete the training before offering their online or hybrid course.

The **UWSP Online Instructor Handbook** was completed by the UWSP Online office in 2015. The handbook, which details policies related to distance instruction, offers information to instructors

² University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Change Panel Action Letter 4-23-2013

³ UW-Stevens Point HLC Monitoring Report for Distance Education, 1-15-2015

⁴ Email from Jeff Rosen (HLC) to Todd Huspeni, 10-29-2015

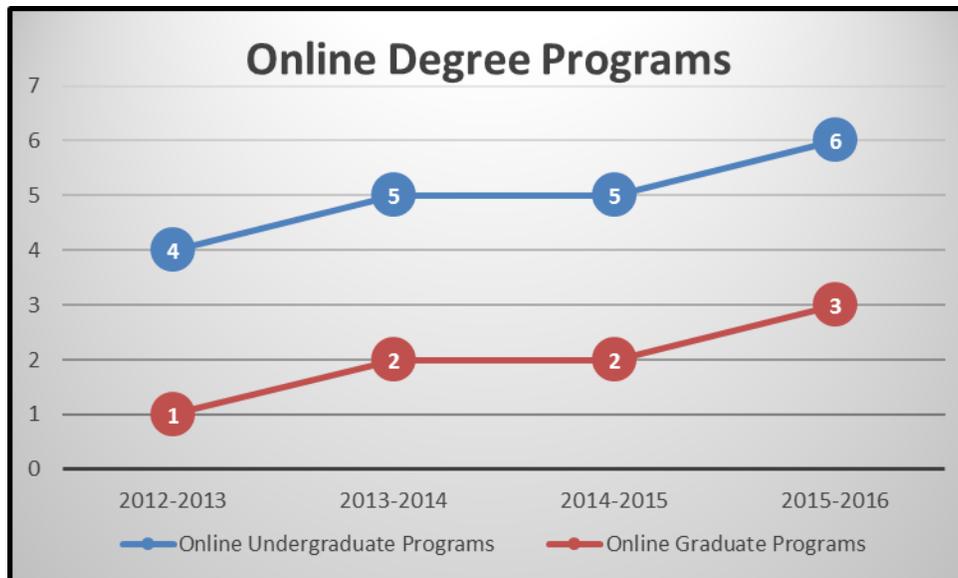
and defines distance education terminology is moving through faculty governance and should be available early in 2016.

The UWSP Online office also developed many **supports for online students**. These include library resources, tutoring resources, resources for students with disabilities, technology resources, and many more. A process allowing online students to acquire student IDs was also developed, giving online students access to UWSP Online Student IDs. The UWSP Online office also began sending welcome emails to all online students beginning with the Winter 2016 term. The emails contain useful tips for success in online courses, direct students to campus resources and help prepare students for online learning. All of these student resources are available via the UW-Stevens Point Online website.

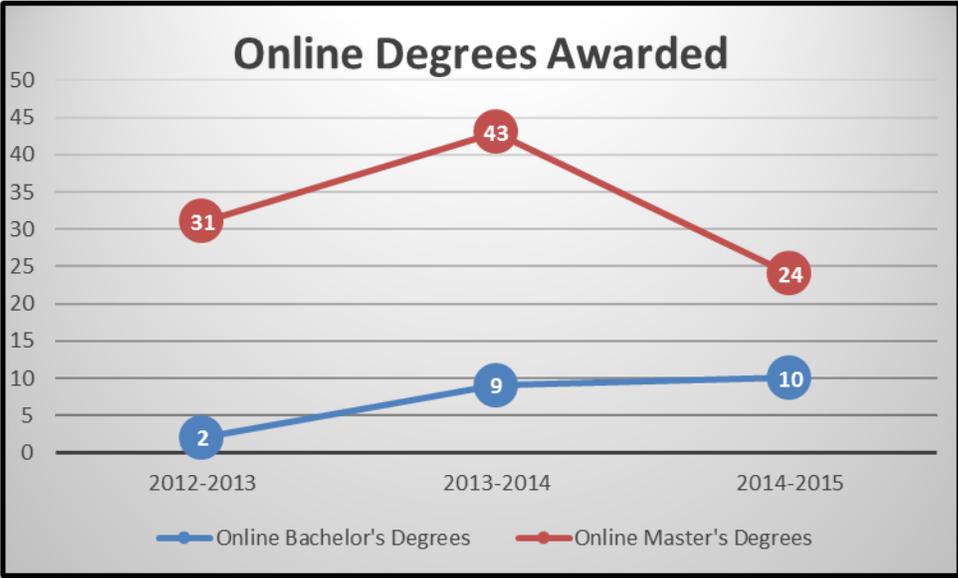
In his role as the Program Integrity Coordinator, the Manager of Distance Education developed and implemented a comprehensive process for obtaining and maintaining distance education **authorizations in other states** and for accurately monitor enrollments from out-of-state students. UWSP is currently authorized in 29 states, has applications pending in 9 states, and is analyzing the costs and benefits of authorization in 11 states.

UWSP DE PROGRAMMING

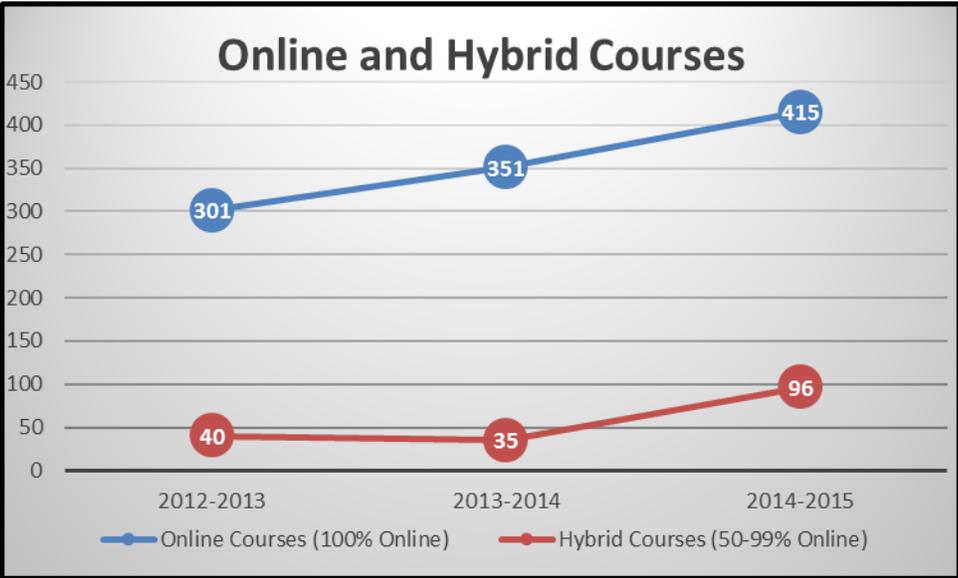
UWSP has seen steady growth of online programming over the last four years, with the addition of four new online degree programs since the 2012-2013 academic year, including two new programs that commenced in Fall 2015.



Source: The University of Wisconsin System Academic Year Distance Education Programs by Level (2012-13 to 2015-16)



Source: Distance Ed Report, UWSP Institutional Research, 12-28-2015



Source: Distance Ed Report, UWSP Institutional Research, 12-28-2015

Current Online Degree Programs⁵

- BA/BS American Studies
- BS Business Administration
- BS Health & Wellness Management*
- BS Health Information Management & Technologies*
- BS Early Childhood Education
- RN to BSN Completion (online coursework available via BSN@Home)
- MSED Education (General)
- MS Natural Resources
- MS Data Science*

*Indicates collaborative degree programs

Online Certificate Programs⁶

- Health & Wellness Coaching Certificate
- Paralegal Certificate*
- Project Management Certificate*

*Indicates non-credit certificates

School of Education Add-on Teacher Certification Programs⁶

Hybrid Add-on Teacher Certification Programs (some courses offered online)

- Adapted Physical Education
- Reading Teacher
- Reading Specialist
- Special Education (5 specific licenses)

Online Add-on Teacher Certification Programs (all courses can be completed online)

- Bilingual/Bicultural Education
- Early Childhood through Middle Childhood License
- English as a Second Language
- Environmental Studies
- Gifted and Talented Education
- Health Education

*Most Add-on Teacher Certification programs require students to complete a practicum or student teaching experience in their local community, even if all coursework is offered online.

The School of Education collaborates with Mid-State Technical College, Nicolet College and Northcentral Technical College to offer the Central Wisconsin Alliance for Early Childhood Education Program (CWAEC). The program is a **bachelor degree completion program** designed for working adults who have completed an associate degree in Early Childhood Education. Students work in cohorts to complete the hybrid program. The first cohort began in spring 2011 and the third cohort began coursework in fall 2016.

⁵ The University of Wisconsin System 2015-16 Academic Year Distance Education Programs by Level

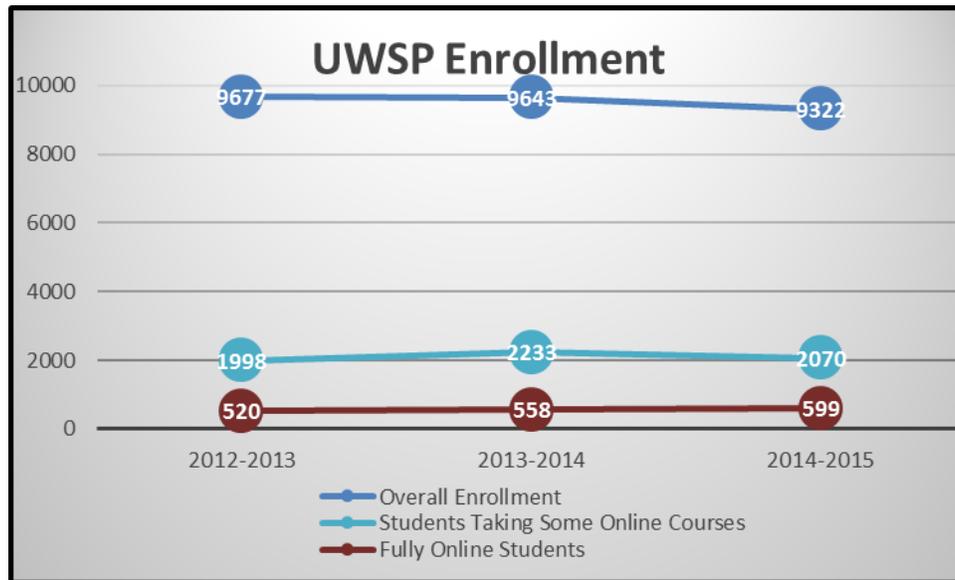
⁶ Information gathered from the UWSP website and discussions with program managers.

In addition to online and hybrid courses, the World Language Program at UWSP collaborates with several other UW campuses to provide students with live-streamed courses. Professors at UWSP have provided five to six courses per year to students **via the ITV network** during the past three years. During the same time, about 15 foreign language courses offered by other UW campuses have been made available to UWSP students via the ITV network.

UWSP STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The overall UWSP student population has slowly declined over the past three academic years. During this time, the number of online students has steadily increased.⁷ This **upward trend in the number of online students** is reflective of national trends in online education. This growth in online enrollments during a time of decreased overall enrollment is indicative of the demand for increased online programming and the growth potential of online education.

The data also indicates that UWSP's online programs are attracting new students from different audiences. Compared to the overall student body, the online student population is older and more female.⁷ Many factors likely contribute to these differences. One factor could be that about 30% UWSP's online programs are graduate degree programs, which inherently attract older students. The Health and Wellness Management (HWM) and Health Information Management and Technology (HIMT) online programs are enrolled heavily by female students⁸, which likely contribute to the higher percentage of females taking online courses.



Source: Distance Ed Report, UWSP Institutional Research, 12-28-2015

⁷ Distance Ed Report, UWSP Institutional Research, 12-28-2015

⁸ HWM and HIMT Program Reports, Fall 2015, UW-Extension

FUTURE PLANS

Plans for distance education include the use of a standard rubric, such as the Quality Matters Rubric, to assess and evaluate online courses, the development of a more standardized and consistent online pricing/tuition policy, the development and implementation of a consistent online course and program development process, increased support for online instructors, and the development of more online programs.

Starting with the Spring 2016 term, **weekly Online Instructor Trainings** will be offered to UWSP faculty. The trainings will cover 12 topics related to online instruction, with each training offered twice per term. The Online Instructor Training program will continue in future terms, with training topics updated based on participant feedback, technology advances and current research in online instruction.

Several online degree programs are currently being developed:

- The Department of Geography & Geology is working with UW-Extension to implement a competency-based **Master of Science in Geodesign & GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Techniques (MS-GDGIST)** degree. The online FLEX program will consist of 12 competency sets, totaling 36 credit equivalencies. The MS-GDGIST degree is expected to launch in fall 2016, with approximately 20 students.
- The School of Health Promotion & Human Development is currently working with UW-Extension and four other UW campuses to develop a collaborative **Master of Science in Health & Wellness Management (MS-HWM)** degree. Coursework for the 36-credit online program is expected to begin in fall 2016.
- The School of Education is collaborating with three other UW campuses to develop a **Doctorate of Education in Sustainability (Ed.D.)** degree. The 54-credit hybrid doctoral program is expected to launch in summer 2017.
- The School of Business and Economics is developing a **Master of Business Administration (MBA)** program. The 36-credit hybrid program is designed for working adults and is expected to start in fall 2017 with an inaugural class of 12-16 students.
- The College of Professional Studies is exploring the development of a cooperative **Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT)** program with UW-Milwaukee. The DPT program would allow UWSP students to earn a DPT from UW-Milwaukee by completing coursework at UWSP. The program is expected to start summer 2018 with a 24-student cohort. Courses will likely be offered in both hybrid and live telepresence formats.