

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15



UT ONLINE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

Learning Ventures





Learning Ventures continues to be a driving force for innovation, opportunity and outstanding online education at The University of Toledo. I am pleased to highlight the successes of the past year in this 2014-2015 annual report. While one year cannot fully tell the story of online education at the University, this annual report offers a glimpse into some of the important accomplishments, milestones and positive changes that we have helped shape. It has been incredibly rewarding to review what we have accomplished together.

Learning Ventures is the focal point of online learning-related activities at UT.

We assist and expand student access to fully online and blended/hybrid courses. We collaborate with colleges and departments to design, develop and support technology-enabled programs and courses. More faculty participated in professional development opportunities offered by Learning Ventures last year than ever before. We also hosted our first Active Learning and Technology Conference that was attended by 120 high school and university faculty. As part of continuous improvement, a research division was created to improve online learning and teaching.

The University of Toledo started offering distance education in 1998 with eight courses. The first fully online program was offered in 2002. Now in our 17th year, we are proud to offer 42 online programs, including graduate and undergraduate degrees, and graduate certificates. We are eager to partner with academic units to help develop new online programs.

While this report highlights major accomplishments, I would also like to acknowledge the day-to-day efforts of each member of this community. All of you — faculty and staff — contributed to the successes of the past year, and make our achievements possible. I am grateful for all that you do to make Learning Ventures great.

I offer you this year in review and say thank you for your continued support and commitment to Learning Ventures, UT Online. It is a privilege to work with you.

Barbara Kopp Miller, Ph.D.

Associate Provost for Online Education, Learning Ventures, UT Online

INTRODUCTION

Higher education faces enormous challenges. Enrollment and budgets decrease while the demand to incorporate innovative educational technology into traditional educational structures increases. Creating online and blended learning courses and programs meets these challenges.

Learning Ventures is responsible for focusing and advancing the capacity of online and blended learning courses and programs at the University. Learning Ventures provides leading-edge technologies, innovative pedagogies, and faculty and student support to help create inventive, engaging and effective environments where learners can succeed. Learning Ventures professionals — experts in teaching and learning with technology — work collaboratively with faculty to develop course content. Learning Ventures professionals help connect instructors with their students for the delivery of content through technological media.

Learning Ventures creates assets that provide foundations for building new educational models. To this purpose, Learning Ventures is focused on opportunities and challenges that result from infusing innovative pedagogies and leading-edge technologies into high-quality online programs and courses.



2014-2015 Major Achievements

- Supported design and development of 127 new online courses.
- Provided more than 200 sessions of faculty development workshops and courses.
- Provided over 400 one-on-one consultations.
- Implemented the Pathway to Master Online Instructor Program.
- Received the 2013-2014 Excellence in Assessment Award from the University Assessment Committee.
- Administered and monitored server and infrastructure, and provided training and support for Blackboard Learn, Respondus Software, TurningPoint and Echo360.
- Celebrated as three individuals earned the Ella Fridman Award, the DiAnne M. Masztak Award, and the UT Online Staff Award.
- Received Quality Matters certification in five courses.
- Hosted the inaugural Active Learning and Technology conference.

Figure 1 lists the 42 online programs currently offered by UT.

More than 500 online courses are offered each semester serving approximately 12,000 students.

Figure 1. Fully online programs at The University of Toledo

100% Online Programs					
Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree Completion	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Certificates
Accounting Technology	Applied Organizational Technology	Accounting	Criminal Justice	Doctor of Nursing Practice	Contemporary Gerontological Practice – Grad
Business Administration (Pre-Business)	Early Childhood Education	Criminal Justice	Early Childhood Education	Specialist Degree	Diversity Specialist – Grad
Business Management Technology	Health Information Administration	Liberal Studies	Educational Technology		Elder Law
Computer Network Administration	Individualized Studies	Management	Engineering	Education Specialist	Educational Assessment Specialist – Grad
Computer Software Specialist	Nursing – RN to BSN	Marketing	Liberal Studies		Health Information Administration
General Studies			Nurse Educator		Nurse Educator
Information Services & Support			Recreation Administration		Ohio Reading Endorsement
Interdisciplinary Program in Technical Studies			Special Education		Foundations of Peace Education
Intermodal Transportation Technology					Preschool Special Needs Endorsement
Programming & Software Development					Transition to Work Endorsement
					Virtual Educator – Grad
					Workplace Certificates – COBI

Learning Ventures consists of four departments with 34 employees and a 2014-2015 budget of \$6 million. The departments and their responsibilities are outlined in the following sections:

- Instructional Design and Development
- Learning and Academic Technology
- Faculty Services and Help Desk
- Compliance and Assessment

In addition to the Learning Ventures staff, a Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) was constituted in 2013. The FAB provides input, feedback and expert advice regarding ideas and opportunities for online education and online faculty development programs. Faculty board members are encouraged to serve as liaisons for their colleges regarding Learning Ventures initiatives.



I. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Instructional Design and Development provides services to faculty who teach online and blended courses. Instructional designers and multimedia designers collaborate with faculty in course design, development and delivery. Designers utilize Higher Learning Commission's best practices for electronically offered degree and certificate programs, the Quality Matters Rubric, Online Learning Consortium scorecards, instructional design theories, learning theories, and best practices for online and blended learning as guidance in providing pedagogical support throughout the academic year.

A. Course design: Quality Matters standards, design templates and guidelines, critical issues of online courses

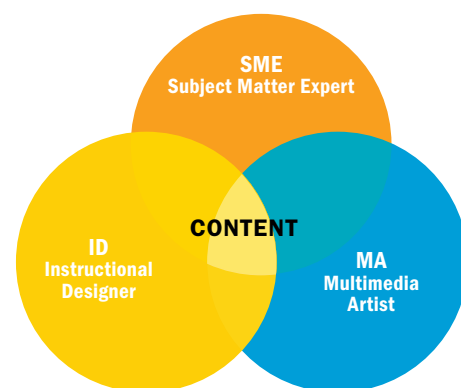
The Quality Matters (QM) Program is a faculty-centered, peer review process designed to assess the quality of online courses. It is widely adopted by colleges and universities around the world. The Quality Matters rubric consists of eight broad categories broken down into 43 individual standards that can be used in a variety of ways, ranging from providing guidelines for course development, to evaluation and certification of courses, through an internal or external review process.

The QM rubric guides the online course design and development process. Learning Ventures provides faculty with the rubric at the initial consultation. Instructional designers — certified Quality Matters peer reviewers — guide and advise faculty throughout the entire course development process.

Faculty members are content experts and have full control of course content. Instructional designers and multimedia designers collaborate with faculty to create an engaging, interactive learning environment. Faculty decide what tools to apply to their course content in conference with instructional designers and multimedia designers. In 2014-2015, 127 new courses were developed, 186 new instructors received training, and the department supported 1,562 courses.

B. Course review and evaluation

Online courses are assessed in accordance with applicable University of Toledo policies. Learning Ventures assists departments and faculty in suggesting modifications to academic course evaluation forms to fit the unique aspects of the online format. Learning Ventures also assists faculty members in assuring that appropriate measures are taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.



Learning Ventures developed and revised a course evaluation tool based on the essential standards of Quality Matters to assess online course design. This tool is used for new online courses supported by Learning Ventures course development funds. This tool is also administered upon the request of veteran online instructors. Informal QM review is conducted on the courses that receive Learning Ventures development funds. During the 2013-2014 academic year, 36 informal reviews occurred, and five new online courses were officially recognized by Quality Matters. These courses are:

Course Title	Format	Instructor	Instructional Designer
GER05420:901 Grief and Bereavement Issues	OL	Barbara Kopp Miller	Christopher Prevette
UTLEARNING VENTURES1000:901 Online Teaching Certificate	OL	Phoebe Ballard & Mingli Xiao	Mingli Xiao & Phoebe Ballard
MATH1320:901 College Algebra	OL	Kevin Gibbs	Christopher Prevette & Claire Stuve
ASTR1010:901 Survey of Astronomy	OL	Kathy Shan	Christopher Prevette
ARTH1500:901 Art in History	OL	Thor Mednick	Phoebe Ballard

C. Online faculty development

The Instructional Design and Development Department provides faculty development in a variety of formats for faculty both new to and experienced with online and blended learning. The sessions focus on pedagogy, best practices and effective use of technologies in course design. Sessions include:

- Face-to-face workshops
- Roadshows
- Roundtables
- Online certificate courses (OTC) – Receiver of the 2014 Blackboard Exemplary Course Award
- Applying Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR)
- Peer review certificate (PRC) – offered by Quality Matters
- Individual consultation sessions.

Table 1 shows the attendance at the faculty development programs.

Learning Ventures provides high-quality, effective e-learning solutions, including audio, video, animation, interactivity, simulations and assessment tools. Multimedia designers work collaboratively with instructional designers and faculty subject-matter experts to conceptualize and produce interactive instructional content for online courses.

Specifically, multimedia designers collaborate with faculty by translating instructional needs into interactive, web-based learning solutions, suggesting techniques for creating collaborative and active learning activities, including the development and infusion of simulation-based learning. They also work with faculty in evaluating current course design and suggesting improvements with visual instructional material.

Table 1. Attendance at faculty development programs 2013 – 2014

Sessions/Semester	Fall 2013		Spring 2014		Summer 2014		Total	
	# of sessions	# of participants	# of sessions	# of participants	# of sessions	# of participants	# of sessions	# of participants
F2F/VC workshops	15	41	12	53	7*	47*	34	141
ADACOC					1	6	1	6
OCDC					1	10	1	10
OTC	1	17					1	17
APPQMR	1	5/3**	2	21/17**	2*	14	5	34
PRC		6		3				9
Total								217

* as of June 30, 2015

**number of participants/ number of participants from UT who successfully completed the course.

***number of people awarded with the grant, number of people completing the course.



During the 2014-2015 academic year, total attendance at training workshops was 217, and instructional designers and multimedia specialists met with faculty in over 400 one-on-one consultations. Many faculty participated in Quality Matters professional development programs. Twenty-two faculty members completed the Applying Quality Matters Rubric workshops, and nine faculty members completed the Peer Reviewer course. As of July 2015, 17 faculty members have become certified QM peer reviewers and have served on course review teams.

D. Multimedia design consultations

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E. Research presentations and professional services

Learning Ventures' instructional designers also spend time researching best practices in teaching and learning with technology, and disseminate research findings in the field of online learning. During 2014-2015 the instructional designers have been invited to present at numerous conferences and faculty events including:

- Toledo Early College High School Science Symposium
- Bloomfield College Technology Showcase
- Ohio Quality Matters Annual Meeting
- Blackboard World
- Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education
- Global Awareness Society International
- Lourdes University eLearning Event

Reviewer Name	College/Unit
Phoebe Ballard*	Learning Ventures
Rachel Barnes	Learning Ventures
Mary Ellen Edwards	Judith Herb College of Education
Melissa Gleckler	College of Adult and Lifelong Learning
Jill Humphries	College of Languages, Literature and Social Sciences
Marie Janes	College of Health Sciences
Barbara Kopp Miller	Learning Ventures
Ruthie Kucharewski	College of Health Sciences
Barbara Mauter	College of Adult and Lifelong Learning
Holly Monsos	College of Communication and the Arts
Yolanda Mora-Calderon	College of Languages, Literature and Social Sciences
Barbara Saltzman	College of Medicine and Life Sciences
Rebecca Schneider	Judith Herb College of Education
Claire Stuve	Learning Ventures
Suzanne Wambold	College of Health Sciences
Mingli Xiao*	Learning Ventures
Jiyu Peter You	Learning Ventures

*Master Reviewers eligible to serve as team chairs on an official review team.

Learning Ventures' instructional designers also served on a variety of professional committees and review boards.

- Ohio Quality Matters Consortium – Executive Committee
- Global Awareness Society International, Program Chair, Online and Distance Education
- Collegian Media Foundation – Board Member
- UT Student Media Association – Faculty Adviser
- Quality Matters in Online & Blended Planning Committee
- E-Learn
- International Journal of Education and Development using Information Communication Technology
- Journal of Interactive Online Learning
- QM Peer Reviewers
- QM Master Peer Reviewers
- QM Workshop Facilitators
- QM Course Reviewer Manager

“The Learning Ventures staff assisted me not only with reaching toward Quality Matters certification, but with idea generation to best meet the needs of an online student learner. It was a journey to create UT’s first, and northwest Ohio’s first online graduate diversity certificate, and the wonderful professional design staff got us there.”

*— Shanda Gore, Ed.D.
Associate Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Community Engagement
Chief Diversity Officer*



II. LEARNING AND ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Learning and Academic Technology supports educational technologies provided through Learning Ventures from technical infrastructure to faculty training and support. The department is composed of two teams: educational technologists and technology support.

A. Educational technology

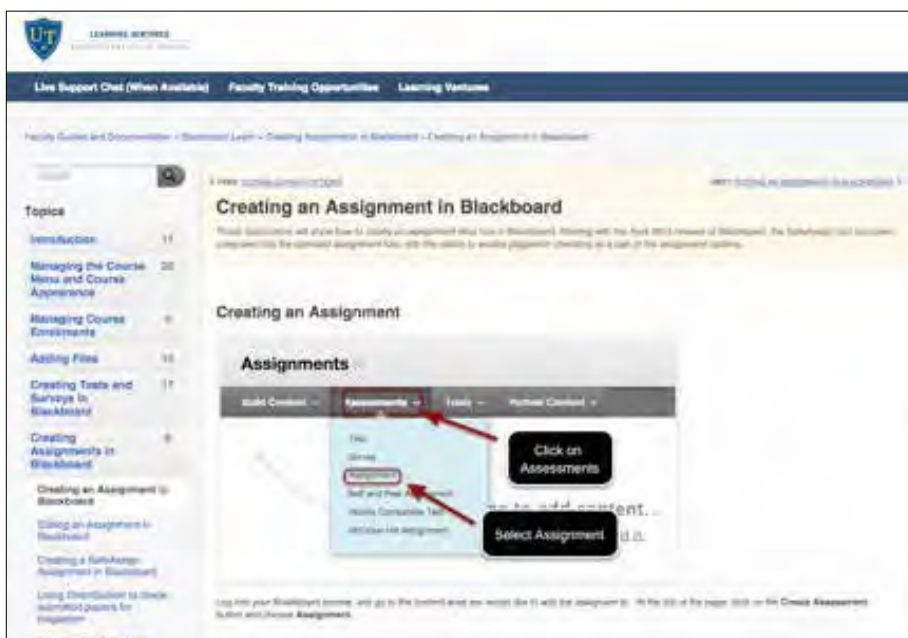
Educational technologists offer consultations and provide in-depth training opportunities to faculty regarding effective use of technologies that promote learner-centered educational experiences in online, hybrid, and classroom environments. During the 2014-2015 academic year, total attendance at training workshops was 135, and educational technologists met with faculty in over 100 one-on-one consultations.

Training Session Attendance Summer 2014-Spring 2015

Workshop Title	Attendees
Blackboard Collaborate Basics	17
Blackboard Collaborate Intermediate	14
Blackboard Learn: Basics I	19
Blackboard Learn: Basics II	16
Blackboard Learn: Creating Tests, Assignments, and Surveys	20
Blackboard Learn: Importing Tests and Surveys Using Respondus	4
Blackboard Learn: Managing Student Grades Using the Grade Center	19
Blackboard Learn: Respondus Monitor Training	2
Echo360 (Lecture Capture)	24
Total	135

Starting in 2014, educational technologists developed a “self-help” site for products supported by Learning Ventures. The site, available through a “Faculty Support” tab in Blackboard, includes detailed step-by-step walkthroughs for the many functions of Blackboard Learn, Blackboard Collaborate, Respondus, Echo360 and more. The content is automatically indexed and searchable for quick access. In addition to being a resource for faculty and students, the site is also used heavily by the Learning Ventures Help Desk to assist with providing support. From the initial launch in July 2014, through the end of the Spring 2015 semester, the site recorded 6,634 user sessions.

Figure 2. Learning Ventures “self-help” site page



B. Technology support

The technology support team designs, maintains, upgrades, and monitors the technology and infrastructure that supports the University’s online learning programs and various academic technologies. The team focuses on providing reliable service through high-availability infrastructure design, as well as proactive monitoring. Technology systems are protected by several layers of redundancy, spanning across network components, servers, storage systems, electrical systems, via geographical server separation. Servers, network components, power distribution units, and other related services are actively monitored 24/7, and alerts are immediately delivered to the team via email and/or text message. Full backups are created on a nightly basis for disaster recovery purposes. Individual archives of online courses are also created on a nightly basis for quick restoration if a course-specific incident occurs. In addition to supporting the architecture, the team is also responsible for managing access to courses and organizations in the learning management system and related applications. During the 2014-2015 academic year, changes in UT’s Information Technology department allowed for access to more up-to-date enrollment data. With this new access, the technology support team adapted data import processes to reduce the delay between registration and access to the learning management system.



C. Support of help desk and course evaluations

While Faculty Services and Help Desk provide front-line support for faculty and students, Learning and Academic Technology provides support for advanced issues that are escalated from the Help Desk. During the 2014-2015 academic year, members of Learning and Academic Technology logged 988 hours assisting with 2,619 support tickets.

Learning Ventures also assists colleges and departments by offering two methods for deploying course evaluations within Blackboard Learn: the in-course survey tool and the Enterprise Survey tool. Members from Learning and Academic Technology, Faculty Services and Help Desk work together to deploy evaluations and retrieve results. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Learning Ventures deployed course evaluations for 19 departments or programs, as well as several individual requests from instructors to deploy evaluations in their course sites.

D. Supported technologies

Learning and Academic Technology personnel administer infrastructure and provide training and support for various Learning Ventures-supported technologies, which are described below.

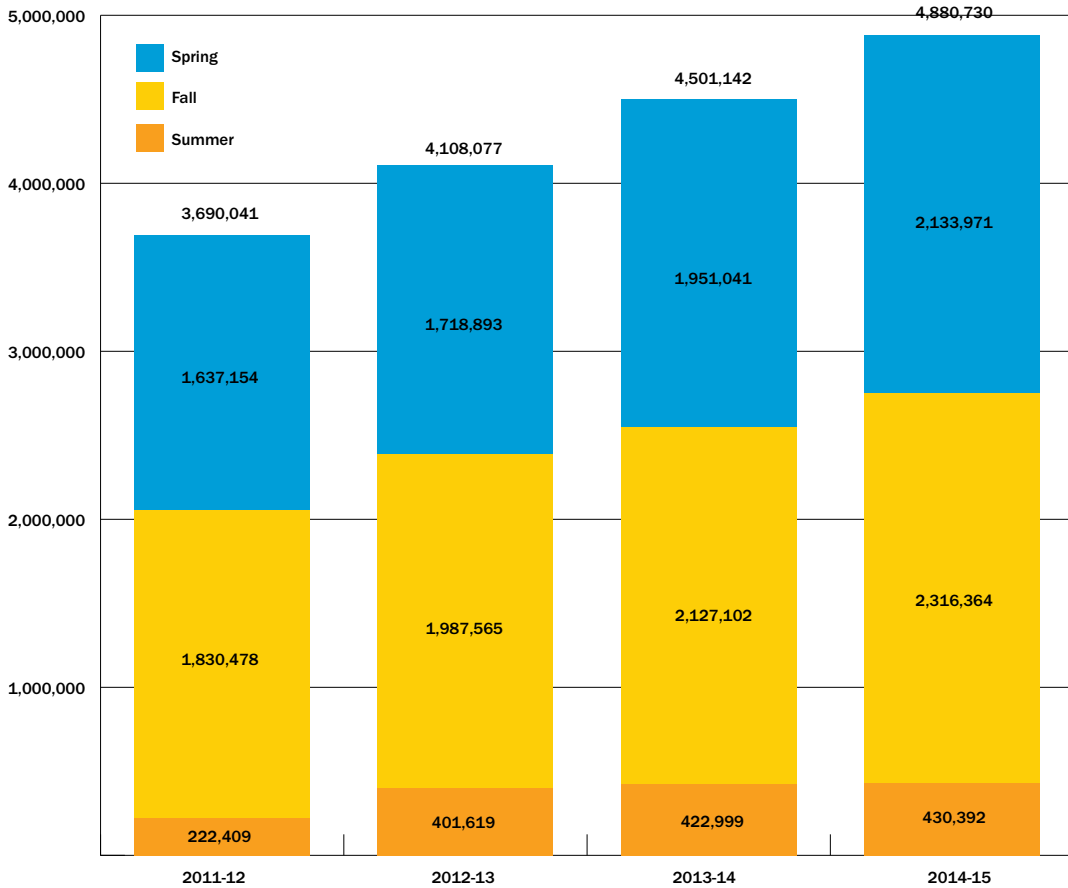
Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is the University's primary learning management system. It provides a virtual learning environment where faculty can deliver instruction through various tools and modules. Students participate in group chats, discussion boards and blogs, and complete online assignments and assessments. Learning and Academic Technology supports the technical infrastructure upon which the Blackboard Learn environment is built, and provides faculty training and high-level support. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Blackboard recorded 4,880,730 user logins.

“I have worked with Learning Ventures on two different projects in the past year, and I have been amazed at how efficient they are, and how Barb and her staff brainstorm and come up with ‘outside of the box’ solutions that work!! These solutions ensure that our students will complete a degree from The University of Toledo on time. They are one of the crown jewels of our University.”

— James Zubricky
Associate Lecturer of Chemistry
Apple Distinguished Educator

Blackboard Logins by Academic Year



Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing

Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing (Collaborate) allows people with an Internet connection anywhere in the world to communicate. With a focus on education, Collaborate includes such features as: two-way audio-video; interactive whiteboard; screen sharing; assessment; polling; chat; file sharing; breakout rooms; and more. During the 2014-2015 academic year, faculty, students, and staff created 4,526 sessions with 17,208 attendees.

Blackboard Community Engagement

Blackboard Community Engagement (Community) is an add-on to Blackboard Learn that allows the institution to create targeted content for specific user roles. Using Community, Learning Ventures has added additional resources to Blackboard via “tabs” that include Help Desk information and links to many useful resources for faculty and students. In addition, Learning Ventures offers faculty and staff the option to create “organizations” in Blackboard. At the end of the Spring 2015 semester, 48 organizations had been created in Blackboard for several purposes, including: housing departmental resources; providing program resources for students and orientation sites for specific student populations; developing internal training and leadership programs; and much more.

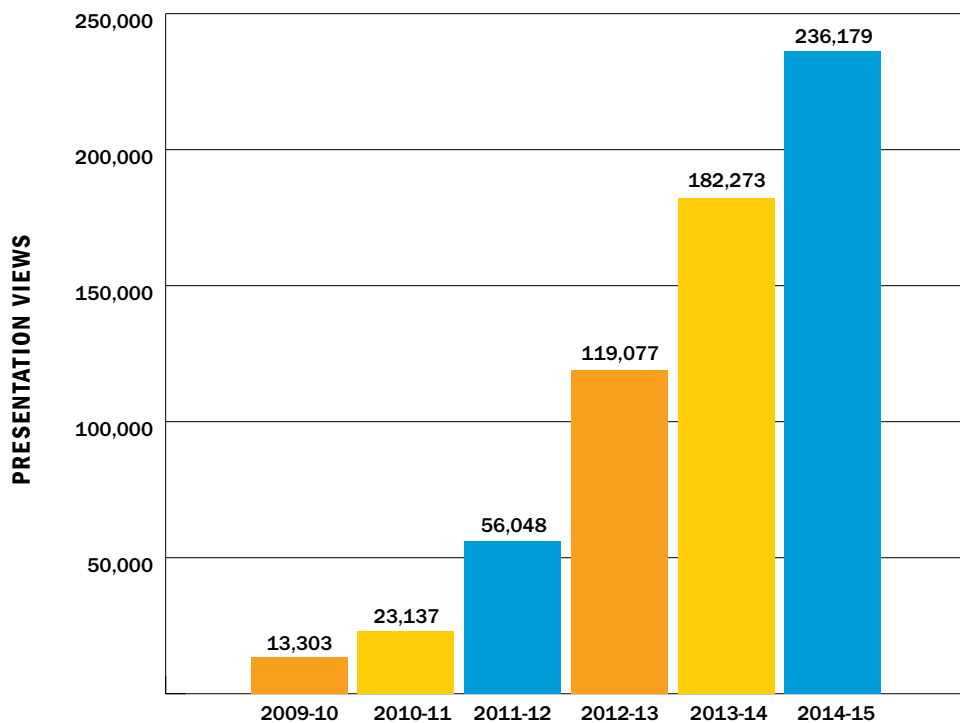
Blackboard Outcomes Assessment

Blackboard Outcomes Assessment (Outcomes) is an add-on to Blackboard Learn that assists in the program assessment process by allowing for collection of student-submitted artifacts. Collected artifacts can be aligned to goals at various levels, including program, college, department, institution, or even national accreditation standards. Collected artifacts may be presented to assigned groups or committees who can assess them based on rubrics associated with those goals. While the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Program Review works with University departments and programs on program-level assessment, Learning Ventures supports the technical infrastructure of the Outcomes system, and also offers faculty training.

Echo360

Learning and Academic Technology supports the infrastructure and provides faculty training and high-level support for the Echo360 lecture capture system. Echo360 allows instructors to record, or even live-broadcast classroom activity via synchronized video and screen capture. Archived lectures can then be made available to students for review, often less than an hour after the class session is completed. In addition to classroom capture, faculty can also create and publish mini-lectures using capture software on their own computer systems. Faculty have access to analytics for each presentation, for example heat maps that indicate the most-watched video segments. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Echo360 captures were viewed 236,179 times, a 29.6 percent increase from the previous academic year.

Echo 360 viewership 2009-2015



Respondus Software

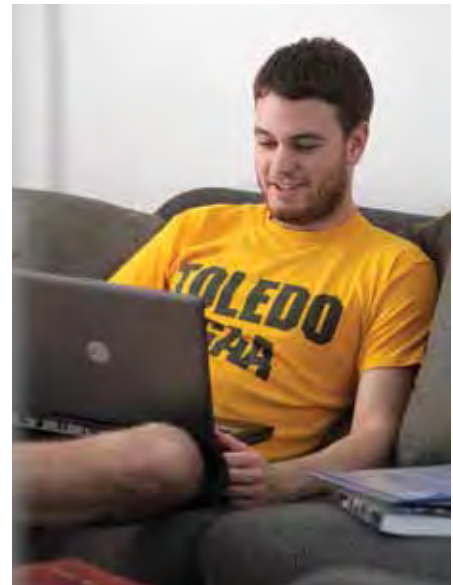
Respondus Quiz Authoring provides the ability to create new, or convert text-based assessments for import into the Blackboard Learn environment. Educational Technologists provide Respondus training as well as ongoing support for Respondus users.

Respondus LockDown Browser with Monitor creates a more secure testing environment by requiring students to complete assessments while shutting down access to other computer applications or websites. In classes where instructors have chosen to require the Monitor add-on, students must also use their webcam to monitor the test-taking environment.

Third-Party Integrations

In addition to the fully-supported technologies described above, Learning and Academic Technology helps faculty connect the learning management system with several third-party products and publish systems, such as:

- Cengage Learning MindLinks
- Echo360's LectureTools
- ExamSoft
- McGraw-Hill ALEKS
- McGraw-Hill Connect and Create
- Pearson MyLab and Mastering
- Pearson MyLabsPlus
- Sapling Learning
- Seelio
- Starfish
- Turning Technologies Audience Response Systems
- WileyPlus



“Last year was my first time teaching a completely online course. I found a wealth of resources and support at LV. From the administration, to the various departments, to the people who answer the help line, I always found fast and courteous answers. I never felt that I couldn’t reach out for help with anything from the simplest to the most daunting problems.”

— Brenda Leady
Lecturer
Biological Sciences

D. Implementation of new technologies

During the 2013-2014 academic year, Learning and Academic Technology was involved with implementation of several new products, including Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing, Blackboard Outcomes Assessment and Blackboard Community.

Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing

Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing (Collaborate) is a web conferencing tool that allows people anywhere in the world with an internet connection to communicate. Features include two-way audio, webcam video and interactive whiteboards that allow moderators and participants to interact as though they were face-to-face.

Blackboard Community Engagement

Blackboard Community Engagement (Community) is an add-on to Blackboard Learn that allows the institution to create targeted content for specific user roles.

Blackboard Outcomes Assessment

Blackboard Outcomes Assessment (Outcomes) is an add-on to Blackboard Learn that assists in the assessment process by allowing for collection of student-submitted artifacts. Collected artifacts can be aligned to goals at various levels, including programs, colleges, departments, institutional or even national accreditation standards. Collected artifacts may also be presented to assigned groups or committees who can assess them based on rubrics associated with those goals.



III. FACULTY SERVICES AND HELP DESK

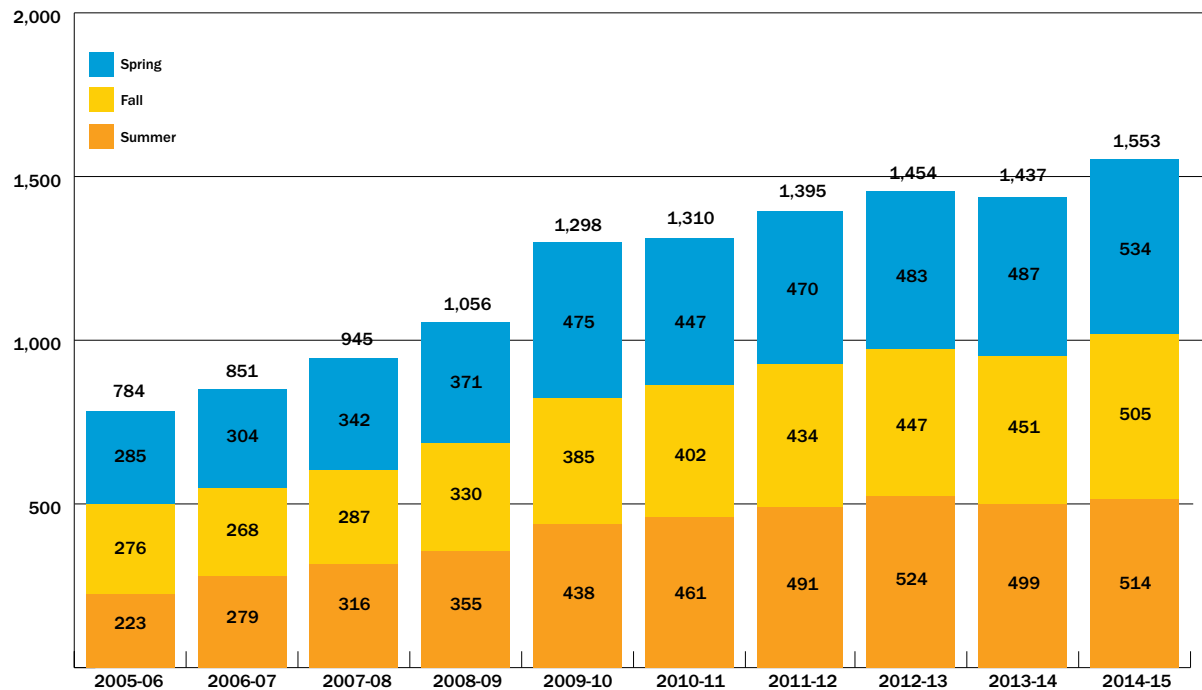
Faculty Services and Help Desk coordinates the delivery of online and blended courses. Staff work with academic departments and University offices, including payroll and human resources (HR), and with individual faculty and instructors. The staff support Blackboard users across the University by providing technical assistance via phone, chat, e-mail and face-to-face meetings. They also assist educational technologists by performing routine tasks, such as copying courses, and formatting and uploading exams and surveys.

A. Faculty services

Faculty Services creates and manages all contracts and compensation workflow for part-time faculty teaching online courses, and for full-time faculty teaching online courses out-of-load; during 2014-2015, 578 faculty agreements were processed. Faculty Services manages the data by tracking online and blended courses and enrollments while also providing ad hoc reports.

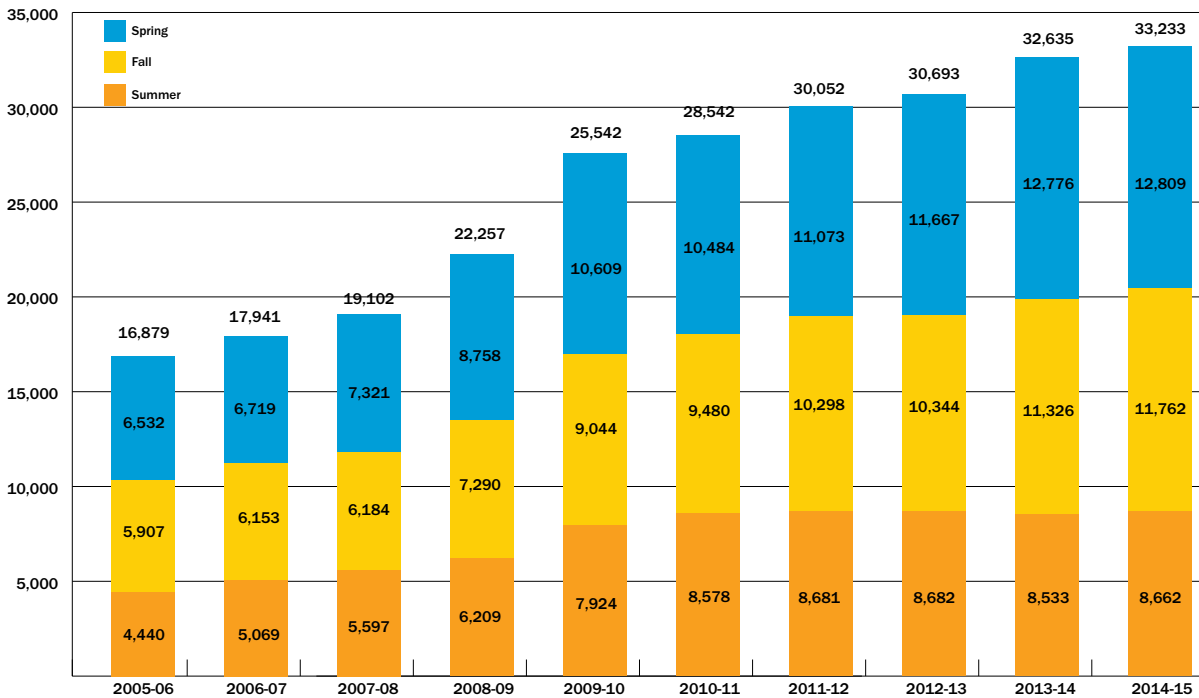
Over the past decade the number of courses offered online has nearly doubled. Nine of these 10 the years the number of courses offered has increased; in each of the 10 years student enrollment has increased. Currently, students may choose from more than 1,500 courses throughout the academic year. A snapshot of this growth can be seen below.

Number of online courses 2005-2015





Enrollment in online courses 2005-2015



The staff coordinates off-site proctored testing for distant online students, which includes confirming state-side and international proctors to ensure test integrity. The staff work with faculty, students and proctors to confirm instructions, and send and receive tests in a timely manner. Our staff keeps extensive records for all proctoring-related activities and confers with faculty and students regarding the test circumstances.

Faculty services staff retrieve the results of all online course evaluations. Online course evaluations for face-to-face courses are processed when requested. During 2014-2015, 562 online course evaluations were processed. They are also responsible for the Web presentation of online course lists, course and program information pages, Web application pages and forms for the division of enrollment management.

B. Help desk

The Help Desk staff supports Blackboard users across the University community by providing technical assistance over the phone, by chat, e-mail or face-to-face consultations. Online faculty and students are kept up to date on Blackboard issues via email and social media.

Inquiries are tracked to identify issues and/or trends that may require intervention. Based on this data, tutorials and other resources are disseminated, which enables Learning Ventures to improve customer service and support continuously.

July 2014-June 2015 Help Desk Figures

- 6,445 Help Desk inquiries, including 2,134 online chats, 570 facebook likes and over 400 proctored exam requests.



IV. COMPLIANCE AND ASSESSMENT

The Department of Compliance and Assessment Research is responsible for researching, analyzing and performing ongoing review of applicable federal and state laws and regulations affecting online education, as well as establishing and facilitating data-driven improvements through assessment support, reporting, and evaluation for Learning Ventures.

A. Compliance

Legal compliance with federal and state laws and regulations affecting online education includes working with state, interstate and federal systems. Research and analysis is ongoing as regulations, interpretations, and procedures are constantly evolving.

Each state determines which educational activities require authorization, the process for application, and the costs to comply. In most states, the need to seek authorization depends on the specific combination of that state's laws and the activities that the institution is conducting in that state.

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) establishes national standards for interstate offerings of postsecondary online education. It allows member states to recognize each others' work in assuring quality and consumer protection among institutions. Each member state approves their own in-state institutions for SARA participation. Institutional membership is voluntary and open to accredited, degree-granting institutions. Once approved, SARA member institutions may offer distance education programs in other SARA member states without additional authorization. The benefits to students residing in SARA states are immediate. They can access online education in any SARA state at the institution of their choice.

Approximately 92 percent of UT online students reside in Ohio or Michigan. The University is fully authorized to deliver online programs to residents of Michigan. There are 33 states in which five or fewer UT online students reside. Of the 33 states, all of the online programs offered by UT are authorized, exempt, registered, not subject to regulatory approval, or are granted a SARA "grace period."

B. Assessment

The Department of Compliance and Assessment works to enhance online teaching and learning environments, and facilitate data-driven improvements through assessment and evaluation activities, which leads to planning and implementing appropriate actions that continuously improve our mission and vision. Researching best practices, and performing assessment of the services in support of online teaching and learning is an ongoing priority.

Last year, the following strategies were employed to prioritize our efforts to comply with state authorization requirements:

- Identifying states in which online students reside
- Researching and reviewing requirements of applicable laws and regulations in the states in which students reside
- Preparing and submitting required documents for states in which authorization was sought
- Maintaining required records, and performing ongoing review
- Making necessary adjustments in response to senior administrative policies and changes in state laws and/or regulations
- Creating a repository of information by developing a Web site dedicated to State Authorization/SARA

The Learning Ventures Assessment Committee, chaired by the Director of Compliance and Assessment, leads the development of assessment plans and procedures within the unit. The following outlines the charge of this committee.

- Providing leadership in the review, evaluation, and continuous improvement of Learning Ventures' assessment plan.
- Providing a central repository for sharing assessment information within the unit via Blackboard.
- Identifying and facilitating participation of professional development opportunities so staff can stay current with the nuances of service outcomes, and apply best practices to continuously improving plans.
- Communicating results of assessment reports and activities with senior leadership through the chair and liaison of the University Assessment Committee.
- Helping draft reports to accrediting bodies.
- Participating as a member of the University Assessment Committee.

The department utilizes a variety of assessment tools and best practices. The tools include: Quality Matters; Online Learning Consortium's (OLC) Quality Scorecard and the Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model.



V. NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2014-2015

In the 2014-2015 academic year, Learning Ventures launched a Research Division to assist faculty in improving online teaching and learning. This division works with faculty to evaluate online and blended courses in order to study best practices and assess learning outcomes. The following is a summary of current projects supported by the Research Division.

Satisfaction and Priorities of Students Enrolled in Fully-Online Degree Programs

Learning Ventures surveyed students in online programs with the Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learning (PSOL) instrument to analyze how satisfied our students are with our fully-online degree programs, and what issues are important to them. Learning Ventures surveyed online student expectations and perceptions in the areas of Academic Services, Enrollment Services, Institutional perceptions, Instructional Services, and Student Services.

A Comparison of Dual-Credit High School & University Students in Multi-Modal-Delivered Courses

Through the College Credit Plus (CC+) program, high school students have had the opportunity to take courses at UT for college credit. These courses are offered as online, blended, and video conferenced courses. The differences in final grades between the high school and UT students will be compared, along with the comparison of final grades of students for each of the three modalities. The researchers will also study how many high school seniors from the program attend UT the following year.

Student Usage & Satisfaction of Instructor-Generated Video Content in Flipped & Online Classes

This study will explore student satisfaction of instructor-generated videos and student engagement in a first-year math course. These results will be compared to the length of the videos, their content, and the days/times of the week that students access the videos. Follow-up studies for other disciplines are expected.

Student Perceptions of an Adaptive Learning System in College Algebra and Its Effect on Performance

To help improve passage rates in introductory math courses, students use an adaptive learning system that allows them to spend more time on content with which they struggle. This study explores student interest in adaptive learning systems, and whether or not students find the technology beneficial to their learning. In addition, grades of students who used the adaptive learning system will be compared to grades of students who did not use the system to test for the system's effectiveness on student learning.

The Effect of an Adaptive Learning System in College Algebra on Performance and Retention Rates

As a follow-up to the aforementioned study, this study will explore student interest in adaptive learning systems, and if students find the technology beneficial to their learning. In addition, the drop/fail/withdrawal rates in the subsequent math course will be compared with students who used the adaptive learning system in the pre-requisite course, and those who did not.

Using a Math Emporium to Prepare Freshmen for Calculus

To help students succeed in math, a math emporium will be created in the Fall 2015 for students to refresh their math skills. These students will meet in a computer lab five days a week and use an adaptive learning system to work at their own pace to complete content. This study will explore student interest in the emporium-style math course.

The following semester, Calculus grades of students who completed the emporium-style course will be compared with the Calculus grades of students who did not complete the emporium-style course.

In addition to the Research Division, Learning Ventures created three awards and celebrated individuals at the University who have made an impact in distance learning.

Dr. David Meabon, associate professor of higher education in the College of Social Justice and Human Service, and director of the John H. Russel Center for Educational Leadership, received the DiAnne M. Masztak Award. The award was presented to an individual in the greater University community who has supported online learning and educational technology in a distinguished fashion.

Kevin Gibbs, associate lecturer in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, received the Ella Fridman Award for exhibiting pedagogically sound, and student-centered instruction in an online course. Fridman was a faculty member in the Engineering Technology Department and a pioneer in online learning. She was one of the first faculty members to create online versions of traditional courses.

Justin Ballard, Director of Learning and Academic Technology for Learning Ventures, received the UT Online Staff Award. This honor was presented to an employee of Learning Ventures for exhibiting exemplary dedication to his or her work and for serving members of the UT community.

“As an online educator for the past 10 years, and a member of the LV Faculty Advisory Board, my involvement with the Learning Ventures staff has been exceptional! UT LV staff has been recognized for exemplary course development and they are 110 percent student- and faculty-centered while continually striving to improve online learning pedagogy. I have been very impressed with the department’s initiative to provide cutting-edge technology and innovative teaching strategies to enhance the student experience. Also noteworthy is Learning Ventures’ commitment to providing opportunities for education and development to the faculty through partnerships with students, colleges, faculty and academic administrators.”

*—R. Kucharewski, Ph.D.
Professor
Rehabilitation Services*







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