

WCET *Frontiers* “What’s Next” Interviews

Spring 2020

Interviewer: Russ Adkins

Mary Niemiec, Associate Vice President for Digital Education and Director, University of Nebraska Online shares a university’s consortial approach adding online courses during Covid-19.

The University of Nebraska Online uses a highly collaborative and coordinated NU system-wide approach to aggregate resources to support delivery of online programs to meet student demand and workforce needs. Working with the University’s four campuses (each of which is separately accredited), NU Online “markets, nurtures and regenerates” a balanced and comprehensive array of more than 150 fully online bachelors, masters, doctoral and certificate programs.

Collaboration and coordination pay dividends. Leveraging the strength of a collaborative approach to the use of university resources, the University of Nebraska Online is allocating grants to enable the strategic and coordinated conversion of on-campus or blended courses to high quality online, and to scale instructional design and digital tools. Campus leadership is submitting proposals to use a portion of funds available to create online offerings of high enrollment ‘gateway/bottleneck’ courses, and core undergraduate and graduate courses that have never been taught online. Already approved for funding to enable summer-term delivery are more than 100 online courses across multiple disciplines totaling an investment of \$375,000. Some of the courses slated for conversion to online are:

- 31 undergraduate business courses and 5 graduate business courses.
- 3 courses to support summer term professional development for schoolteachers.
- A masters level Math endorsement program for middle school teachers.
- A 200-level psychology course that is a prerequisite for 400-level courses.

Consortial model applied to a single University system. The University of Nebraska Online uses a highly collaborative and coordinated NU system-wide approach to support building online programs to meet student demand and workforce needs. Working with the University’s four campuses (each of which is separately accredited), NU Online “markets, nurtures and regenerates” a balanced and comprehensive array of more than 150 fully online bachelors, masters, doctoral and certificate programs.