

Report: Public Institutions Lead Private in Adoption of Online Courses

By Joshua Bolkan • 11/05/13

Nearly half of all state colleges in the United States offer at least five undergraduate degrees online, but only 15 percent of private colleges do the same, according to two new surveys from Learning House.

"There has been a lot of discussion about the impact of MOOCs," said David Clinefelter, chief academic officer at Learning House and a co-author of the reports, in a prepared statement. "But in these two surveys, we discovered that institutions, private and public alike, are more focused on offering additional online programs."

Other key findings of the reports, "Online Learning at Public Universities: Building a New Path to a College Degree" and "Online Learning at Private Colleges and Universities: A Survey of Chief Academic Officers," include:

- Undergraduate enrollment in online programs is up 60 percent over last year, according to respondents;
- While 48 percent of state schools reported that they offer at least five programs fully online, the same number of private institutions told researchers they have no fully online programs;
- Ninety percent of private schools reported that they offer at least one fully online or hybrid course;
- Most schools represented in the survey, 64 percent, said their online programs cost students the same amount as traditional classes, 22 percent said the cost to students was the same, and 15 percent said that their online programs were more expensive for students;
- About a third of respondents offering online programs charge a technology fee for the courses;
- Thirty-five percent of state schools surveyed said they generate more than \$1 million per year through online courses and 21 percent of private schools surveyed said the same;
- Student discipline was cited as the biggest barrier to online success by the vast majority of respondents; and

- Business is the most common field of study chosen by online students at both the undergraduate and graduate level, according to respondents, and the most commonly offered to undergrads.

Clinefelter and Coauthor Susan C. Aldridge, senior vice president of online learning at Drexel University, will discuss the findings of both surveys in a webinar November 7 at learninghouse.com.

About the Author

Joshua Bolkan is the multimedia editor for Campus Technology and THE Journal. He can be reached at jbolkan@1105media.com.