



Minnesota  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

## Distance Education Minnesota State Report

### Minnesota ONLINE

[www.mnonline.mnscu.edu](http://www.mnonline.mnscu.edu)

[www.eresources.mnscu.edu](http://www.eresources.mnscu.edu)

[www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach](http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach) (after 9/1/04)

National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges  
Austin, Texas  
August 8, 2004

#### I. Minnesota ONLINE INTRODUCTION

##### A. FRAMEWORK

Minnesota Online is the collaborative framework and structure established by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to guide the system's 32 institutions in delivering online education. Inherent principles of Minnesota Online delivery of education are:

1. The ability to **communicate effectively** with students and faculty
2. The **pursuit of partnerships and collaboration** within the system, our communities, the corporate sector and other education and state agencies
3. Addressing the **diversity** of learners
4. **Continuously improving** on the delivery of learning experiences
5. **Demonstrating accountability** for providing student access and serving students flexibly and responsively
6. **Supporting** learning **innovation** and system-building

##### B. MINNESOTA ONLINE COUNCIL

Minnesota OnLine operates under the guidance of the Minnesota Online Council of faculty and administrators which oversees the implementation of a consolidated approach to e-learning by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

##### C. CURRENT ISSUES/INITIATIVES

1. **Partnerships** :
  - ? We are developing partnerships with other public entities, such as Tribal Colleges, other state virtual campuses in our region (ND, SD and WI), and high schools.
  - ? We are interested in what other states are doing to partner with business and industry
2. **Tuition**: Each college/university sets its own tuition for online courses. Institutions may charge a market rate for online courses which means they can price courses at a higher level than land-based courses.

**3. Funding:**

- Congressional awards over a three year period (2001-2004): received \$4.3 million which was matched with an equivalent amount of system state funds.
  - No special funds have been provided by the legislature; however, we are requesting \$20 million in the next biennium to support curriculum development and services.
4. **Seamless Delivery System:** Currently focusing significant attention on establishing and implementing processes to insure that students can move around seamlessly within the system's online environment.
5. **Higher Learning Commission:** The system achieved significant accomplishment in obtaining authority from the HLC to accredit our own institutions' online programs. This means our institutions do not have to seek accreditation for new online programs from the HLC but must comply with a special internal system accreditation process.
6. **Faculty Development:** The system has combined several sources of funds (Federal Congressional Award, Perkins, state) to implement a Professional Development OnLine Center delivering resources, tutorials and courses for faculty with a special focus on online teaching. Website after 9/1/04 is [www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach](http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach).

**II. Minnesota ONLINE RESPONSIBILITIES**

**A. The responsibilities of Minnesota Online are to work with system colleges and universities to:**

- Provide support services or assist member institutions in supporting online courses and programs
- Enhance academic, technical, and student services for online learners
- Provide access for learners to all available online courses and programs
- Assure seamless financial aid for eligible students enrolled through Minnesota Online
- Secure affiliation status from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC/NCA) for online program approval for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and facilitate campuses in achieving accreditation for online programs

**III. Minnesota ONLINE BUSINESS PLAN**

**A. Purpose**

The business plan provides operational guidelines for the Minnesota Online Council and the Council staff. The purpose of the business plan is:

- To set forth the tactical goals necessary to move the mission, vision and goals of Minnesota Online forward
- To identify specific action plans for achieving these goals
- To identify the resource requirements and sources for delivering these action plans
- To maximize resources by leveraging existing system college and university capacities and services

**B. Strategic Goals**

The business plan addresses the following strategic goals for Minnesota Online:

- To increase student access and opportunity by moving forward at a strategically aggressive pace to implement Minnesota Online, including consistent and reliable student and faculty support services, faculty training and resource centers, curriculum development, marketing and research

- To serve as a model for system-wide collaboration that is standards based, assures accountability and sustainability and is coordinated to maximize effectiveness and efficiencies of an integrated system
- To increase significantly the capacity of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to provide access to quality online programs and assists the state in being innovative and competitive in a global market

### **C. Tactical Goals**

The tactical goals for the business plan are divided into “mission critical goals” and “support goals.” Mission critical goals identify aspects of Minnesota Online that must be achieved if the overriding strategic goals are to be met. Mission critical goals deal specifically with the development and delivery of online education. Support goals, as implied, relate to those elements of Minnesota online that are necessary to achieve the mission critical goals. These support goals deal with such issues as funding, marketing, and evaluation.

#### **Mission Critical Goals**

1. To create and deliver seamless virtual student services for all Minnesota Online students
2. To develop and provide e-learning resources and training programs for faculty and staff development
3. To encourage development of online courses and programs consistent with Minnesota Online’s strategy for targeted learner segment markets
4. To provide required infrastructure support, including bandwidth, online library services, 24/7 help desks, software maintenance and licensing, and technology hardware.
5. To facilitate the accreditation of all Minnesota Online programs and institutions

#### **Support Goals**

6. To develop a comprehensive marketing strategy and plan for promoting the delivery of MnOnline
7. To promote resource acquisition to support the delivery of MnOnline programs and services through grant acquisition and other measures
8. To develop partnerships with state and local governments and with business and industry
9. To develop a research capability that fosters evaluation of MnOnline, including policies and the research, design and implementation of appropriate assessment systems

## **IV. Minnesota ONLINE BACKGROUND**

### **A. History**

Building on a Virtual Summit sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor in October 2000, an E-Learning Task Force was established to determine how “to promote emerging curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the development of a MnSCU e-learning environment that includes standards-based e-learning course/courseware development and a wide range of web-based student services.” The E-Learning Task Force identified four critical drivers that reinforce the importance of strategically developing a position in the e-learning space: 1) meet market demand, 2) meet stakeholder expectations, 3) promote and increase access and 4) respond to increased competition.

### **B. Market Segments**

The Task Force contracted for an e-learning market analysis to improve the Systems’ understanding about e-learning market demand, about other providers with whom the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are competing for the e-learning market, and about the requirements of a provider to be

successful in the e-learning market. This analysis identified, among other things, seven learner segments:

1. Corporate Learners (individuals employed in a corporate setting and seeking education to advance their careers)
2. Professional Enhancement Learners (individuals seeking to advance or shift their careers)
3. Degree Completion Learners (individuals seeking to complete a degree, typically older students also employed full time)
4. Life Fulfillment Learners (individuals interested in education for its own sake)
5. College Experience Learners (typically the traditional 18-to-24 year old residential college student)
6. Remediation and Test Preparation Learners (individuals interested in learning as a prerequisite for an examination or entrance to an educational program)
7. Pre-College (K-12) Learners (individuals interested in taking post-secondary work prior to completion of high school)

**C. Priority Market Segments**

At present, the vast majority of the System’s delivery of online learning responds to college experience learners seeking greater flexibility in their schedules. As the work continues, the corporate learners and the degree completion learners will become a focus as well.

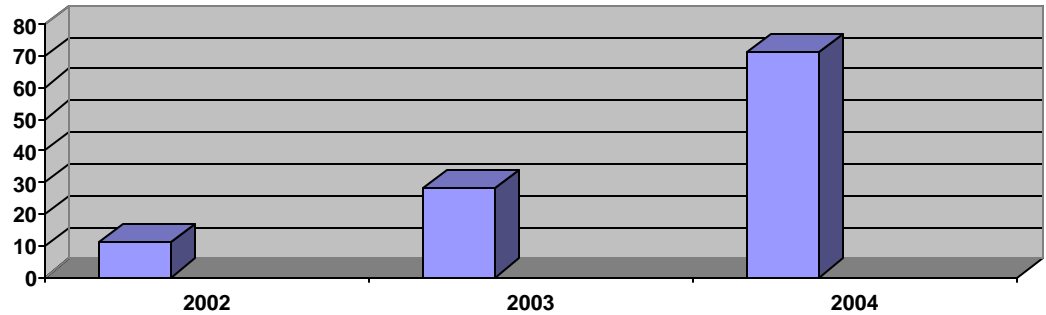
**V. Minnesota ONLINE FACTS**

**A. Historical Growth of Online Education for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities FY 2001 – 2003**

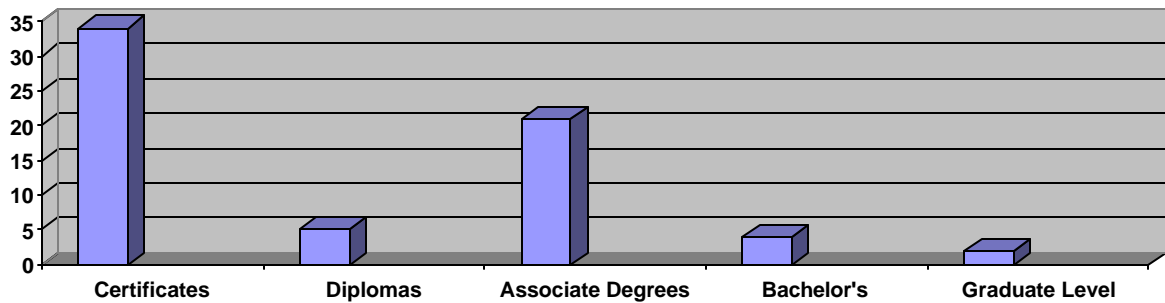
System Totals	Fiscal Yr 2001			Fiscal Yr 2002			Fiscal Yr 2003		
	Cr	Non Cr	Total	Cr	Non Cr	Total	Cr	Non Cr	Total
<b>Course Sections</b>	618	346	964	950	488	1438	1525	783	2308
<b>Colleges</b>	559	343	902	834	486	1320	1110	778	1888
<b>Universities</b>	59	3	62	116	2	118	415	5	420
	<b>Cr</b>	<b>Non Cr</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cr</b>	<b>Non Cr</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cr</b>	<b>Non Cr</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Und. Headcount</b>	6970	374	7344	12082	451	12531	16278	668	16946
<b>Colleges</b>	6137	372	6509	10713	445	11156	13027	646	13673
<b>Universities</b>	833	2	835	1369	6	1375	3251	22	3273
<b>FYE’s</b>	911		911	1640		1640	2593		2593
<b>Colleges</b>	824		824	1470		1470	2058		2058
<b>Universities</b>	88		88	170		170	535		535

## B. Virtual Online Programs

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities offer 71 online virtual programs ranging from certificate to graduate programs.



Virtual Program Inventory reveals majority are certificate options



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