

More than half of UIS students taking an online course

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The University of Illinois at Springfield, which has the largest online presence among the U of I's three campuses, has posted increases in the number of students taking online classes for 20 consecutive semesters.

UIS offers 16 fully online degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and has more than 1,000 students majoring in those degree and certificate programs.

About 2,350 of the college's 4,431 students — just over 53 percent — are taking at least one online class this semester, and 31 percent of UIS's students are taking only online courses this semester.

Contrast that with the U of I's fledgling Global Campus project. That program, launched with much fanfare in January, has only 10 students taking classes online so far.

However, U of I administrators in Champaign expect more than 100 students to be enrolled in Global Campus by September, when several new courses will be added.

Faculty from the U of I's three campuses — Champaign-Urbana, Chicago and Springfield — will design Global Campus programs and set credentials for the teachers.

UIS spokeswoman Cheryl Peck said the Springfield campus' only involvement to date with the Global Campus project is that Brookens Library is part of it.

But UIS's homegrown online programs continue to thrive.

"Our online education is determined by the faculty," Peck said. "They are encouraged by the Office of Technical and Enhanced Learning, headed by Ray Schroeder, that teaches faculty members how to teach online."

UIS takes great pride in its "blended learning," she said.

"We've seen students taking heavier course loads because they can take some courses online and some in the classroom," she said.

UIS courses are created so they may be taught either online or in traditional classroom settings, she said.

"All our online classes are taught by our faculty and are the exact same courses taught in the classroom," Peck said.

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