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Distance Doesn't Mean A Stop To Learning With Online College!

About half of all Americans who enroll in college never complete the program, according to the Lumina Foundation of Education. Some states have recently begun working to improve college graduation rates. What's also working well are college distance learning classes for students who cannot attend a traditional campus.

Representatives from 17 states have formed an alliance, Complete College America, whereby they plan to work with colleges and universities to help improve graduation rates, according to a March 2010 Associate Press report. High schools in seven states plan to next year allow 10th grade students to take exams that would allow them to earn their diplomas immediately and move on to community college, a report in The New York Times noted. Those who didn't succeed would better understand college expectations and be able to retest in their junior and senior years, The New York Times article reported. If you need more information about [bachelor's degree online](#), look on the internet.

The U.S. Department of Education has identified full-time jobs, delayed college entry, dependants and alternative high school credentials as being among the college completion risk factors, according to the Pew Research Center. A student's single parent and financially independent status can also make a difference, the 2002 research center information suggests. At the time, African-American and Hispanic undergraduates reportedly maintained more of these risk factors than white undergraduates did.

More recently, the National Center for Education Statistics has reported that the percentage of Hispanic students particularly has been increasing. An American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy report noted that 51 percent of Hispanics at the average college or university complete a bachelor's degree in six years as compared with 59 percent of white students who do, the "Rising to the Challenge" report noted.

Likewise, online college classes tend to appeal to adults, according to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and online college enrollment numbers also have been rising. Online college enrollment for fall 2008 had increased by 17 percent over the previous year, with 4.6 million students (one-quarter of all college students) taking at least one online college class, a Sloan Consortium study noted. One study dating back to 2000 found that online college drop out rates can extend beyond 40 percent at some institutions, according to a report from the United States Distance Learning Association. Students who enroll in online college programs because they're too busy for classroom courses might nevertheless have a hard time keeping up with their studies, reports in the Chronicle of Higher Education and USA Today noted.

Rising to the Challenge recommends that colleges and universities focus on and commit to high levels of retention and completion; that they provide Hispanic students with better consumer information, including information about schools within their academic and financial reach and schools with successful Hispanic student track records; that they improve financial aid counseling; and that they encourage students to attend more selective schools, if they qualify. The report also recommends tying university aid to school performance standards, including student graduation and labor-market success, rather than on enrollment.

It's becoming increasingly unusual for students to enroll at one institution and remain there for their entire college education, the American Council on Education has reported, attributing this in part to working adults who return to school. More than one-half of bachelor's degree recipients attend more than one institution and are in some instances taking classes at two different institutions simultaneously or moving among multiple institutions, with non-enrollment intervals in between, the council noted. Online college studies have shown a strong relationship between self-motivation and academic persistence, according to the Distance Learning Association report. Studies and reports have also suggested that successful distance learning programs are strongly tied to instructors, including those who maintain personal contact with students, provide quick responses to their questions and concerns, advise them in advance what's required of coursework, offer interactive elements such as message boards, and provide flexible course formats that better enable students to juggle their studies with work and family responsibilities. There is an abundance of information about [online master's degrees](#) on the web.

Colleges, universities and non-profit organizations such as the Lumina Foundation and the National Association of System Heads have, like states, been making strides to improve college graduation rates. One university in Texas has long offered an online bachelor's degree program that it touts as a degree completion program and that

reportedly provides as many as 59 hours of college credit for technical and experiential credit. A community college and a university in Arizona have more recently begun working together to point students toward coursework that's required for certain degrees, to guarantee these students university admission and to make them eligible for limits on annual tuition increases, according to a March report in the Sierra Vista Herald. A California college is working to add a personal touch to online classes by employing a program that allows professors to deliver lessons and messages to students with Webcam video recordings and to use the service, Skype, for live, video conversations with students, the USA Today article reported.

Attending [online college](#) classes works on many levels. Those with degrees who are returning for their [online bachelors degrees](#) will find they have the tools they need to make the career leap they seek.

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