TODAY'S STUDENTS ARE DRIVING

THE ONLINE LEARNING IMPERATIVE

Let's face it, online learning is becoming mainstream. And why not? This learning modality provides ease of access, affordability and inclusion for an evolving, growing higher education population.

Increased digital learning opportunities, such as learning analytics, competency-based education and adaptive learning are quickly being embraced by today's students and allow for new learning methods to be adopted by institutions so that they can better serve students.

So where do we go from here?

TAKING THE PLUNGE

5.8M students **enrolled** in online courses

that's a **263% increase** over the last twelve years

2/3 of whom take online courses at **public institutions**

TODAY'S STUDENTS ARE UNIQUE

75% of undergrads are **25** or older

85% of Americans enrolled in post-secondary institutions **are contemporary** (or non-traditional) **learners**

Most students think online learning is the **same or better than the traditional classroom experience** **90%**

MANY CAN'T AFFORD TRADITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

WHO APPLIES?
48% of **high-achieving** students **from wealthy families**
23% of **high-achieving** students **from low-income families**

WHO'S ACCEPTED?
72% of students **from wealthy families**
3% of students **from low-income families**

77% of students **from wealthy families**
9% of students **from low-income families**
WHO EARNS A DEGREE?

WHO DROPS OUT?
While over 1/2 of college students graduate within 6 years, **the completion rate for low-income students is just 25%.**

WHO HAS DEBT?
The percentage of graduates who earn a bachelor's degree with **student loans continues to rise.**
< 50% 20 years ago
64% 10 years ago
> 71% today

AND HOW MUCH?
For the 1st time in history, student loan debt is **higher than credit card debt.**

$35,000 on average, **owed in student loans,** by the Class of 2015.

And remember, dropouts will likely default on student loans!

AFFORDABILITY REALIZED ONLINE

Universities often charge less for online courses.

$3.4K TO $8.4K
Annual tuition rate at the top non-profit schools offering the most popular online degrees.

EDTECH: A PROVEN CATALYST FOR SUCCESS

Students report that tech increases engagement
--- **77%** with **course materials**
--- **64%** with **professors**
--- **50%** with **fellow students**

University CIOs agree
--- **94%** digital curricular resources **improve learning** for students
--- **87%** provide **a richer experience** than traditional print materials

Students report that adaptive analytics lead to better learning outcomes
--- **87% better performance** with access to personalized data
--- **68%** continual **feedback drives improvement**

University CIOs agree
--- **96%** adaptive technology has great potential to **improve student learning outcomes**

In fact, 84% of students feel tech helps instructors teach better... but 4-in-5 say universities & professors could do more with technology.

MOMENTUM CONTINUES TO BUILD

For Academic Leaders
--- **77%** of institutions offering online learning say it's **crucial to their long-term strategy**
--- **71%** of academic leaders rate online learning outcomes the **same or superior to face-to-face**
--- **60%** of the schools with the **largest distance enrollments report faculty acceptance**

But For Faculty
--- **85%** have **very little experience** with digital learning materials and open educational resources (OER)
--- yet **71%** would **adopt digital/OER materials** if they are of high quality and improve affordability for their students

That may be why by the Fall of 2018, it's predicted that 48% of materials will be primarily digital.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE POLITICAL ARENA?

From '08 to '11, while many countries raised education expenditures by as much as 7%, the US made cuts. *Instead, they should be investing in education.*
--- Higher education leads to higher salaries
--- Higher salaries lead to more taxes collected
--- Taxpayers get a $200K ROI out of every US grad

Can POTUS enact change in his last year in office?
--- Congress eliminated year-round Pell Grants back in 2011
--- By offering new Pell Grant proposals for accelerated study, POTUS aims to help low-income students enroll and complete in college
--- Proposing that after completing one year of college, students would be eligible for $1915 more a year

And who will lead the political agenda over the next 4 years?

Online learning continues to be embraced by academic leaders and faculty who are focusing on pedagogical innovation, active learning approaches, as well as using adaptive learning tools and technologies. But the ultimate drivers are today's students, representing a patchwork of ages, backgrounds, challenges, motivations, and income levels. It is an exciting time to be part of OLC, as collectively we forge an affordable, accessible, and innovative future for higher education.

OLC ONLINE LEARNING CONSORTIUM

Achieving excellence in online learning. Won't you join us?
onlinelearning-c.org/joinus

SOURCES: 1. Online Report Card, Tracking Online Education in the United States, Babson Survey Research Group, February 2016, http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/read/online-report-card-tracking-online-education-united-states-2015/ 2. National Center for Education Statistics, Characteristics of Postsecondary Students, Institute of Education Sciences, Updated May 2015, http://.usa.gov/1KZLV00 3. US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Studies. 4. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2014, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_311.15.asp 5. "True Merit: Ensuring Our Brightest Students Have Access to Our Best Colleges and Universities", Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, 2016, http://bit.ly/1KCp7pg 6. Pell Institute and PennAHEAD, Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States, 2015, http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_45_Year_Trend_Report.pdf 7. Increasing College Opportunity for Low-Income Students, 2014, http://1.usa.gov/24bJ4IO 8. Congratulations, Class of 2015: 9. You're the Most Indebted Ever (For Now), Wall Street Journal, May 2015, http://on.wsj.com/1QWMPES 10. Can Online Learning Bend the Higher Education Cost Curve?, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015 11. 2016 Most Affordable Online Colleges & Degrees, OnlineLong, January 2016, http://bit.ly/1nQdij90 12. Are Learning Analytics the New Class? 87% of College Students. Perform Better with Access to Personalized Data, New Research Finds, McGraw Hill 2015, http://bit.ly/21Sopuz. bit.ly/1SHOfdg 13. Great Faith in the Instructional Benefits of Digital Technologies, Great Expectations for the Rising Use of OER, 2015, http://www.campuscomputing.net/item/2015-campus-computing-survey 14. Going DIGITAL: Faculty Perspective on Digital and OER Course Materials, Campus Computing, February 2016, http://www.campuscomputing.net/goingdigital2016 15. Education-at-a-Glance report, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, November 2015 http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm