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## Great Reasons to Join OLC

According to our Institutional Members

READ THEIR ONLINE LEARNING STORIES AND THE  
REASONS WHY THEY ARE PART OF THE OLC COMMUNITY.

# A global community dedicated to online learning

Membership with OLC involves being an integral part of a global community of online learning enthusiasts, experts, and practitioners. It means that no matter where you are — and we have members from 14 countries at last count — you can gain direct access to subject matter experts, receive training from industry leaders, and take advantage of some of the best professional development, best practice guidelines, advisory services, and networking opportunities in this field.

Through the pages of this ebook, OLC's members share success stories and showcase what we've done together to accelerate online learning. These Institutional Members are true innovators and continue to embrace and help shape this evolving field. We look forward to our continued — and new — partnerships to work with us as we collectively advance digital and online learning within the higher education landscape.



1. Partnering to advance online learning success with best practice research and guidance



2. Jumpstarting faculty expertise by enrolling in immersive, quality online teaching programs



3. Benchmarking and supporting online program success and accreditation with the OLC Quality Scorecard



4. Accelerating faculty development and supporting the continuous improvement of online programs



5. Facilitating a successful transition to online and blended learning programs with custom advisory



# #1 Partnering to advance online learning success with best practice research and guidance

For nearly two decades, OLC has enjoyed a long-standing, successful relationship with our academic partner, Penn State, who has worked with us to advance online learning nationally.

In 2011, we jointly launched the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) — an intensive, five-month, blended-learning leadership program designed to meet the developmental needs of professionals in this rapidly evolving sector of higher education. Together, we can proudly look back and acknowledge the 226 leaders in online learning who have graduated from this program over the past seven years.

Penn State, like many other OLC members, has told us that access to a community of peers is critical to their success. Karen Pollack, the Assistant Vice Provost of Penn State’s World Campus, and a definitive leader in this industry, has echoed this sentiment. Having participated in, and presented at, our Blended Workshops and Conferences, Karen relies on OLC as a constant source of best practice guidance to inform her strategic planning and modeling for the World Campus’ online and blended learning programs.

With an Institutional Membership, Karen — along with Penn State faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students — is active in a variety of OLC programs. “There aren’t many professional associations that are able to appeal to so many segments of our university community and still remain relevant,” she noted.

**“We have had active participation of faculty, staff, graduate students, and administrators. There aren’t many professional associations that are able to appeal to so many segments and remain relevant.”**

Karen Pollack,  
Ph.D. Assistant Vice Provost  
for Online Undergraduate and  
Blended Programs, Penn State  
Online, The World Campus



- ✓ Access to a community of peers
- ✓ Best practice guidance factoring into institutional development
  - OLC Research
  - OLC Quality Pillars
- ✓ Active participation from faculty, staff, graduate students, and administrators
  - Attending and presenting at conferences
  - Attending workshops at the OLC Institute





## #2 Jumpstarting faculty expertise by enrolling in immersive, quality online teaching programs

While some OLC members rely on the consortium to supplement their internal online teaching programs, others like Baltimore's Coppin State University (CSU), a Historically Black College and University, have turned to OLC to provide their institution with an online learning jumpstart.

Dr. Dionne Curbeam, Director of Instructional Technology at Coppin State, strongly felt that if CSU was to offer online classes, its faculty needed to be 'retrained' so that courses taught online would match the integrity and quality of their offline counterparts.

To achieve this, CSU enrolled a handful of faculty in OLC's Online Teaching Certificate program. Dionne notes she chose this program because it is based on OLC's five pillars of quality in online education: learning effectiveness, access, scale, faculty satisfaction, and student satisfaction. The breadth of the Certificate program was, and is, an important factor.

Three years later, Dionne speaks proudly of the improved quality of CSU's online learning initiatives, which boast over 35 faculty who have completed the certificate program.

What makes her most proud? "When we started, I had to beg our faculty take the program. Now," she says with a laugh, "they are clamoring to enroll."

**"There is no question the OLC Online Teaching Certificate program has improved the quality of our programs. In fact, our faculty are now clamoring to enroll."**

Dr. Dionne Curbeam,  
Director of Instructional  
Technology, Coppin State  
University



- ✓ Need for quality online skills to match the quality of offline programs
- ✓ Turned to OLC for the Online Teaching Certificate Program
- ✓ Based on the OLC pillars of quality in online education
- ✓ Resulted in improved quality of Coppin State University's online programs
- ✓ Over 36 graduates of OLC to date and more in line to attend



## #3 Benchmarking and supporting online program success and accreditation with the OLC Quality Scorecard

In the mid-to-late 1990s, Wichita State University (WSU) was clearly an early adopter of online education, unveiling a handful of online courses. By 2007, they offered several online degree programs, approved by their accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission. At the time, however, the HLC reserved the right to revisit the accreditation if the strength of the infrastructure was ever in question.

WSU took this initiative seriously and formed a department to oversee all online learning initiatives and brought on Mark Porcaro as Executive Director. Mark's sole focus was to expand the online learning infrastructure and ensure program success.

By 2015, having worked closely with a variety of WSU faculty and staff, this new group created 16 new online undergraduate and graduate programs in Business, Health, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Education.

To ensure full accreditation, and to support a successful roll out of WSU's fully online programs, Mark sought out a 'best practices' tool to benchmark how they were doing and to make sure they were headed in the right direction. The solution came in the form of an Institutional Membership with OLC and application of the OLC Quality Scorecard.

"The OLC Quality Scorecard gives us a perspective on what areas are on track as well as a framework for where we should focus our efforts," Mark said. "Having that benchmarking really helped us shape our plan and see what we're doing right and where we still need to improve."

**"The OLC Quality Scorecard serves as a national baseline to show us how we benchmark against online learning best practices – allowing us to see how we're doing and where we need to improve."**

Mark Porcaro,  
Executive Director of  
Online Learning,  
Wichita State University



- ✓ Framework to give us key points of where we should be focused
- ✓ Used as an evidence file as part of accreditation
- ✓ Measure the effectiveness through a triangular view using the OLC Quality Scorecard
- ✓ Serves as a guide to help us plan and execute quickly





## #4 Accelerating faculty development and supporting the continuous improvement of online programs

Not long ago, Texas State University was experiencing a period of extremely rapid growth, resulting in an immediate need for faculty development and an even longer term need to assess and advance the quality of its online programs. Debbie Thorne, Texas State University Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Professor of Marketing, reached out to OLC to help augment and accelerate the pace of their internal online learning initiatives.

Texas State formed a partnership with OLC to conduct a Texas State-only cohort of the OLC Online Teaching program, which ensured that all faculty who taught online had appropriate training and could effectively deliver on the promises of the University's online education programs. What's more, Debbie acknowledged, is that it gave faculty the opportunity to earn a recognized credential which, she added, was highly valued by faculty.

Texas State also put the OLC Quality Scorecard to good use by implementing its rigorous self-assessment process and used it as a guide for continuous improvement of their online education programs.

"The OLC Quality Scorecard is grounded in research, best practices, and expert opinion," she said, "so I know the University is well-served by implementing the self-assessment process and demonstrating our continuous improvement."

**"OLC is the standard-bearer in the field of online education. I know that I can count on the products, conferences, and knowledge that OLC provides to add value to Texas State University's online programs and services."**

Debbie Thorne,  
Associate VP for Academic Affairs  
and Professor of Marketing,  
Texas State University



- ✓ Formed partnership to establish Texas State-only online teaching cohort
- ✓ 27 Online Teaching Certificate Graduates
- ✓ Use OLC Quality Scorecard for self-assessment and as a guide for continued improvement
  - A proprietary OLC research-based evaluation and benchmarking tool
  - Measures and quantifies strengths and weaknesses of your online programs

# #5 Facilitating a successful transition to online and blended learning programs with custom advisory

A longtime Institutional Member, SUNY Downstate Medical Center, asked the OLC Advisory Services team if they could support its faculty development initiatives as they transitioned into a blended and online learning environment.

With over 20 full-time faculty across four academic departments, OLC needed to design a comprehensive, custom program for the group including virtual and on-site training, a full-day speaking engagement, and ongoing consultation and advisement.

The results? "Complete satisfaction." At least, that's what Dan Ehlke, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management, reported. In fact, our satisfaction survey echoed Dan's commentary, with an advisor rating of 96%.

"Each of us was very impressed with the expertise and guidance that OLC shared with us, both in-person and virtually," Dan said. "For me personally, the experience has opened up entirely new venues of online instruction I did not know existed."

"Their training," he said, "has now infused me with inspiration and passion to make my students' experience in this field as rewarding as possible."

**"The experience has opened up entirely new venues of online instruction I did not even know existed. Their training has now infused me with inspiration and passion."**

Daniel C. Ehlke,  
Assistant Professor of Health Policy  
and Management,  
SUNY-Downstate Medical Center  
School of Public Health



- ✓ Jumpstart faculty development
- ✓ Help transition to blended online environment
- ✓ Custom onsite and virtual training
- ✓ Ongoing consultation and advisement
- ✓ Focus on student success and engagement





NETWORKING &  
COLLABORATION



PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



INSTITUTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



RECOGNITION &  
AFFILIATION

## Achieving excellence in online learning. Won't you join us?

As the leading organization devoted to advancing quality online education, the Online Learning Consortium is thrilled to offer professional development, instruction, best practice publications, and expert guidance to OLC members.

Through our webinars and conferences, our quality learning opportunities, and the support we offer one another, we're proud to be a part of the swift growth and transformation of today's higher education ecosystem.

For more information, visit [onlinelearning-c.org/join](http://onlinelearning-c.org/join) or give us a call, 617.716.1414.



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