

UIS receives award for online education

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The University of Illinois at Springfield is getting national recognition for promoting online education.

The Sloan Consortium, based in Needham, Mass., announced Monday that UIS has been awarded the online education organization's Excellence in Institution-Wide Online Teaching and Learning Program honor.

"For UIS to receive a national award of this magnitude for excellence among the thousands of colleges and universities with online programs across the country is most extraordinary," UIS Chancellor Richard Ringeisen said in a news release.

The university's award is among six given by the Consortium this year for exceptional online education. UIS was the only institution to be recognized for institution-wide teaching and learning programming, the news release said.

"This award is especially significant because of the credentials of the selection committee, including university and association presidents of the highest caliber," said Ray Schroeder, director of UIS's Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning (OTEL). "The award is particularly gratifying because it belongs to everyone at UIS, not an individual or department, but to the entire university."

In 2002, Schroeder received the Consortium's Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual award. Another University of Illinois faculty member, Burks Oakley II, visiting research professor in OTEL, received the award the following year.

UIS's online course offerings began in 1998 with 30 students. This fall, nearly 50 percent of UIS's 4,855 students are taking at least one online class, and more than 1,000 students are enrolled in the school's 16 fully online degree programs and two certificates, the news release said.

Students enrolled in online classes live in every state except Rhode Island, as well as nine foreign countries.

Those who teach online courses are the same faculty members and adjunct faculty who teach on campus, and 185 instructors taught at least one class online this past academic year.

UIS has an e-tuition rate for its online programs in which Illinois and out-of-state students pay the same tuition for online courses. This fall, the e-tuition is \$201.75 per credit hour for new undergraduates

and \$251 per credit hour for new graduate students, according to the release.

"This relatively inexpensive tuition makes the UIS online programs accessible to potential students throughout the nation," Schroeder said.

UIS will receive its award during the 13th Sloan-C International Conference on Online Learning: The Power of Online Learning: Making a Difference, on Nov. 7 in Orlando, Fla.

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