

# **An Update About the UC Online Education Program**

From Keith R. Williams, PhD, Interim Director of UC Online Education  
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As many of you are aware, there have been some recent leadership changes for the UC Online Education project. As this transition occurs, I would like to take the opportunity to update the UC community about the status and future direction of the project.

UC Online would not be in the position it is now without the vision, persistence and energy of Daniel Greenstein, Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Programs and Coordination. At the end of this month, Vice Provost Greenstein will be leaving UC to accept a job as Director of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Success Strategy. We are indebted to him for taking the project from conception to where it is today, and remain committed to continuing the project as he and his team have developed it.

The UC Online program continues to have the strong support of UC President Mark Yudof and the UCOP leadership.

At the behest of outgoing UC Provost Lawrence Pitts, in consultation with President Yudof and the incoming Provost who will assume responsibilities on July 1, I have been asked to take on the role as Interim Director of Online Education. I have been involved with the online project since its inception and bring to the program a strong commitment to undergraduate education, having served for 30 years as a faculty member at UC Davis, as well as a member of committees of the Davis Academic Senate, twice the chair of the systemwide UC Educational Policy Committee (UCEP) and a member of the Senate's Academic Council.

UC Online is currently at an exciting point in its development, moving from the pilot phase launched in 2010, to the development of a long-term, financially self-sustaining online education program focused on the development of lower division, high-enrollment gateway courses.

The first six courses to be developed through UC Online were offered in the 2012 spring semester/quarter to UC students enrolled at the instructors' home campuses. An additional 19 courses are targeted to roll out over the next nine months, with more courses in development.

Starting in July, UC Online will begin marketing efforts to enroll not just UC students, but also include non-matriculated students who can take the courses for transfer credit. Course fees paid by non-matriculated students will not only help support the continued operation of the online program, but also provide revenue for participating departments to cover instructional and other costs.

An important goal of the online program is to establish the administrative and technological infrastructure so that students can take any UC Online course for credit at their home campus. Serving non-matriculated students will help us to meet the goal of enabling cross-campus enrollment for UC Online courses by 2014.

One of the most exciting aspects of the online program is the development of a new and innovative learning management system, the Common Learning Environment (CoLE). This system provides faculty maximum flexibility in designing their courses and incorporates social media tools to foster interaction among faculty, students and classmates. Recently hired to oversee this effort is Mary-Ellen Kreher, who comes to UC from a solid background in online education in both public and private arenas.

Input from the university community is important to the success of our efforts. While we will make concerted efforts to make information available and communicate with various constituent groups, anyone who desires more information, or would like to make suggestions is encouraged to email us at [uconline@ucop.edu](mailto:uconline@ucop.edu). Additional information can be found at the UC Online website, <http://onlineeducation.universityofcalifornia.edu>.

A substantial amount of work has been done in the last year by the faculty developing courses, the staff guiding the development of courses and creating a new, modern online learning environment, and the management group overseeing the effort. I am enthusiastic to have the opportunity to help move this program forward and am encouraged by the capabilities and commitment of its participants.