2021

Emerging technologies, Effective Teaching Practices, and Innovative Course Design.

Online Learning Strategic Plan

Sul Ross State University

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is a public, comprehensive, Master's degree-granting, multi-campus university, providing on-site education and distance education across 19 counties, including the borderland regions of central and west Texas. SRSU, proudly designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), is committed to enhancing student learning through low student-to-teacher ratios, quality faculty, and hands-on experiences. SRSU builds on the diversity of our students, their work and life backgrounds, and their individual personal and professional goals as the cornerstone for each academic program. Offering online learning opportunities for over 20 years, SRSU has an established reputation of providing quality learning experiences to online students. SRSU is now offering online degrees in the following areas.

- MAg Animal Science
- MAg Natural Resource Conservation
- MA English
- MA History
- MA Political Science
- MPA Public Administration
- MS Criminal Justice
- MBA Business
- MS Homeland Security
- MS Health & Human Performance
- MEd Reading Specialist
- MEd Educational Diagnostician
- MEd Counseling
- MEd General
- MEd Educational Leadership

New Graduate Online Programs at Sul Ross State University

M.S. Biology ~ 2020

M.Ed.
Educational Instructional
Technology ~ 2020

M.S. Sports
Administration 2021

Vision for Online Learning: *Sul Ross State University will provide access and quality online learning to all students through emerging technologies, effective teaching practices, and innovative course design.*
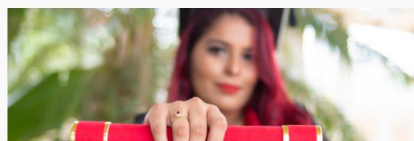
MS Health & Human Performance Program ~ Top Academic Assessment Report

MS Homeland Security Program ~ Top Academic Assessment Report

Who We Are

Sul Ross State University

OVERVIEW

Student Enrollment

2,044

Alpine, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Uvalde

# of Online Graduate Programs

18

Average Cost for 36 hour Online Program

$13,704

Average Cost for 30 hour Online Program

$9,148

Small Class Sizes

Student Clubs and Organizations for Online Students

Personal Attention

Quick Facts

Graduate Student Population

557

Alpine, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Uvalde
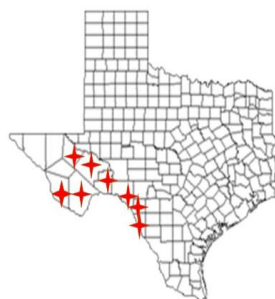
Faculty/Student Ratio

1:13

Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Percent of Hispanic Full Time Enrollment

64.01%

Undergraduate Full Time % Receiving Financial Aid

77%

GOAL: SRSU will continue to enhance support structures fostering retention, progression, and graduation within online learning

Strategic Objectives

- Create and maintain a communication plan for online learners
- Ensure all university processes are user friendly for online students
- Provide equitable, engaging, and comprehensive academic support for online learners at all SRSU campuses

Actions

- Provide orientation and preparation for learning in the online environment
- Create specific opportunities for online learners to become involved in their program outside of the classroom
- Provide strong technical support and instructional services for Learning Management Systems and related technologies
- Create specific awards for online students
- Make data-driven decisions that address student needs and demands for online learning opportunities and resources
- Utilize student retention tools to identify struggling students so that the appropriate outreach may be used

Assessment Measures

- Student Retention Rate, Graduation Rate, Online Course Completion Rates, Course Evaluations, Satisfaction Surveys, Use of Academic Services, Attendance, Alumni Membership, Help Desk call records, and LTAC request

GOAL: SRSU will implement support systems to continuously enhance online course quality, instructional technology, and faculty guidance.

Strategic Objectives

- Create and provide training opportunities and support to improve online course and program quality with a heightened focus on cognitive presence, teacher presence, and social presence in online course delivery
- Support accessibility, academic integrity, and intellectual property rights within course delivery
- Organize regular evaluation of online course offerings and promote data-driven decision-making that is focused on student needs as well as the changing needs of society
- Improve self-efficacy and confidence around integration of technology and online teaching

Actions

- Promote the Online Course Redesign & Faculty Certification Program through SRSU Instructional Services
- Provide ongoing training opportunities through SRSU Instructional Services centered on best practices for instructional design, use of instructional technology tools, and assessments of online learning
- Develop a faculty mentoring program from Faculty Certification Program
- Incorporate universal design for learning to provide broad accessibility to all learners and to support standardization of course content delivery

Assessment Measures

- Course Evaluations, Self-Reflection Rubric for Online Teaching, Student Retention, Graduation Rates, Faculty Mentor/Peer Evaluations, Online Training Evaluations, Attendance of ODE (Online Distance Education)/IT Committees/Teaching & Learning Council, Policies and Guidance of ODE/IT Committees/Teaching and Learning Council, LMS student support service use, LMS support service use, Online Course Redesign & Faculty Certification Completion Rate

GOAL: SRSU will target future ready and maketable skills to support online learning.

Strategic Objectives

- Conduct annual analysis of online programs to stay current and to meet the changing needs of industry and society.
- Identify digital literacies to include Communication, Creativity, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking (4C's) skills in online programs.
- Integrate listening skills, diversity and cultural sensitivity to prepare for global workforce.

Actions

- Promote the development of student presentations in both asynchronous and synchronous formats
- Incorporate Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound (SMART) goals
- Highlight programs for digital workforce/digital literacy
- Share resources for industry needs in future ready skills in Texas and Beyond

Assessment

- Skill rubrics for QEP (communication) and Presentations in virtual world, Enrollment, Retention, Certificates, Job Placements, Alumni Membership, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Industry Partnership

Future Ready Careers

- ⊘ · Healthcare & Medical
- ⊘ Education
  ~ M.Ed.

- ⊘ Environmental Science
- ⊘ Information Technology

- ⊘ Oil and Gas
- ⊘ Manufacturing

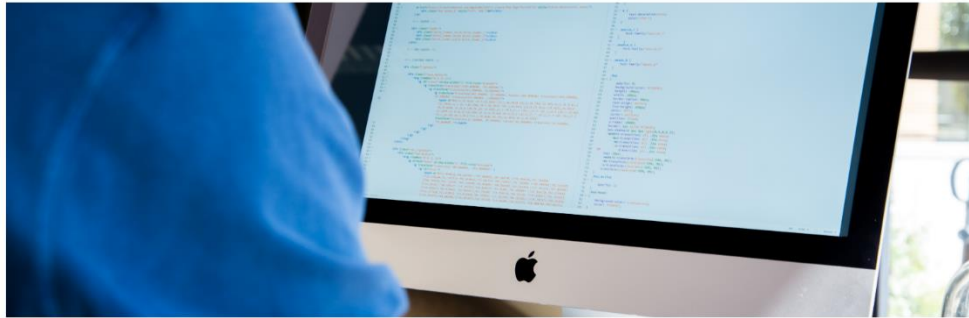- ⊘ Logistics
- ⊘ Mining

- ⊘ Small Business Development
- ⊘ Hospitality & Tourism

- ⊘ Creative Works
- ⊘ Computer Science

- ⊘ Data Analyst
- ⊘ Cybersecurity

GOAL: SRSU will expand infrastructure and policies to continuously improve the quality of online learning experiences, instructional technology, faculty training, and support services.

Objectives

- Support online learning through faculty development by providing technical and support services for Blackboard and related technologies to students and faculty and by assisting faculty in incorporating emerging technologies into instructional strategies

Actions

- Creation of a Communication Plan
- Support Online Course Redesign & Faculty Certification Program
- Provide Training and Ongoing Support
- Provide access to Blackboard Support
- Provide access to Library Resources to include Interlibrary Loan and Texshare Cards
- Increase applications and resources to integrate into Blackboard
- Improve Accessibility for Student Resources
- Improve flexibility and availability of Student Resources and Faculty
- Increase classroom capability of hybrid technologies
- Provide for increased opportunities for student involvement in online programs
- Improve equity and accessibility of support services to include OER resources, universal design for learning, and mobile compatibility
- Provide hotspots and accessibility support to students to improve access to broadband services

Assessment (Should these be listed in paragraph form like they are in the other sections?)

- Instructional Services Administrative Assessment Report
- Increased Retention and Graduation Rates
- Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Usage Reports
- Satisfaction Surveys

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations will be modified in order to reflect the online content and learning of the courses within an online program. Such modifications should allow for student comment on established areas of importance and the fact that the course is being delivered online as well as considerations of improved cognitive presence, teacher presence, and social presence too. Possible additions to current evaluation criteria include ease of access, quality of interaction between students and faculty, and the level of availability offered by the faculty member.

Mentor Program

In addition to online training modules, online mentoring programs will be developed and implemented. Peer mentors will assist faculty in all aspects of their approach to teaching online. Mentoring will support and encourage faculty as they adhere to established online policy. To this end, mentors function as the connective tissue between institution and its teachers, and their role reduces teaching online as an isolating experience in favor of one guided by directed and compassionate support. Much of the focus in mentoring will be on developing specific approaches commensurate with the challenges of online learning, such as consistent and substantive interaction with students, which involves an intentionally broad framework that recognizes the importance of active, flexible, and collaborative teaching. This dialogic approach fosters meaningful interaction in terms of teaching and mentoring and offers the opportunity to reinforce best practices for online learning.

Andragogy

Any approach to teaching must incorporate the realities of contemporary online education. Hence, rather than conceive of online learning as something diametrically opposed to classroom teaching faculty should be reassured that much of what they employ in the classroom is viable online. At the same time, online teaching brings unique challenges and opportunities. Effective online teaching embraces the intersection between knowledge and technology, and it appreciates how technology and content influence and constrain one another. Knowledge of these areas allows teachers to embrace the strengths online andragogy offers, such as networking opportunities, unparalleled access to interactive learning opportunities, direct mentoring with faculty, and the lower costs of participating on online classes. Such awareness also presumes that we, as educators, embrace education as a fundamental question of rights. In

this respect, our delivery, our andragogy, can make a fundamental difference in that online teaching can facilitate a respect for human rights, the lack of which is a principal determinant of why prosperity is so unequally shared. A self-assessment and evaluation of a faculty andragogy pursuant to quality online learning will be created in order to support faculty growth and development.

SRSU Online Honors and Recognition

SRSU was an early adopter of the promotion of online learning for graduate programs. By enhancing our capacity to advocate for quality online learning experiences, SRSU continues to ensure learners benefit from an integrated and fully connected online learning environment. SRSU is proud to feature the following programs that have gained SRSU notoriety in online learning.

Online Learning Successes

MA Political Science
Ranked in Top 10 among Online Master's in Political Science for affordability and flexibility

M.Ed. Counseling
Ranked #6 Nationally for Most Affordable Online Program

MS Health and Human Performance
Best Online Master's Degree in Human Perforamnce

COVID-19 presented an opportunity to increase access and opportunities for SRSU learners to pursue education in flexible and innovative ways. The SRSU Online Learning Strategic Plan was developed through a yearlong study and collaboration of best research practices, student focus groups, and collaboration of stakeholders' representative of faculty, staff, and leadership. The SRSU Online Learning Strategic Plan maps the direction for online learning for the next three years at SRSU.

Online Learning Strategic Planning Subcommittee Members

- Dr. Jennifer Miller-Ray, chair of ODE subcommittee for strategic planning
- Dr. Jeanne Qvarnstrom
- Dr. Chris Herrera
- Dr. Thomas Matula
- Dr. Jessica Velasco
- Dr. Jay Downing
- Dr. Barbara Tucker
- Dean April Aultman Becker
- Carol Fairlie
- Dr. Michael Ortiz
- Dr. Ian Peddie
- Dr. Bibi Gutierrez
- Dr. Laura Payne
- Marjorie Scott
- Tim Parsons
- Estella Vega
- George Hernandez
- David Gibson
- Dr. Matthew Moore
- Dr. Bonnie Warnock
- Dr. Audrey Taylor
- Dr. Dexter Wakefield
- Dr. Patricia Harveson

Citations

Lin's (2018) An online learning model to facilitate learners' rights to education. Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 12(1), 127-143.

Kelly, B., McCormack, M., Reeves, J., Brooks, D. C., & O'Brien, J. (2021). 2021 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report: Information Security Edition. EDUCAUSE.

Kop, R., & Hill, A. (2008). Connectivism: Learning theory of the future or vestige of the past?. The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 9(3).

Garrison, D. R. (2007). Online community of inquiry review: Social, cognitive, and teaching presence issues. Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 11(1), 61-72.

Gikandi, J. W., Morrow, D., & Davis, N. E. (2011). Online formative assessment in higher education: A review of the literature. Computers & education, 57(4), 2333-2351.

Tannehill, D. B., Serapiglia, C. P., & Guiler, J. (2018). Administrative or faculty control of online course development and teaching: A comparison of three institutions. Information Systems Education Journal, 16(3), 26.

King, J., & South, J. (2017). Reimagining the role of technology in higher education: A supplement to the national education technology plan. US Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology.

eCampusOntario. (2018). https://www.ecampusontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/eCampusOntario_strategic_Plan_2018-2021.pdf

The University of Southern Mississippi. (2016). http://www.gcjxn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/StrategicPlan.pdf

Jackson, B. (2017). Evaluating the online teacher: An analysis of the iNACOL Quality Standards for Online Teaching. In *EdMedia+ Innovate Learning* (pp. 558-565). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).

https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/faculty/design/

The world is changing quickly, and we are committed to adapting with it!