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In a citation read on the floor of the Utah House of Representatives and Senate, USU was declared the leading university in the state in providing digital education. More than 134,000 students from all 29 Utah counties, 50 states and 55 countries across the globe have taken USU Online’s 500-plus credit courses and pursued more than 60 degrees and certificates. The program is identified nationally through several online education ranking organizations.

“In online education has been an important component of our university delivery to students for the last 25 years,” said USU President Noelle E. Cockett. “Our strategy has been, and continues to be, providing quality education through flexible and affordable degrees that build skills and change people’s lives.”

In 2020, the university is celebrating its 25th anniversary of offering online education in some form; in 1995, educators at USU began moving paper-based independent study courses to a digital format, using email to send assignments back and forth. Since then, the online program has grown to one of the most respected in the nation.

Rep. Derrin Owens, R-Fountain Green, read the citation in the House, and Sen. Lyle Hillyard, R-Logan, recognized the House’s citation in the Senate.

“They were the first to do it in the state of Utah,” Hillyard said of USU’s online education work.

In just the last year, 11 new online programs have launched at USU, and the university intends to continue that growth. New academic programs continue to be developed and added to the USU Online portfolio, including competency-based degrees that focus on local workforce demand, making degrees that are more pertinent accessible to more students, with great flexibility.

USU was recently ranked by U.S. News & World Report as sixth in the nation for its online master’s education program and listed as 18th in the nation for its online veterans bachelor’s program. No other school in Utah appeared on the online master’s education list, and USU ranked 23rd and is the only Utah school in the Top 100 for its online bachelor’s program.

The university’s history of education outreach goes back to the land-grant act of 1888, when the institution’s core mission became that to deliver quality education to all Utah residents.

“Utah State University has used USU Online as a way of meeting its land-grant mission and fulfilling its responsibility to deliver high-quality education across the state,” said Robert Wagner, vice president of Academic & Instructional Services at USU. “Over the decades, we have done that by sending professors on planes, trains and automobiles. We’ve done it through correspondence courses, through satellite transmission and through internet video. Online has been a very successful way for us to provide high-quality courses to every corner of the state.”

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