
From: Office of the President
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020
Subject: Letter from Interim President Harroz - OU Online



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA.
Office of the President

February 17, 2020

Dear OU Community,

Last semester, I announced the launch of a special project to explore how the University can build upon our online education successes and expand our ability to reach students in Oklahoma and beyond. This project, led by Dr. Gregg Garn, centers on the democratization of education. We see online education as a true fulfillment of our public mission, to make an OU degree accessible to as many people as possible.

After intensive discussions across our three campuses, researching other online programming, and consulting with a marketing partner, the exploratory effort originally hailed as “OU Global” has evolved to “OU Online.”

With the help of a leadership committee – composed of faculty and staff from all three campuses – we have developed a better understanding of the fundamental elements required to expand our online offerings. More than 125 hours of discussions and focus groups have been held with a number of entities, including 25 academic programs, nine administrative departments, Faculty and Staff Senates, faculty representatives, and our Deans’ Councils. Our student survey – targeted toward online graduate students – provided important feedback about the online student experience, notably that surveyed students pride themselves in earning a degree from OU.

Our initial analysis revealed an undeniable message: online education must be an essential component of our portfolio of degree and certificate offerings. The emergence of new technologies has, in many ways, disrupted the very fabric of learning. We have a tremendous opportunity to embrace this disruption and emerge as leaders in the online education space. OU Online will define the structure, build the culture, and improve the efficiency of OU colleges launching new graduate programs while enhancing the quality of our current programming. By unifying our efforts, we can serve a new, more diverse segment of students and become the clear regional leader for high quality online learning at the graduate level. More details about OU Online, including a list of frequently asked questions, are available by visiting link.ou.edu/online.

We have seen great progress in the past five months, but we have more work to do. In light of that, I have asked Dr. Garn to continue his leadership efforts on this important project, with an emphasis on refining our vision for OU Online and crafting possible implementation plans. We hope to present our full proposal of OU Online to the OU Board of Regents later this spring.

I want to thank all who have taken time to visit with Dr. Garn and the committee. Your valuable input has jumpstarted our excitement for what lies ahead, and the collective enthusiasm of the University family to achieve new levels of excellence is inspiring. Because of you, OU's future is unlimited.

Sincerely,

Joseph Harroz, Jr.
Interim President