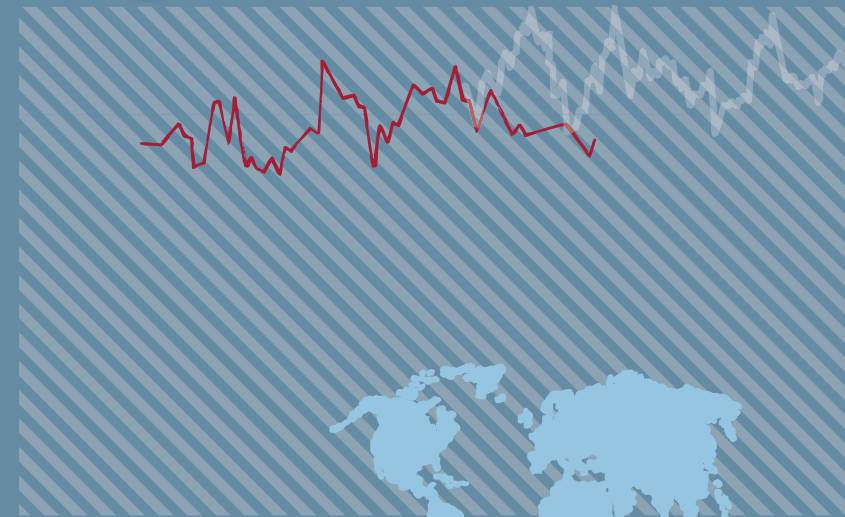




CSUN in the Digital World

California State University, Northridge



CSUN recognizes that being agile and innovative in today's mercurial educational landscape requires a co-creative approach to developing curricula.

Changes that Redefine the Future

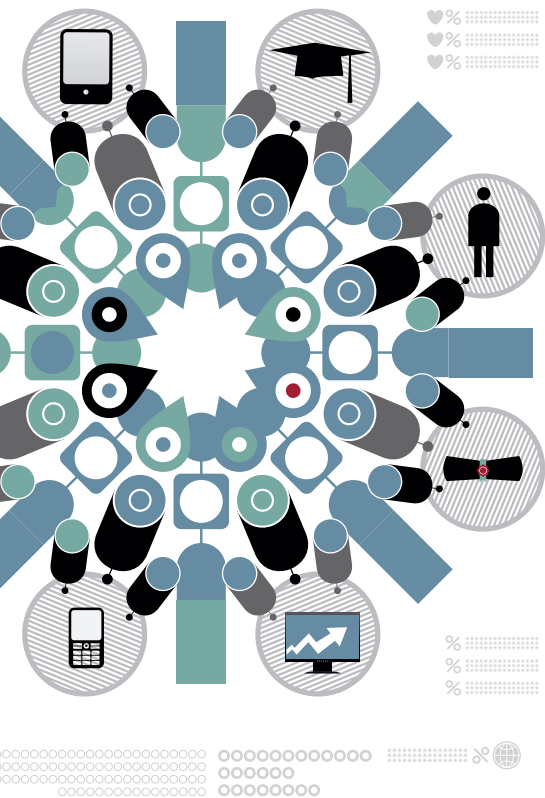
The complex and changing demands of professional practice in a global context, the changing patterns of options in the world of higher education, and the economic constraints California faces are reshaping the way California State University, Northridge (CSUN) thinks about, develops and offers programs: baccalaureate and graduate degrees, credentialing and certification, and continuing professional education. At a time when there is almost daily news about changes that may redefine the future of higher education – (such as, education without institutions, free universities, massive open online courses (MOOCs), education via smart phone – many institutions are struggling to find a way forward. Some seem to do so by looking backward or by locking in a single approach to give them a sense of stability in a turbulent world. At CSUN, we recognize that these are, indeed, challenging times. We also recognize that at a time when options are many and change defines the day, what is needed is agility, smart and purposeful innovation, collaboration, and a readiness to bring talent together to create something exceptional that evolves over time as new possibilities emerge.

For nearly 18 years, CSUN has invested in skilled technical and instructional design specialists who work with faculty to enhance their use of educational technologies in teaching, learning, and research in face-to-face, hybrid and online courses. As a result, from the digital materials and services in the CSUN library to the collaborative faculty groups exploring new ways to make smart and effective use of educational technologies in the classroom and in the laboratory, CSUN is regularly looked to as a model for how the new can be woven into the traditional strengths of American higher education to deliver an exceptional experience that offers educational advantage across fields and levels, from the entering student to the doctoral candidate.

Within the past 12 years, CSUN has also invested in its ability to develop and offer fully online degree programs. **In 2012/2013, CSUN fully online degree programs served students throughout California and in 31 of the other 49 states (32 states total), as well as in three other nations.** This document focuses on CSUN's approach and growth as a provider of excellent and distinctive fully online degree programs. The CSUN vision and distance learning philosophy encourages online programs to be innovative in the use of technology and instructional practices, and to inspire students to develop their passion by asking hard questions, seeking unconventional answers, and manifesting what role they have played and can continue to play in a global society, as they earn their degrees and graduate certificates.

The CSUN Approach to Online Teaching and Learning

The notion that faculty “hand off” their course materials to a team of instructional designers who then develop online programs is archaic. For online programs that work, one does not merely “put a course online.” One crafts a course using the instructional possibilities and options of the digital technologies. CSUN recognizes that being agile and innovative in today's mercurial educational landscape requires a co-creative approach to developing curricula that considers learning goals and online instructional options together as the program is carefully crafted. Leveraging campus-wide partnerships ensures excellence in student-centered instruction, accessibility from many perspectives, and student services that are as carefully designed and thoughtfully executed as the program itself.





The Crafting of Curriculum

CSUN's fully online degree programs are designed to serve the working adult – the midcareer professional. The programs offered online are career focused and designed to move students who have not completed the baccalaureate degree to degree completion, and to enable those with a baccalaureate to complete the master's degree in fields in demand in the California and global economy.

To create CSUN online programs, **CSUN faculty, leading practitioners and CSUN's team of eLearning professionals (instructional designers and technical experts) develop online programs that weave together the best in scholarship in the field in question with an understanding of what professional practice in the field will demand in the decades ahead.** This course development process enables CSUN to achieve significant educational outcomes: a solid knowledge of the field, advanced conceptual skills, and refined professional abilities that make CSUN graduates effective practitioners. In addition, CSUN enhances the comprehensive impact of all fully online programs by offering them in the cohort format – in which groups of students move through the program together from beginning to end, creating a strong learning community and allowing each course to build on the last in a very purposeful way. Taking full advantage of the learning community created in each cohort, CSUN faculty, working with the CSUN eLearning team, take advantage of the wider range of options, changing technologies, and digital resources to provide select instructional strategies and create adaptive learning environments designed to enhance student engagement and student achievement.

CSUN's online programs are more than just a set of courses. Each program is an educational whole – a comprehensive learning experience. In this context, collaboration among faculty members teaching in the program increases synergy among the courses. For example, in some programs, faculty develop case studies and assignments built over several courses to take students' critical thinking skills and sophisticated professional abilities to higher levels. Faculty continuously update and refine their courses every semester to meet trends in their field and current student needs while maintaining rights to the materials they create. There is also a synergy between CSUN's online program development and the enhancement of CSUN's use of educational technologies and digital instructional strategies in the more traditional courses on the CSUN campus. CSUN faculty developing and teaching in fully online courses often take digital assignments, modules and instructional strategies back to their traditional classrooms. Because CSUN provides online technical support and program development, there is no question about faculty having ready access to materials developed and having seamless technical support for their use. Through this approach CSUN has become increasingly innovative, responsive and engaged in the evolution of educational technologies in higher education worldwide.

CSUN Services in Support of Faculty and Students in Fully Online Programs

A member of the CSUN eLearning team is assigned to work with each faculty member developing a course and teaching in a CSUN fully online program. The eLearning director and staff also participate from the start as a team of faculty and practitioners who are convened to develop a new online program. CSUN eLearning staff provide collaborative and individual consultation that focuses on best practices and options in instructional design for digital teaching and learning, effective instructional strategies online, and approaches to course facilitation. CSUN also provides faculty and students

CSUN Online Degrees

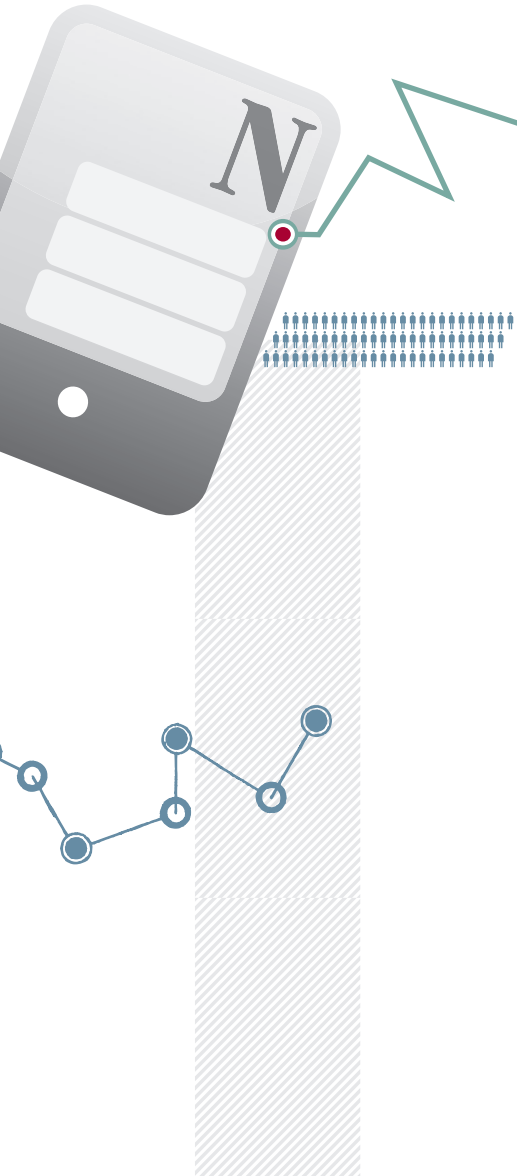
- Assistive Technology Studies and Human Services (M.S.)
- Communication Disorders and Sciences – Speech-Language Pathology (M.S.)
- Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (M.A.)
- Public Administration* (MPA)
- Public Policy (M.S.)
- Social Work (MSW)

Forthcoming

- Education* (M.A.)
- Public Administration for Executives (MPA)
- Engineering Management (M.S.)
- Civil Engineering (M.S.)
- Knowledge Management (MKM)
- Tourism, Hospitality, and Recreation Management* (M.S.)
- Degree Completion in Liberal Studies: Professional/Global (B.A.)
- Degree Completion in Public Sector Management (B.A.)

**multiple options*





enrolling in a CSUN online program with ongoing technical training and support for the Learning Management System (LMS) used as a foundation, the synchronous and asynchronous web tools for the program in question, and emerging technologies and digital learning resources available to support faculty and students (through the CSUN library, through web resources in the field in question, through CSU resources such as Merlot, and more).

CSUN understands that the idea of a single LMS system as the foundation of online teaching and learning is rapidly becoming outdated as new web strategies and learning tools become available. **CSUN's approach to developing online programs is agile in its ability to discover and use the most effective new tools and continually link them to the learning environment.** CSUN's eLearning team looks ahead and regularly does research to identify emerging technologies. They evaluate the potential of what they discover with an understanding of CSUN programs, current and planned.

CSUN has a distinctively proactive and comprehensive approach to providing support services to students in online programs. Because CSUN's online programs are designed to create a supportive and engaging educational environment, CSUN assigns both a faculty academic lead to each program and a program support coordinator who works with each student in a given program from the initial contact and application process through to the student's graduation and beyond. The academic lead works with the faculty to ensure that the curriculum and instructional plan go forward as planned. The coordinator provides a source of guidance, encouragement and a single point of contact to access CSUN's wide range of support services.

Online students also receive a two-week intensive online orientation to prepare them for success both from the perspective of effectively using the digital technologies important for the program in which they enrolled and from the perspective of learning skills and study strategies that prepare them for success in a fully online program. The orientation also introduces students to the eLearning staff members providing the technical support for the program and to the personalized 24/7 library resources that they will be able to use throughout their educational careers.

Students in CSUN online programs begin their journey by building networks in program-specific online learning communities called "Hubs." These encompass everything from resources to advisement and career opportunities to symposiums. **The Student Hub is equivalent to a "student union – online," which provides the most comprehensive online experience a university can offer** as communities are formed and college experiences are shared.

Student Achievements and Graduation Rates

CSUN's fully online programs have on-time graduation rates that average 70 to 80 percent, with some programs reaching over 90 percent. Graduates of CSUN online programs also regularly report both finding positions in their intended fields and getting meaningful promotions following graduation. Recent examples include Tom Lenahan, a Master of Public Administration (MPA) graduate taking a "command position" with the Burbank Fire Department in Burbank, Calif., and Erin Wade, an Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) graduate, promoted to principal at Antelope Valley Learning Academy.



As an example of the CSUN commitment to excellence in online education, surveyors from the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) complimented the university on the quality of its Communication Disorders and Sciences (CDS) online master's degree program during a recent (October 2012) campus visit. The online CDS master's degree program, which has received the 2013 Outstanding Program Award from the University Professional & Continuing Education Association, has achieved an average on-time graduation rate of 73 percent over the 13 years that it has been offered.

In addition, CSUN pass rate results on the Praxis Examination average 91 percent compared to the national average of 85.7 percent over the same three-year period between 2008 and 2011. This national examination is used by CDS online students to qualify for professional certification by ASHA as well as to qualify for licensure to practice in each state.

CSUN online programs continue to produce high graduation rates, national test scores and national recognition, which invigorates our commitment to push forward and seek ways to collaborate within campus lines to expand online programs. This success is partially attributed to CSUN's integration of excellence in classroom instruction, proactive student services, and personalized, rigorous online learning communities.

All **CSUN**
Fully Online
Programs

1,112
total enrollments



948
total enrollments

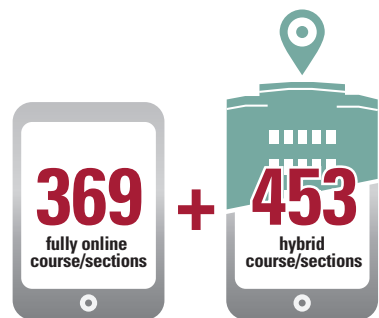
The Growth of CSUN Online Programs

CSUN online programs grew slowly over the early years of the past decade as CSUN developed and refined its approach to creating and supporting online students and programs. With that foundation in place, the pace of growth has steadily increased in more recent years, leading to CSUN's having six fully online degree programs today with an additional eight fully online degree programs in development for launch in the next 18 to 24 months. Many of the current and planned degrees offer multiple majors/options. **This will take CSUN into 2015/2016 with 14 fully online programs offering 24 majors/options and more in development.**

Currently, 357 students are matriculated. This is a 40 percent increase within the last two years. Each student is taking an average of six courses per year in a year-round cohort format that speeds time to degree. **CSUN expects the pace of enrollment growth in online programs, which currently exceeds 2,500 annually, to continue to increase at a rapid pace over the next few years as the market expands and the number of programs offered multiplies.** In addition, CSUN was the first to join Cal State Online with the CSU Reconnect Liberal Studies degree completion program, which takes a different approach that requires working with an outside vendor. CSUN will expand national marketing of its online programs now that it has a robust portfolio of offerings that warrant the marketing investment.

CSUN also offers fully online programs for those changing careers or those who need certificates or sets of courses to meet requirements in professional practice, or to prepare for advanced study in a new field (i.e., programs that help working adults redirect their careers in challenging times).





CSUN online programs are designed to accommodate enrollment levels appropriate for the level of study and the field in question. Enrollment levels can also be limited by the requirements of any special accreditation a program might have. Whether a CSUN program is offered on campus or online, the parameters for enrollments remain the same. The number of cohorts of any given program is also influenced by the number of faculty CSUN has in the field in question. Online programs provide a positive revenue stream that can support additional faculty hiring. For programs covering broader professional fields, the ability to add faculty allows the program to grow, but the availability of highly qualified faculty in more specialized fields can be limited. Some CSUN online programs are regularly fully enrolled, and newer programs are expected to reach that level in the years ahead. CSUN's longest-running online program is regularly fully enrolled with a waiting list.

CSUN also offers a wide range of fully online courses and hybrid courses as part of its state-funded degree programs. For example, **in 2012/2013 CSUN offered 369 fully online course/sections and 453 hybrid course/sections as part of its state-funded programs. These courses had 34,472 enrollments.** Also, in the past year, over 2,000 full-time equivalent students (FTES) were enrolled in high-demand general education online and hybrid offerings of CSUN courses (bottle-neck courses). This included more than 550 FTES who were able to take advantage of the different approaches to teaching and learning offered as part of CSUN's online and hybrid course sections, particularly the many offerings of the challenging courses that students often struggle to pass.

Financial Strategy for Investment and Growth

All of CSUN's fully online degree programs are offered using self-support funding. When CSUN develops a fully online program, it pays faculty for the time they must invest to participate in CSUN's more comprehensive approach to program development for online programs. CSUN also invests the time and resources of the CSUN eLearning team that provides all production services, instructional design support, technical support, faculty training/development and student orientation.

Expenses incurred before the program begins are amortized and recovered over the first three to five cohorts of the program (an average of about 14 percent over total revenue for the first four cohorts of the program). Thereafter, the expense incurred for offering a program fully online, including the use of CSUN eLearning capabilities and resources, is the modest cost of ongoing technical support and course refinement **averaging only 7 percent of total program revenue for each additional cohort.**

In summary, the use of CSUN's own self-support reserve funding to cover the up-front cost of developing a new online program, including program production and advance marketing, allows CSUN to invest in the new program. Once the up-front cost is recouped over the first four cohorts/offerings of a given program, that money is recovered by CSUN and can then be reinvested in the development of another program. For this and other reasons outlined above, CSUN's approach to creating and supporting online programs is very cost effective.

For online courses, beyond the expense of ongoing technical support (about 7 percent of total revenue at CSUN), the costs of instruction, student support and administrative services are comparable to those incurred when CSUN offers self-support degree programs in more traditional modes.



CSUN's fully online programs are priced below those typically offered by private and for-profit colleges and universities and many public education providers. Yet, CSUN's approach allows online programs to be fully self-supported and to provide a positive net revenue flow that allows the university to reinvest in expanding programs, hiring faculty, and adding to its capacities in the changing world of educational technologies.

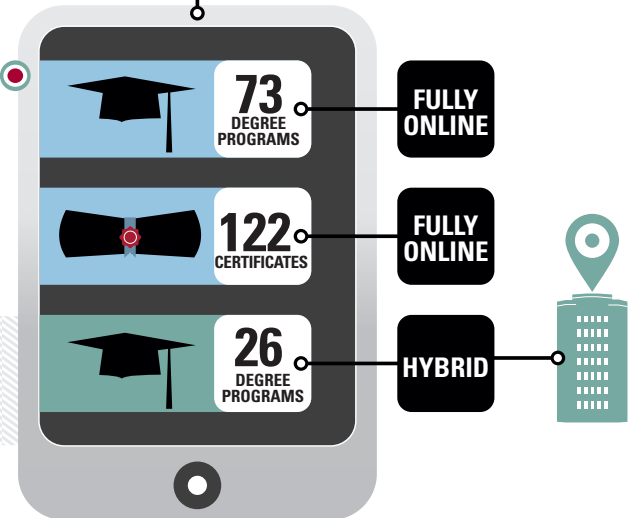
The CSUN approach allows CSUN the advantages of building a comprehensive and agile digital education capacity that reaches across the campus, from the enhancement of on-campus courses to fully online programs. Self-support funding and campus capacity in digital teaching and learning allow CSUN to develop and offer innovative programs; explore and use emerging technologies; use eLearning staff to foster broader use of educational technologies; and support the use of educational technologies in a wide range of ways in teaching, learning, research and community service throughout the university.

The CSU Overall

Currently, the CSU's **23 campuses combined offer a total of 73 fully online degree programs, 26 hybrid degree programs, and 122 certificates for professional development and training fully online. Last year over 5,695** students matriculated in the CSU campuses' fully online degree programs. Also, the CSU at the system-level, working with Pearson, the global leader in education, began offering six of the fully online degrees in spring 2013 (through the CSU's contracted external partnership initiative, known as Cal State Online).



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