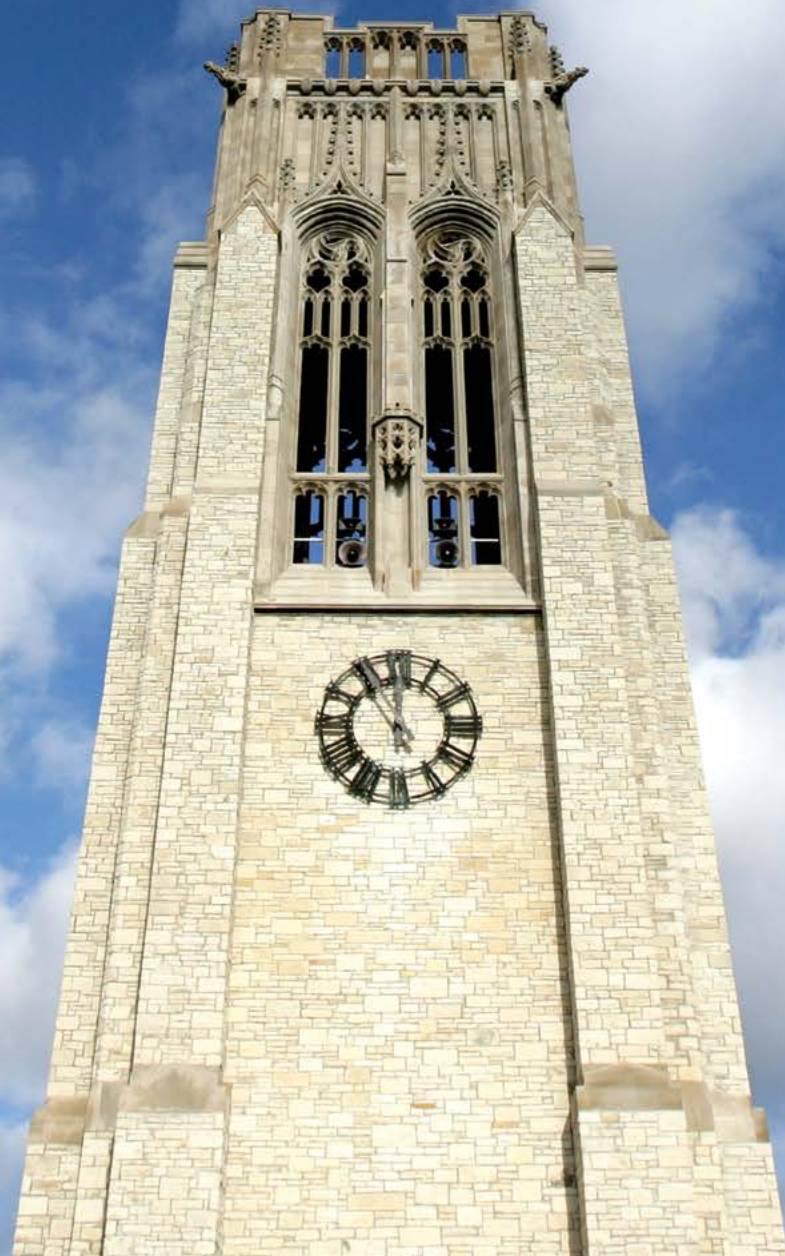# ANNUAL
REPORT 2013-14

UT ONLINE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

Learning Ventures

I am pleased to share this 2013–2014 annual report with you, highlighting the successes of the past year. While one year cannot fully tell the story of online education at The University of Toledo, this first annual report offers a glimpse of just some of the important accomplishments, milestones and positive changes that continue to make Learning Ventures a driving force for innovation, opportunity and outstanding online education. It was incredibly rewarding to review what we accomplished together.

We worked to create a more strategically focused plan for Learning Ventures that is fiscally sustainable and positioned for future opportunities and growth. The progress we made was due to the hard work of staff and faculty across the campus community positioning us to move forward and meet our goals and challenges. Instituting a Faculty Advisory Board was key to this effort.

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. Last year, more faculty availed themselves of professional development opportunities offered by Learning Ventures than ever before.

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 16th year, we are proud to offer 41 online programs including graduate degrees, undergraduate degrees and graduate certificates. We are always eager to partner with academic units to develop new online programs.

While we highlighted major accomplishments in the annual report, I would like to also acknowledge the day-to-day efforts of each member of this community that make our achievements possible. All of us — faculty and staff — contributed to the successes of the past year. 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 is facing enormous challenges ranging from declining enrollments and budgets to increasing demand to incorporate innovative educational technology into traditional educational structures. The creation of online and blended learning courses and programs is the approach that meets these challenges.

Learning Ventures is responsible for focusing and advancing the capacity of online and blended learning courses and programs at The University of Toledo. 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 the area of scholarship around teaching and learning with technology — work collaboratively with faculty to develop course content. Learning Ventures professionals act as the connector for the delivery of content through technological media between the instructor and the student.

Learning Ventures is focused on creating new assets that provide a foundation to build new educational models. For this purpose, Learning Ventures is focused on opportunities and challenges resulting from infusing innovative pedagogies and leading-edge technologies into high-quality online programs and courses.

Figure 1 lists the 41 online programs currently offered by UT. More than 500 online courses are offered each semester with approximately 12,000 students taking online courses per semester.

The University of Toledo had the highest distance-learning enrollment rate (29 percent) of the 14 major state-supported universities in Ohio, according to the annual 2011 distance-learning enrollment report of the OHTECH Division of Student Services.

2013-2014 Major Achievements

- Helped support and create three additional online degree programs for a total of 41 online certificate and degree offerings.

- Supported design and development of 102 new online courses.

- Completed 27 sessions of online faculty development workshops and courses.

- Designed Pathway to Master Online Instructor Program.

- Received 2014 Blackboard Exemplary Course Award.

- Administered and monitored server and infrastructure and provided training and support for Blackboard Learn, Respondus Software, TurningPoint and Echo360.

- Implemented new products including Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing, Blackboard Outcomes Assessment and Blackboard Community.

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	Criminal Justice	Engineering	Doctor of Nursing Practice	Workplace
Business Mgmt Technology	Nursing – RN to BSN	Liberal Studies	Nurse Educator		Health & Information Administration
Business Administration (Pre-Business)	Information Technology		Recreation and Leisure		Nurse Educator
Computer Network Admin	Early Childhood Education		Early Childhood Education		Ohio Reading Endorsement
Computer Software Specialist	Health Care Administration		Liberal Studies		Preschool Special Needs Endorsement
Information Services & Support	Health Information Administration		Special Education/ Early Childhood		Transition to Work Endorsement
Intermodal Transportation Technology	Professional Studies		Ed Technology		Child Advocate – Grad
Programming & Software Development	Individualized Studies		Criminal Justice		Contemporary Gerontological Practice – Grad
Interdisciplinary Program in Technical Studies					Elder Law – Grad
					Patient Advocate – Grad
					Peace Education – Grad
					Educational Assessment Specialist – Grad
					Diversity – Grad

Learning Ventures consists of four departments with 32 employees and a 2013-2014 budget of $ 5.5 million. The departments, whose responsibilities are outlined in the following sections, include:

- Instructional Design and Development

- Learning and Academic Technology

- Faculty Services and Help Desk

- Online Program Development, Compliance and Assessment

In addition to the Learning Ventures staff, a Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) was constituted in 2013-2014. 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 instructional design and development 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 across and beyond the United States. 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 rubric has been adopted to guide the online course design and development process. Faculty members are provided with the rubric at the initial consultation. Instructional designers, who are certified Quality Matters peer reviewers, are available to 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 2013–2014, 102 new courses were developed, 199 new instructors received training, and the department supported 1,513 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 in 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 LV course development funds. This tool is also administered upon request of online instructors. Informal QM review is conducted on the courses that received LV course development funds. During the 2013-2014 academic year, 12 informal reviews occurred.

SME
Subject Matter Expert

CONTENT

ID
Instructional
Designer

MA
Multimedia
Artist
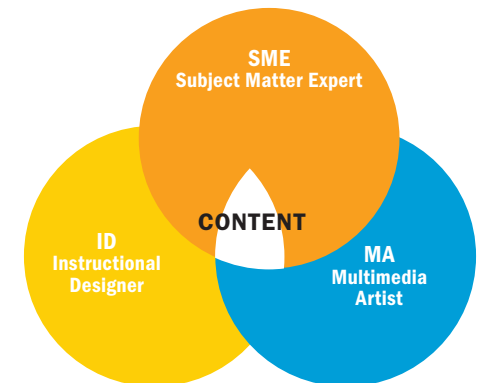
C. Online faculty development

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.

"Because of Learning Ventures, my students are learning more and have a stronger sense of engagement with my courses. Not only has LV enhanced my online teaching, but it has positively impacted my face-to-face teaching as well. The Quality Matters seminar delivered by LV staff was expertly done, and the seminar has improved my teaching and the structure of my courses."

— Lee M. Heritage, Ph.D. Associate Professor in College of Communication and the Arts

| 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 workshop	7	28	11	37			18	65
Roadshows			1	45	1	21	2	66
OTC	1	19	1	18	2	16	4	53
APPQMR	1	3	1	10	1	8	3	21
PRC	5	3					5	3
Total							32	208

D. Multimedia design consultations

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.

"From its inception, this division has compartmentalized expertise, viz., the content and organization of each course has been the responsibility of the academicians and the design and actual creation of the course site has been the responsibility of the expert technical staff. To encourage professors to develop complete, well-designed courses, stipends and technical expertise have been offered to develop new courses …

I have had the good fortune to work with … the multimedia designers for my courses. [They] are examples of the consummate professional[s]. They quickly and expertly fix any problem that my students or I encounter. They always respond to my requests as well as suggest improvements for my course sites. I have no doubt that my students are able to learn much more in my courses because of the actions of these two professionals. The success of online learning at The University of Toledo depends primarily on professionals … and secondarily on academics like me. They are a vital and necessary component of the educational role of Learning Ventures."

— Ernest DuBrul, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences
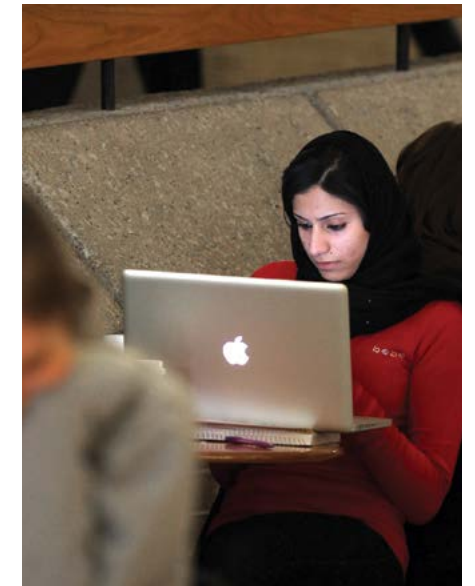
II. LEARNING AND ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Learning and Academic Technology supports educational technologies provided through Learning Ventures from technical infrastructure through faculty training and support. The team is composed of Educational Technology 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. In addition to workshops, educational technologists offered more than 200 one-on-one faculty consultations. Table 2 lists the topics and attendance at the trainings during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Table 2. Training session attendance	
Workshop Title	**Attendees**
Echo360	19
Blackboard: Grade Center	7
Blackboard: Creating Tests and Assignments	10
Blackboard: Respondus	5
Blackboard: Basics II	8
Blackboard: Basics I	8
Blackboard: Creating & Sharing Content with xpL or Content Repository	1
Getting Started with LectureTools	8
Blackboard Collaborative Basics	7
Blackboard Collaborate Intermediate	7
Total	**80**

During the first half of 2014, educational technologists began development of a "self-help" site that includes documentation for products supported by Learning Ventures. Figure 2 includes screenshots and step-by-step instructions for using the many functions of Blackboard Learn, Blackboard Collaborate, Respondus, Echo360 and more. The content is automatically indexed and searchable for quick access.
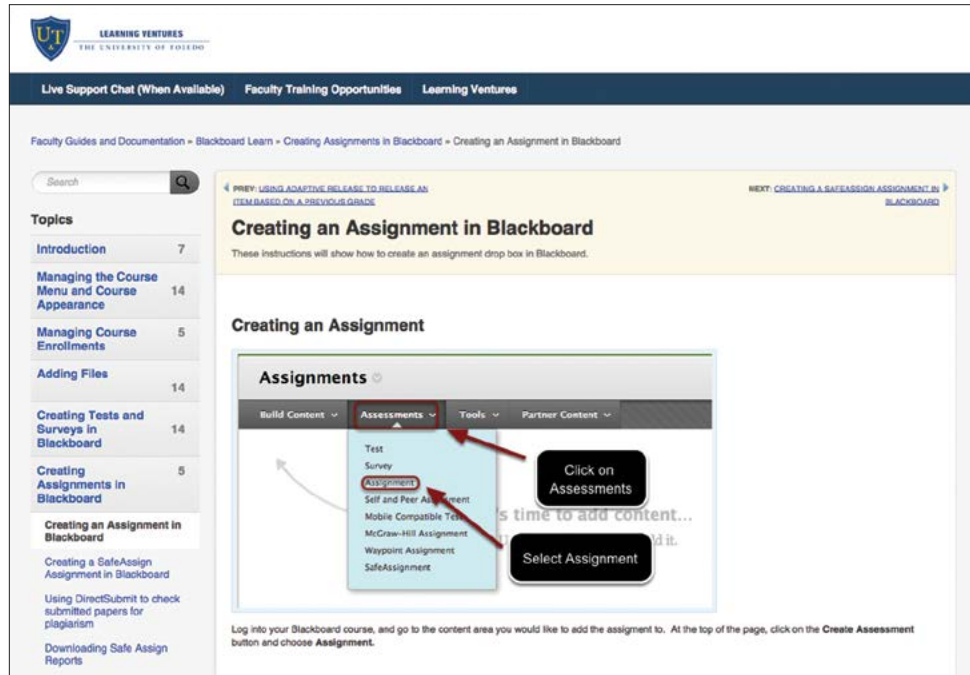
Learning Ventures assists colleges and departments with conducting electronic course evaluations. Learning and Academic Technology is primarily responsible for deployment of the evaluations to the Blackboard Learn course sites, while the Faculty Services and Help Desk Department retrieve the results. Learning Ventures currently offers two methods for deploying course evaluations within Blackboard Learn: the in-course survey tool and the enterprise survey tool. Online Course Design Evaluation was deployed to 13 new courses developed with new LV course development funds.

B. Technology support

The Technology Support team manages the technology and infrastructure that supports the University's online learning programs and various academic technologies.

The majority of systems supported by Learning Ventures are hosted in multi-server environments. In most cases, problems affecting server hardware are not noticeable to users due to layers of redundancy across network components, servers, storage systems, electrical systems and server locations. A technology team dedicated solely to online learning-related technology monitors, maintains and upgrades the infrastructure that supports the learning management system. Servers, network components, power distribution units and other related services are actively monitored 24/7, and notifications of problems are immediately delivered to the team via email or text message, depending upon severity. Full backups of the learning management system are created on a nightly basis for disaster recovery purposes. Individual archives of courses are also created on a nightly basis for quick restoration if a course-specific incident occurs.

C. Supported Educational Technology

Learning and Academic Technology personnel are involved in administering infrastructure and providing training and support for various Learning Ventures supported technologies. In addition to the technologies listed below, the team is involved in the implementation of other technologies detailed in the next section.

Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is the University's primary learning management system. It provides a virtual learning environment where faculty can provide instruction through various tools and modules. Students can participate in group chats, discussion boards and blogs, as well as 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.

Respondus Software

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

TurningTechnologies TurningPoint

TurningPoint provides the ability to use "clickers" in a classroom environment. Clickers are small devices that allow students to participate in polling during class. Educational Technologists provide support on integrating TurningPoint into the Blackboard Learn environment in order to more easily manage polling results.

Echo360

Learning and Academic Technology supports the infrastructure and provides faculty training and high-level support for Echo360, streaming software that synchronizes video and audio of the instructor with any content that can be displayed from the computer. Faculty members adapting and using this technology to record learning modules, screencasts and tutorials for student review, online courses and other activities have increased significantly since 2009 as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Echo 360 viewership 2009-2014

Figure 3. Echo 360 viewership 2009-2014
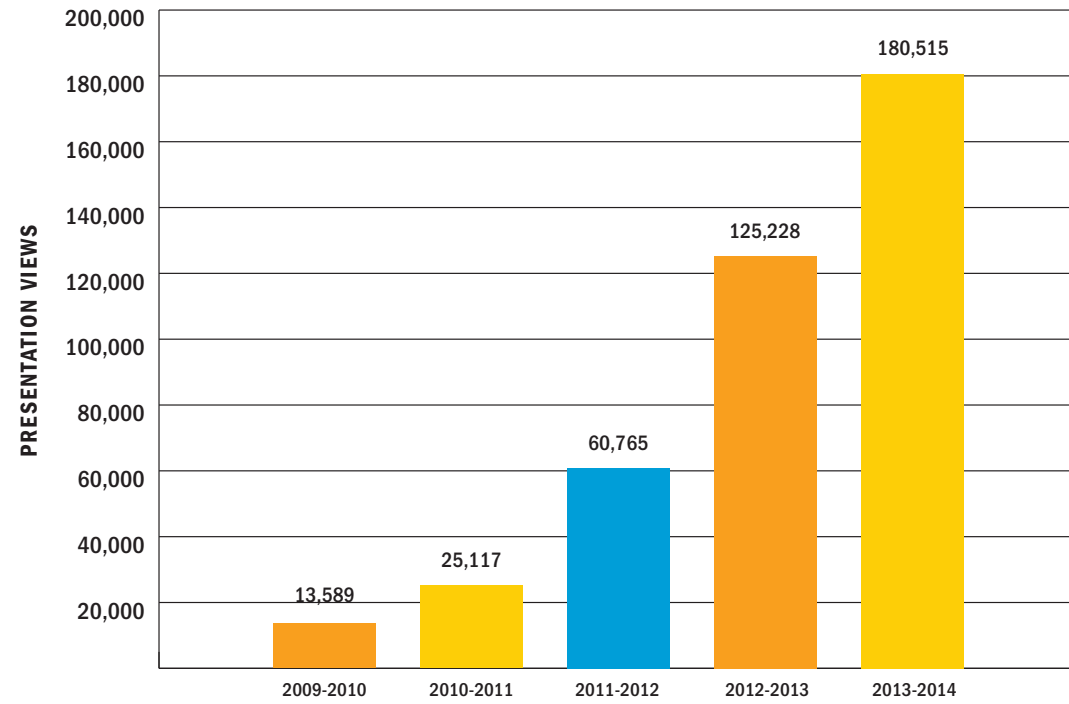
D. Implementation of new technologies

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

The Department of Faculty Services and Help Desk coordinates delivery of online and blended courses by working with academic departments; University offices, including payroll and human resources (HR); and individual faculty and instructors. The department also supports Blackboard users across the University community by providing technical assistance over the phone, by chat, by e-mail or face-to-face.

A. Faculty services

Faculty Services creates and manages all contracts and human resource and compensation workflow for part-time faculty teaching online courses and full-time faculty who are teaching online courses out of load. During 2013-2014, 414 contracts were processed through the department. Faculty Services manages the database of the number of online courses offered during each semester as well as the number of students that are enrolled in online courses. The department provides reports as requested by administration.

In the past 10 years, Learning Ventures doubled the number of online courses offered. Students enrolled in online courses increased by 260 percent. A snapshot of this growth can be seen in Figures 4 and 5.
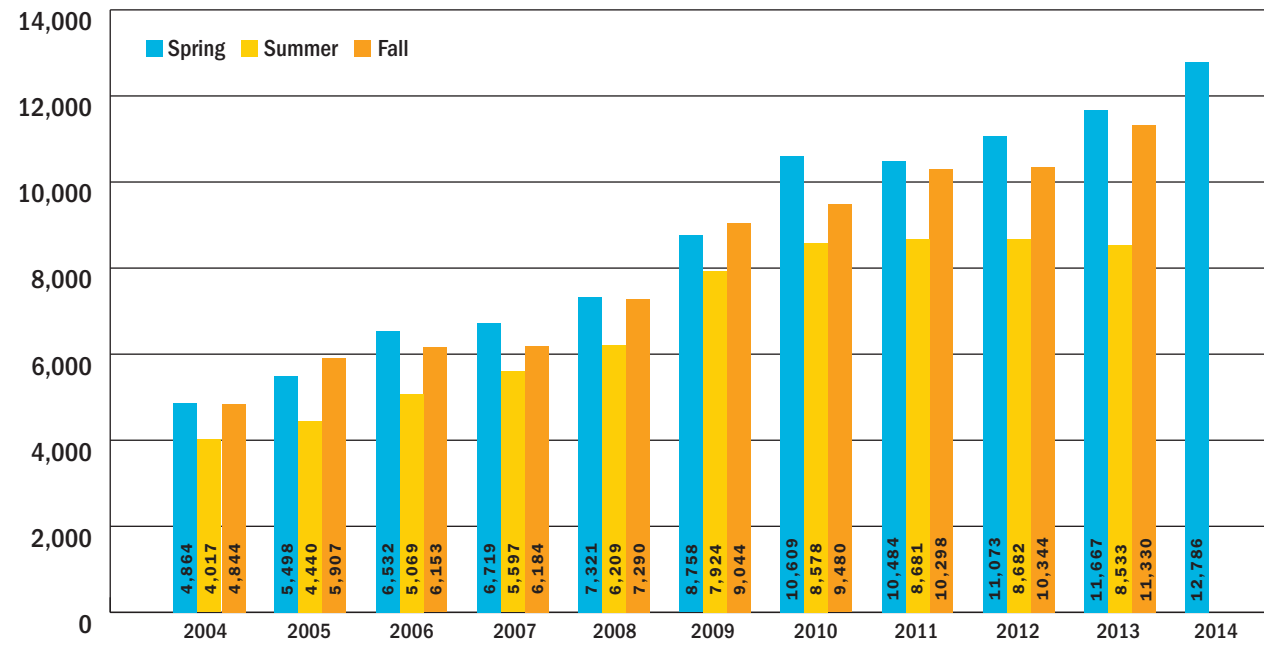
Figure 4. Number of online courses 2004-2014
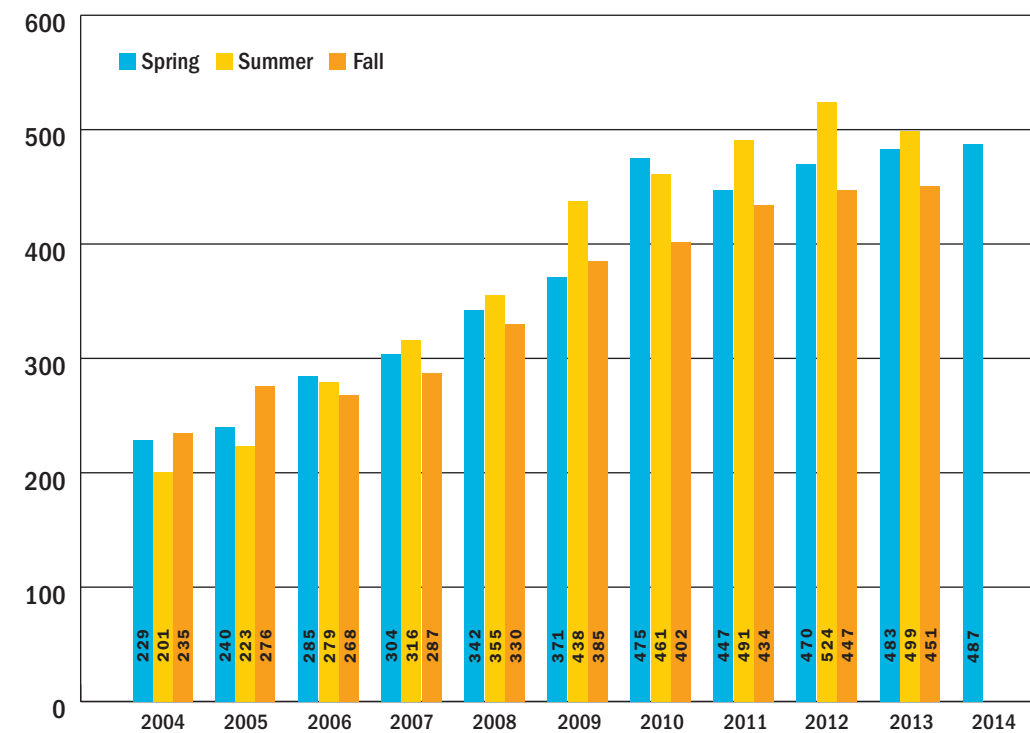
"The staff at Learning Ventures assists in engaging and preparing faculty for all aspects of the online learning experience, beyond just structuring and loading course materials, but readying you for challenges you will face as technology and teaching methods change and advance."

— Kasey Tucker-Gail, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice & Director of College Honors

Figure 5. Enrollment in online courses 2004-2014

Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
2004	4,864	4,017	4,844
2005	5,498	4,440	5,907
2006	6,532	5,069	6,153
2007	6,719	5,597	6,184
2008	7,321	6,209	7,290
2009	8,758	7,924	9,044
2010	10,609	8,578	9,480
2011	10,484	8,681	10,298
2012	11,073	8,682	10,344
2013	11,667	8,533	11,330
2014	12,786		

Faculty Services coordinates off-site proctored testing for online students at a distance and processes evaluations for online courses. The department also is responsible for the web presentation of online course lists, course information pages, program information pages and the web applications, pages and forms for the Division of Enrollment Management.

Faculty Services retrieves the results of the course evaluations for all online course evaluations. Online course evaluations for face-to-face courses are processed when requested. During 2013-2014, 759 online course evaluations were processed.

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 abreast of issues relating to Blackboard via email and social media.

Inquiries are tracked in order to identify issues and/or trends that may require intervention. Based on this data, tutorials and other resources are disseminated enabling Learning Ventures to continuously improve customer service and support.
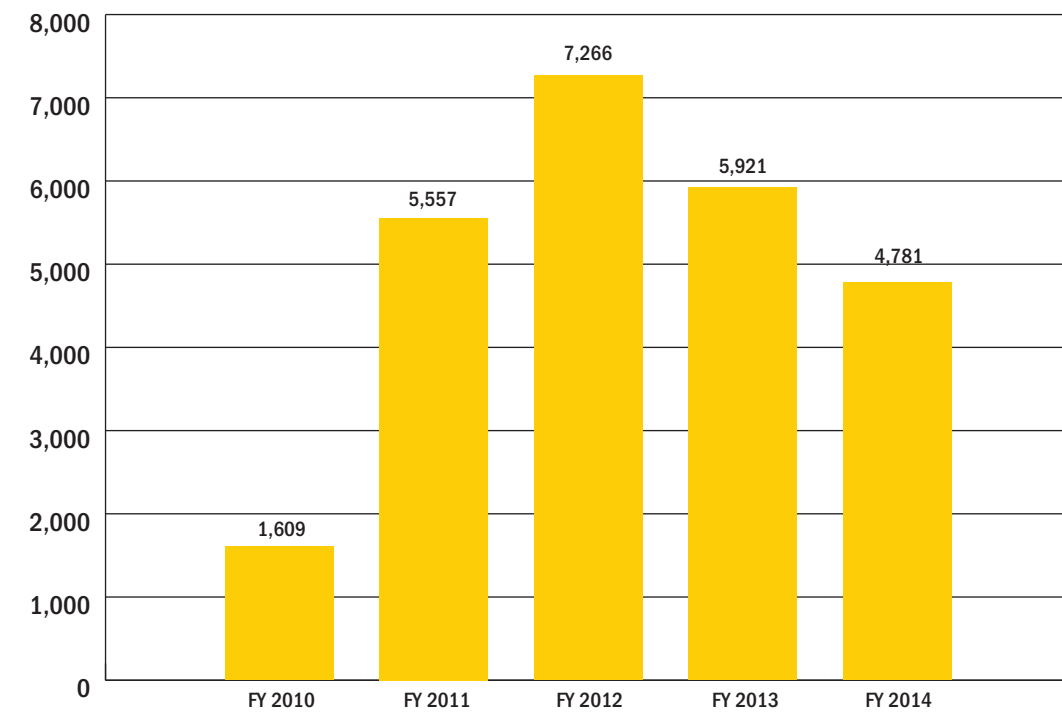
Figure 6 shows the decline in inquiries over the past two years, indicating improved services and support.

July 2013–June 2014

- 4,781 Help Desk inquiries
- 812 online chats
- Facebook likes (unique users) increased 9 percent

Figure 6. Number of Help Desk support inquiries 2010-2014

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Inquiries	1,609	5,557	7,266	5,921	4,781

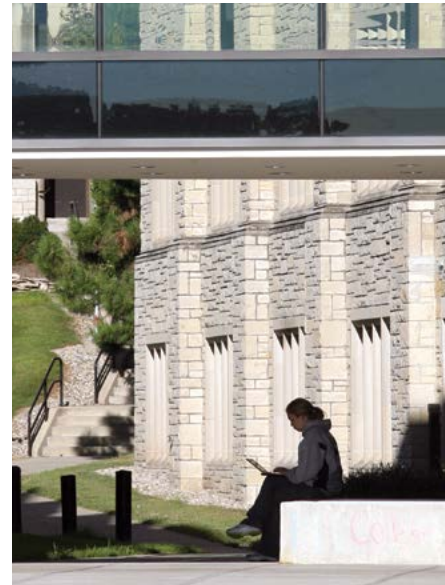# IV. ONLINE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, COMPLIANCE AND ASSESSMENT

The Department of Online Program Development, Compliance and Assessment assists academic programs in development and growth of 100 percent online programs; ensures compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, including state authorization laws related to online education; and establishes and oversees a program of assessment and reporting for Learning Ventures.

A. Online program development

Strategic selection of online program offerings is essential to the continual success of UT's online learning operation. Factors for consideration include mission, current offerings and market research.

Learning Ventures works interdependently with academic units by coordinating and facilitating the collaboration of faculty and administration to explore and develop online curricula/degree offerings. Building and maintaining formal and informal networks and relationships across the University is critical to fostering collaboration. To that end, Learning Ventures professionals attend one-on-one and small-group meetings with potential and existing strategic partners.

When potential new online programs are identified, Learning Ventures produces a feasibility study. The study includes an education and industry analysis, competitive

analysis, estimated marketing costs and recommendations. Table 3 shows that in 2013–2014, four feasibility studies were published. Two studies are in the beginning phase of development and two of the four published were converted and offered to UT students as 100 percent online degrees. The other two studies are under consideration.

Table 3. Online program feasibility studies		
Degree	**College**	**Status**
Master of art in criminal justice	College of Social Justice and Human Services	Offered 100 percent online
Master in educational technology	Judith Herb College of Education	Offered 100 percent online
Professional science masters in bioinformatics	College of Medicine and Life Sciences	Under consideration
Master of science in health information management	College of Health Sciences	Under consideration

Additionally, the following degrees and certificates are now officially offered in a 100 percent online format:

- Bachelor of science in criminal justice

- Master of art in recreation administration and leisure studies with a concentration in recreation administration

- Educational assessment specialist graduate certificate

- Diversity graduate certificate

Feasibility studies include:

- A review of education, industry and market dynamics, employment data, earning potential and job volume to determine the real-world employment outlook for students as they craft their careers post-graduation.

- Reviews of other schools' programs, degree requirements, estimated tuition costs and enrollment statistics. Programmatic strengths and weaknesses and differentiating factors will also be examined, to the extent possible, to lend context for later recommendations for The University of Toledo's program design.

- Estimated marketing costs based on industry-wide standards and program-specific enrollment rates.

- Recommendations regarding further exploration, development and support.

B. Compliance

Legal compliance with federal and state authorization laws and regulations affecting online education requires work with statewide, interstate and national systems. Currently, these laws and regulations are in flux, leaving educational institutions to deal with the issue of compliance with 50 vastly different sets of regulations.

Learning Ventures is responsible for:

- Researching and performing ongoing review of applicable laws and regulations

- Submitting required documents

- Maintaining required records

- Making necessary adjustments in response to senior administrative policies and changes in state laws and/or regulations

- 96 percent of students taking online courses reside in Ohio or Michigan.

- The remaining 4 percent of students are from these other states: Illinois, Indiana, California, Pennsylvania, Florida and Georgia.

- UT is authorized to deliver online postsecondary education in each of these listed states.

C. Assessment

Learning Ventures works to enhance online teaching and learning environments and to facilitate data-driven improvements through assessment support and evaluation. Researching best practices and performing assessment of the services Learning Ventures provides in support of online teaching and learning is an ongoing priority. Responsibilities of this unit include the following:

- Leading the development of assessment plans and procedures within the unit.

- Providing leadership in the review, evaluation, and continuous improvement of Learning Ventures' assessment plan.

- Providing a central repository for sharing of assessment information within the unit via Blackboard.

- Identifying and facilitating participation of professional development opportunities in order for staff to understand the nuances of service outcomes and apply best practices to continuously improving plans.

- Communicating with senior leadership and the University Assessment Committee through assessment reports and activities.

- Assisting in drafting reports to accrediting bodies, as needed.

- Participating as a member of the University Assessment Committee.