

Contact: Rachel Boon






2020-21 DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the 2020-21 Distance Education Report.

Executive Summary: The Distance Education Report is submitted as required by Board Policy 3.12.D. The universities' efforts to use distance, extension and continuing education continue to address Board of Regents' Strategic Plan priorities: 1) ensuring access to education and student success, 2) promoting and supporting innovation in teaching, research and economic development, and 3) promoting the effective use of resources to meet institutional missions.

The response to the Covid-19 pandemic continued to increase the need and interest for courses provided through modes of distance education. The growth in course sections, enrollments and credit hours noted in Table 1 demonstrates the significance of the efforts of faculty and staff to provide these courses and help sustain student progress towards their degrees. In addition, the universities found numerous ways to collaborate in providing high-quality distance education to Iowans. This includes coordinating on the Board of Regents led study of the landscape of distance education to inform future strategic direction and collaborative efforts.

Table 1: Distance Education Summary

Distance Education	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change Over 5 Yrs
Credit courses and programs¹						
No. of programs ²	174	183	189	195	197	13.2% 
No. of course sections	3,581	3,383	3,707	3,739	6,810	90.2% 
No. of student enrollments (dup)	78,383	85,456	96,483	98,147	181,867	132% 
Total number of credit hours	222,397	241,206	267,371	269,811	506,006	128% 
Non-credit courses						% Change Over 4 Yrs
No. of student enrollments (dup)	1,091,471 ₃	745,229	723,004	589,013	605,072	-18.8% 

- 2020-2021 top subject areas with highest credit enrollment:
 - Humanities, Arts & Sciences; Business; Education; Social & Behavioral Sciences; and Engineering are the top five areas, constituting nearly 90% of all enrolled credits through distance education. (Attachment B)
- 2020-2021 top subject areas with the highest non-credit enrollment:
 - Health professions and clinical sciences, agriculture and natural resources, human sciences extension and outreach, and youth development (4-H). These areas account for more than 80% of non-credit enrollment with significant growth in health professions and other health related registrations. (Attachment C)

¹ Only off-campus courses and programs are included. Registrations do not include Saturday and evening classes on campus.

² Includes undergraduate and graduate degree, certificate and endorsement offerings. Certificates and endorsements serve to meet an agency's requirements to practice a profession or to show proficiency in a topic or subject area.

³ In 2016-2017 the University of Iowa included training offered to university employees only

Introduction

This report reflects on distance education offerings at Iowa’s public universities during the 2020-2021 academic year. It is easy to forget that, as recent as that was, in Fall 2020, the world was still in the testing and development phase of Covid-19 vaccines, testing access was scarce, and treatment options seemed limited. In response, colleges, universities and even K-12 schools across the country were grappling with the degree to which online and distance education delivery modes, in combination with other mitigation efforts, could enable continuity for students.

Iowa State University, the University of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa each maximized existing technology platforms and provided faculty, staff and student support to ensure maintenance of high-quality courses, while not totally eschewing the value of face-to-face opportunities. Hybrid, sometimes called hy-flex, enrollments grew, but online delivery of undergraduate, graduate and non-credit courses was a critical factor in a successful academic year.

Distance Education Student Enrollment

Table 2 displays a summary of enrollment by delivery mode, level and credit. For undergraduate and graduate credit courses, the most frequently used delivery mode is the web; for graduate credit courses, on-site instruction at extended campus locations is a significant delivery mode as well. These courses are typically at locations in Des Moines, the Quad Cities, Sioux City and other communities around the state.

Table 2: 2020-2021 Distance Education Enrollments by Level

Mode	UG Enrollment			Grad. Enrollment			Credit Enrollment Total			Non-Credit Enroll. Total		
	SUI	ISU	UNI	SUI	ISU	UNI	SUI	ISU	UNI	SUI	ISU	UNI
Web-based												
1. Semester based courses	39,438	68,601	35,393	12,610	5,652	4,453	52,048	74,253	39,846	20,700	259,347	8,249
2. Guided independent study	0	0	439	0	49	78	0	49	517	86,860	0	0
On-Site	15	0	476	148	390	667	163	390	1,143	95,943	111,149	480
Other Off-Campus	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	24	10,187	0	0
Hybrid courses	400	28	11,524	801	401	280	1,201	429	11,804	11,798	0	359
TOTAL	39,853	68,629	47,856	13,559	6,492	5,478	53,412	75,121	53,334	225,488	370,496	9,088

A snapshot of enrollment in just the fall term shows that overall growth in distance education leaped upwards in Fall 2020 as some courses that were traditionally face-to-face courses were shifted online to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. Due to a change in the student information system at ISU, data could not be reported in the same format as previously for students in only distance education courses (see footnote on Table 3).

Table 3: Three-Year Trend: Headcount, Enrollment and Credit Hours (End-of-term counts)

	Students in Only Distance Ed courses			Students in On-campus & Distance Ed courses			Total		
	Undup Hdcnt	Total Course Enrlmnts	Total Credit Hours	Undup Hdcnt	Total Course Enrlmnts	Total Credit Hours	Total Undup Hdcnt	Total Course Enrlmnts	Total Credit Hours
Fall 2020									
SUI	3,174	6,886	20,130	12,679	17,595	43,151	15,853	24,481	63,281
ISU*	--	--	--	12,666	--	36,098	12,666	--	36,098
UNI	1,181	2,568	6,958	7,576	22,184	62,559	8,757	24,752	69,517
TOTAL	4,355	9,454	27,088	32,921	36,779	141,808	37,276	49,233	168,896
Fall 2019									
SUI	2,942	6,307	18,303	12,663	16,103	38,762	15,605	22,410	57,065
ISU	1,357	2,321	6,652	7,161	9,344	26,029	8,518	11,665	32,681
UNI	1,264	1,963	5,054	2,476	3,225	8,667	3,740	5,188	13,721
TOTAL	5,563	10,591	30,009	22,300	28,672	73,458	27,863	39,263	103,467
Fall 2018									
SUI	2,961	6,370	18,521	12,069	14,966	35,807	15,030	21,336	54,328
ISU	1,443	2,311	6,812	6,825	8,833	24,466	8,268	11,144	31,278
UNI	1,407	2,254	6,131	2,440	3,098	9,148	3,847	5,352	15,279
TOTAL	5,811	10,935	31,464	21,334	26,897	69,421	27,145	37,832	100,885

*There were 12,666 total students enrolled in a course whose course section is flagged as overseen by a distance education unit. Unduplicated students are unavailable for this reporting period. Additionally, delivery method by individual course registration was unavailable, thus all enrollments and credit hours are being reported under the definition of on campus and distance ed courses column.

Collaborative Efforts Among Regent Universities

“The Regent Universities will be Iowa’s premier providers of distance education at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels in targeted programs and content areas. Regent distance education will leverage educational technology, encourage collaborative and complementary offerings by the three universities; and be known for providing distance education programs that are of the same high quality as on campus programs.” (https://www.iowaregents.edu/media/cms/Distance_Education_Strategic_Plan_2_62FF60C525C60.pdf)

Part of this vision is attained by the efforts of the State Extension, Continuing and Distance Education Council (hereafter SECDEC). This group has met regularly for decades and is a collaborative council dedicated to the exchange of ideas and expertise to ensure that distance and online education means the same thing to students and faculty alike.

Topics from this past year’s SECDEC meetings included but were not limited to:







- State Authorization
- Degrees When Due
- Distance Education tuition and fee structure at each institution
- Quality Assurance and peer review
- Structure and staffing of distance education units at each campus including position descriptions and salary schedules
- HLC accreditation visits
- Support for the two Regent Resources Centers (Western Iowa Regional Resource Center and Lakeside Lab) including:
 - Budgets
 - Staffing

- IT
- Outreach
- Preparation for and attendance at Regent sub-committee meetings regarding the hiring of consultants (Huron) to assess the landscape of digital delivery
- Discussions regarding the structure of the distance degree completions programs with follow up meetings plan to assess relevancy of curricula
- Non-credit activity and CEUs

Other collaborations are also reviewed and maintained by SECDEC. For example, Regent universities continue to deliver courses through the Regents Alternative Pathway to Iowa Licensure (RAPIL) program to help talented professionals answer the call to teach. <https://iowateacherintern.org/>. In 2021, the RAPIL program recommended 18 individuals for initial Iowa Teacher Licensure, with an additional 76 currently enrolled in either classes or the internship year.

The Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) available online at all three universities is an ongoing collaboration, though variations exist in some program options and requirements (Table 4). Enrollment in the BLS rebounded in 2020-21 with additional strong growth in completions in the BLS and the Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAS). The decrease in new admissions to the BLS may reflect a need to update this degree program to ensure relevancy for student needs, an effort already underway with SECDEC that will happen in concert with the Council of Provosts.

Table 4: 2020-2021 Bachelor of Liberal Studies and Bachelor of Applied Studies Participation

PROGRAM	SUI	ISU	UNI	TOTAL	% change from Prior Year
Bachelor of Liberal Studies					
Enrollment	284	212	197	693	4.8% 
Graduates	87	76	43	206	6.7% 
New Admissions	130	80	76	286	-14.4% 
Bachelor of Applied Studies (SUI only)					
Enrollment	113			113	-10% 
Graduates	38			38	26.7% 
New Admissions	43			43	38.7% 

Distance Education Program Offerings

See university websites for lists of programs that are fully or partially available via distance education.

<https://distance.uiowa.edu/>

<http://www.distance.iastate.edu/>

<https://continuinged.uni.edu/distance>

New Distance Learning Programs

Instit.	Degree or Certificate	Program Major***	Delivery Method/Site(s)	Requires an on-campus component.
UNI	BAS	Managing Business and Organizations	WWW	
UNI	Ed.D.	Doctor of Education	WWW/On-site	X
SUI	CERT (GR)	Institutional Research and Effectiveness	Hybrid	
SUI	DNP	Nursing- For MSN and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN)	Hybrid	X
SUI	Ed.D.	Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (Higher Education)	Hybrid Sioux City (Briar Cliff) Bettendorf (Scott CC) Des Moines (Pappajohn Center)	
SUI	Ed.D.	Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (PK-12 Administration)	Hybrid Sioux City (Briar Cliff) Bettendorf (Scott CC) Des Moines (Pappajohn Center)	

Western Iowa Regional Resource Center

The Western Iowa Regents Resource Center (WIRRC) operates in partnership with four community colleges, serving a 25-county region of western and southern Iowa. WIRRC functions with one part-time coordinator in Sioux City, one full-time secretary/transfer specialist in Council Bluffs, along with part-time transfer specialists in Creston, Harlan, Sheldon and Sioux City.

WIRRC operates on three lines of effort in support of the Board of Regents Strategic Plan, the Regents Distance Education Strategic Plan, and the strategic plans of the three universities. The lines of effort are:

- Personalized interaction with potential students,
- Promote distance education options, and
- Coordinate educational, cultural, and economic development outreach

Personalized interaction with potential students

Transfer specialists met with 146 students to discuss transfer opportunities. This is a decline of 7% from the previous year, but entirely due to the effects of the pandemic. Prior to the campus closures in March, the specialists had seen an increase of 15% in prospective students. The specialists interacted with 16 College Experience classes at the Community Colleges, five new student orientations, and 19 sessions with students at the Sioux City Career Academy.

Promote distance education options

Identify community engagements. The Coordinator and transfer specialists conducted over 20 meetings with regional employers, participated in eight radio interviews, met with several high

school guidance counselors, and leaders at both Area Education Agencies. WIRRC representatives also delivered three service club presentations, participated in six transfer fairs, one Army Reserve outreach event, and two corporate or hospital higher education fairs.

Coordinate educational, cultural, and economic development outreach

WIRRC coordinated the delivery of an outreach event by the Iowa Center for Agricultural Safety and Health to the Agricultural program at Southwestern Community College in Creston. A planned event in Mapleton was cancelled due to the pandemic. Transfer specialists helped implement and promote the visit by University of Northern Iowa transfer recruiters to campuses in Creston, Council Bluffs, Harlan, Sheldon, and Sioux City, resulting in over 100 potential student leads. The University of Iowa's Young Writers Workshop, aimed at both students and teachers, had been coordinated for Sioux City but cancelled due to the pandemic. The Center coordinated interaction between Iowa State University's Aerospace Engineering program and the Atlantic school district's Aviation STEM program. The Center had coordinated with the Northwest AEA for a professor from UNI to present at a professional development conference during the summer of 2020, but was cancelled due to the pandemic.

Iowa State University's Forward Learning Experience provided support to the STEM festival in Cherokee. Planned events in Avoca, Clarinda, Earlham, and Oakland were cancelled due to the pandemic. WIRRC coordinated with the University of Iowa's Grant Wood Art Colony to interact with Iowa Western Community College art students in Council Bluffs and to conduct printmaking art projects in Harlan.

Challenges, opportunities, and planned efforts for the next academic year

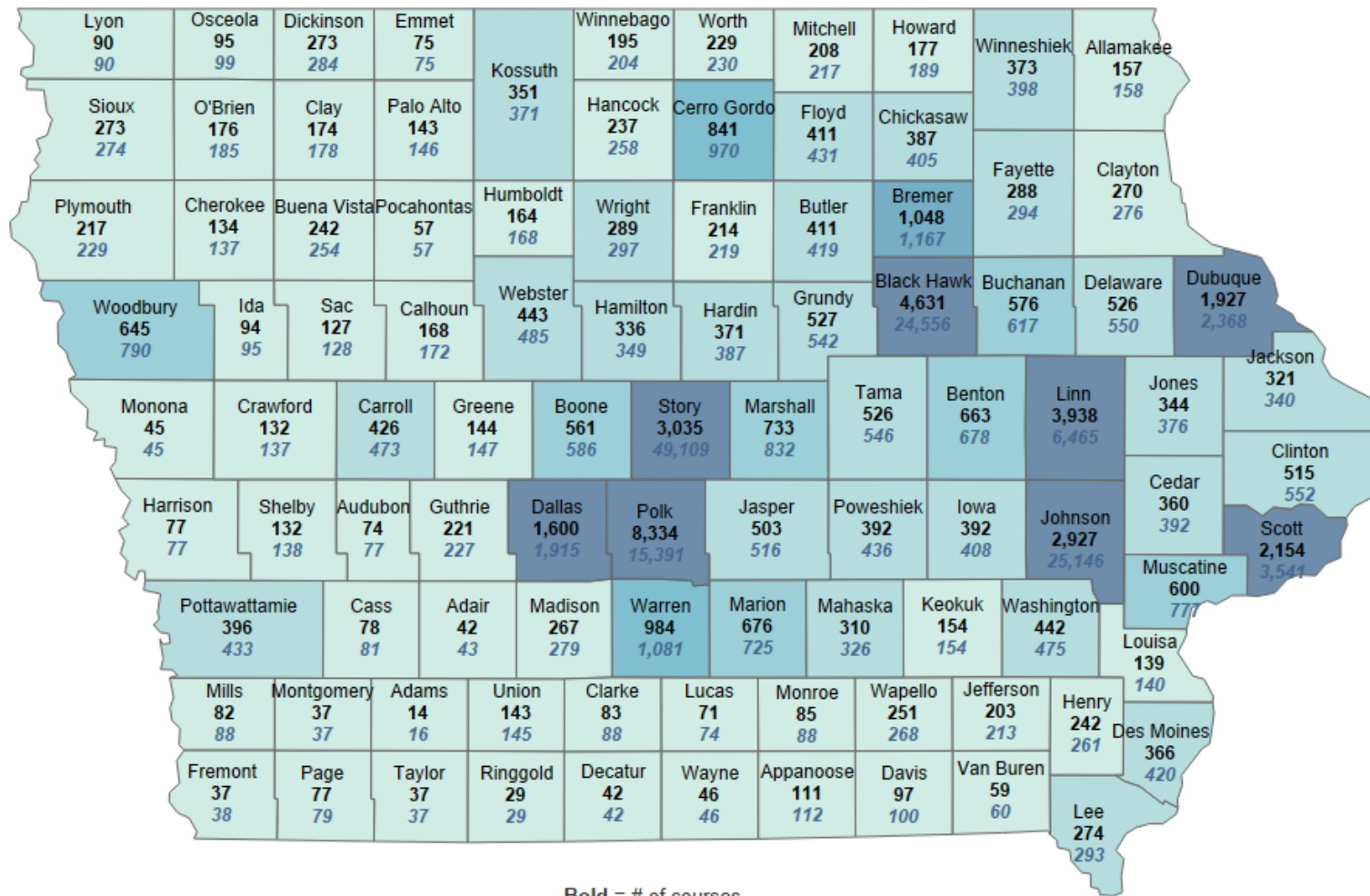
WIRRC will seek to increase virtual engagement with cultural opportunities from the universities given the limitations created by the pandemic. There will be increased focus on marketing to existing community college students and alumni to generate more transfers, as well as maintaining a marketing presence in areas with low bachelor's degree attainment. WIRRC will coordinate with Lakeside Lab to generate greater collaboration with regional community colleges. In addition, staff will engage with regional businesses and non-profit organizations to identify the feasibility of internships and research activities.

The Center remains challenged in delivering outreach activities due to the distance that faculty and staff from the institutions must travel, and in some instances, concerns over costs. Staff will work to identify appropriate venues for video teleconferencing of outreach; however, face-to-face interactions have had the greatest impact, both in terms of exchanged information as well as perceptions of the institutions by area residents. Ideally, video teleconferencing in the near-term will be a mechanism to generate increased face-to-face interactions for the succeeding academic year.

The Center receives significant support from representatives on the Statewide Extension, Distance Education Council, and from the transfer admissions representatives at each of the institutions. WIRRC will build on these relationships, and facilitate outreach activities by the institutions and work to build collaboration between the transfer specialists and transfer admissions representatives.

State Appropriation	FY21
WIRCC	\$272,161

2020-21 Distance Education Credit Courses & Enrollment by Iowa County



Bold = # of courses
Italics = headcount enrollment
 Shading indicates concentrations of enrollment

TOP 2020-2021 CREDIT COURSE REGISTRATIONS BY LEVEL, INSTITUTION AND ACADEMIC UNIT

Academic Unit	SUI UG	SUI Grad	ISU UG	ISU Grad	UNI UG	UNI Grad	Total UG	Total Grad	Grand Total duplicated headcount	SUI Total Credit hours	ISU Total Credit hours	UNI Total Credit hours	Grand TOTAL Credit hours
Humanities, Arts & Sciences	17,216	2,119	49,312	1,291	18,422	1,259				55,639	144,219	58,907	258,765
Business	7,340	7,531	2,498	1,189	5,818	754				40,519	10,508	16,661	67,688
Education	4,736	1,749			9,526	2,506				18,794		28,619	47,413
Interdisciplinary	8,120	250			319	74				15,117		768	15,885
Engineering	400	18	10,101	1,421						1,171	32,838		34,009
Human Sciences			2,556	1,757							12,292		12,292
Ag & Life Sciences			3,882	728							13,138		13,138
Social & Behavioral Sciences					13,771	885						44,342	44,342
Nursing	966	1,526								7,119			7,119
Design			280	106							1,100		1,100
Medicine	855	70								2,828			2,828
Public Health	135	296								1,280			1,280
Veterinary Medicine			0	0									0
Pharmacy	54	0								54			54
Law	31	0								93			93

TOP FIVE 2020-2021 TOP NON-CREDIT COURSE REGISTRATIONS
BY INSTITUTION AND SUBJECT AREA

	SUI	ISU	UNI	REGENT TOTAL	PERCENT OF REGENT TOTAL
Ag, Natural Resources & Conservation		194,183		194,183	32.1%
4-H Youth Development		74,178		74,178	12.3%
Human Sciences		96,717	473	97,190	16.1%
Health Professions & Related Clinical Services	134,948			134,948	22.3%
Health-Related Knowledge & Skills	30,234			30,234	5.0%
Business, Management, Marketing & Related Services			2,987	2,987	0.5%
Community and Economic Development		5,418		5,418	0.9%
Natural Resources & Conservation			2,232	2,232	0.4%
Education	7,181		783	7,964	1.3%
Social Sciences			1,330	1,330	0.2%
Visual & Performing Arts	9,968			9,968	1.6%
Basic Skills	12,476			12,476	2.1%
All other non-credit registrations	30,681		1,283	31,964	5.3%
Total Registrations	225,488	370,496	9,088	605,072	100.0%

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Fiscal Year	Undergraduate DE Courses			Graduate DE Courses			Total DE Courses Sections	% Change from Prior Year
	Undergrad Courses	% Change from Prior Year	% of Total DE Courses	Graduate Courses	% Increase over Prior Year	% of Total DE Courses		
2011-12	624	8.2%	65.3%	332	-0.3%	34.7%	956	5.1%
2012-13	674	8.0%	64.1%	378	13.9%	35.9%	1,052	10.0%
2013-14	694	3.0%	63.1%	406	7.4%	36.9%	1,100	4.6%
2014-15	794	14.4%	66.6%	398	-2.0%	33.4%	1,195	8.4%
2015-16	846	6.6%	65.1%	454	14.1%	34.9%	1,300	9.1%
2016-17	977	15.5%	67.2%	477	5.1%	32.8%	1,454	11.9%
2017-18	1175	7.7%	67.61%	563	5.23%	32.39%	1,738	6.89%
2018-19	1,169	-0.51%	66.42%	591	4.97%	33.57%	1,760	1.27%
2019-20	1,138	-2.65%	64.55%	625	5.75%	35.45%	1,763	0.17%
2020-21	1,117	-1.85%	63.43%	644	3.04%	36.57%	1,761	-0.11%

Term*	Students Enrollments - Taking only Distance Education Courses			Student Enrollments - Taking Combination of On Campus and DE Courses			Total Student Enrollment	Total Unduplicated Headcount
	Total Student Enrollment	Unduplicated	Total Credit Hours	Total Student Enrollment	Unduplicated	Total Credit Hours		
Fall 2014	4,910	2,343	14,545	5,970	4,582	16,711	10,880	6,925
Fall 2015	5,227	2,595	14,619	6,939	5,270	19,645	12,166	7,865
Fall 2016	5,834	2,859	16,089	7,321	5,503	20,742	13,155	8,362
Fall 2017	6,029	3,015	16,903	8,490	6,300	23,567	14,519	9,315
Fall 2018	6,370	2,961	18,521	14,966	12,069	35,807	21,336	15,030
Fall 2019	6,307	2,942	18,303	16,103	12,663	38,762	22,410	15,605
Fall 2020	6,886	3,174	20,130	17,595	12,679	43,151	24,481	15,853

*Fall term counts are end-of-term.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Fiscal Year	Undergraduate DE Courses			Graduate DE Courses			Total DE Courses Sections	% Change from Prior Year
	Undergrad Courses	% Change from Prior Year	% of Total DE Courses	Graduate Courses	% Increase over Prior Year	% of Total DE Courses		
2011-12	295	16.1%	36.7%	508	5.6%	63.3%	803	9.3%
2012-13	379	28.5%	42.0%	523	3.0%	58.0%	902	12.3%
2013-14	411	8.4%	43.7%	529	1.1%	56.3%	940	4.2%
2014-15	373	-9.2%	41.2%	533	0.8%	58.8%	906	-3.6%
2015-16	417	11.8%	44.0%	530	-0.6%	56.0%	947	4.5%
2016-17	446	7.0%	45.8%	528	-0.4%	54.2%	974	2.9%
2017-18	490	9.9%	47.4%	544	3.0%	52.6%	1,034	6.2%
2018-19	502	2.4%	49.6%	511	-6.1%	50.4%	1,013	-2.0%
2019-20	556	4.9%	52.0%	514	-5.2%	48.0%	1,070	-0.2%
2020-21*	2,206	296.8%	70.1%	941	83.1%	29.9%	3,147	194.1%

* During this reporting time frame ISU transitioned away from defining distance education course sections by an X section indicator. In order to have a uniform total, course sections for this fiscal year were defined as those offered as delivery type www or hybrid with a distance education unit flag to indicate overseen by a distance education unit.

Term*	Student Enrollment – Taking only Distance Education Courses			Student Enrollment – Taking Combination of On Campus and DE Courses			Total Student Enrollment	Total Unduplicated Headcount
	Total Student Enrollment	Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours	Total Student Enrollment	Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours		
Fall 2014	2,320	1,501	6,871	5,025	4,162	13,680	7,345	5,663
Fall 2015	2,430	1,544	7,070	5,815	4,730	15,681	8,245	6,274
Fall 2016	2,436	1,555	7,086	6,625	5,283	17,921	9,061	6,838
Fall 2017	2,493	1,606	7,246	6,562	5,228	17,748	9,055	6,834
Fall 2018	2,311	1,443	6,812	8,833	6,825	24,466	11,144	8,268
Fall 2019	2,321	1,357	6,652	9,344	7,161	26,029	11,665	8,518
Fall 2020**	---	---	---	12,666	---	36,098	12,666	---

*Fall term counts are end-of-term

** There were 12,666 total students enrolled in a course whose course section is flagged as overseen by a distance education unit. Unduplicated students are unavailable for this reporting period. Additionally, delivery method by individual course registration was unavailable, thus all enrollments and credit hours are being reported under the definition of on campus and de courses column.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Fiscal Year	Undergraduate DE Courses			Graduate DE Courses			Total DE Course Sections	% Change from Prior Year
	Undergrad Courses	% Change from Prior Year	% of Total DE Courses	Graduate Courses	% Increase over Prior Year	% of Total DE Courses		
2011-12	382	6.1 %	52.1%	351	-3.6 %	47.9%	733	1.2%
2012-13	470	23.0 %	54.5%	393	12.0 %	45.5%	863	17.7%
2013-14	456	-3.0 %	52.4%	414	5.3 %	47.6%	870	0.8%
2014-15	486	6.6 %	52.9%	432	4.3 %	47.1%	918	5.5%
2015-16	470	-3.3%	51.1%	449	3.9%	48.9%	919	0.1%
2016-17	470	0.0%	49.6%	478	6.5%	50.4%	948	3.2%
2017-18	462	-1.7%	50.5%	453	-5.2%	49.5%	915	-3.5%
2018-19	479	3.7%	51.5%	451	-0.4%	48.5%	930	1.6%
2019-20	508	6.1%	58.4%	362	-19.7%	41.6%	870	-6.5%
2020-21	563	10.8%	62.4%	339	-6.4%	37.6%	902	3.7%
2020-21	1,525	170.9%	80.3%	375	10.7%	19.7%	1,900	110.7%

Term*	Student Enrollments - Taking only Distance Education Courses			Student Enrollments - Taking Combination of On Campus and DE Courses			Total Student Enrollment	Total Unduplicated Headcount
	Total Student Enrollment	Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours	Total Student Enrollment	Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours		
Fall 2014	2,197	1,343	5,679	2,436	2,078	6,664	4,633	3,421
Fall 2015	2,319	1,424	6,266	2,840	2,200	7,987	5,159	3,624
Fall 2016	2,240	1,422	6,142	2,307	1,941	6,407	4,547	3,363
Fall 2017	2,529	1,623	6,480	2,750	2,208	7,450	5,279	3,831
Fall 2018	2,254	1,407	6,131	3,098	2,440	9,148	5,352	3,847
Fall 2019	1,963	1,264	5,054	3,225	2,476	8,667	5,188	3,740
Fall 2020	2,568	1,181	6,958	22,184	7,576	62,559	24,752	8,757

*Fall counts are end of term