



UMass Plans Online College for Adult Learners

By [Doug Lederman](#)

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Citing a looming demographic cliff that he called an "existential threat" to New England and the institutions he leads, the president of the University of Massachusetts System [said Monday](#) that the system would create an online college to serve adult learners. Martin Meehan, in his annual State of the University address, said the university needed to take bold action to respond to demographic and other challenges that are already taking a heavy toll on colleges in Massachusetts and surrounding states. (See [related article](#) on another closure of a New England private college.)

The best way to secure UMass's future and meet the state's work-force needs, Meehan said, is to create a freestanding online institution that would specialize in educating working learners. Online courses for the university system's traditional-age students would continue to be delivered through UMass Online, a spokesman for the system said, and revenue from the new online campus would be divided among the system's campuses to educate traditional undergraduate and graduate students.

Meehan said the new UMass campus would seek to compete with the existing and emerging institutions that are already targeting this population, including

Southern New Hampshire University, the University of Maryland University College, Penn State World Campus and Arizona State University. “The time for us to act is now,” Meehan said. “Over the next several years, there will be four to five major players in online education with strong regional footholds, and we intend to be one of them.”

https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/03/05/umass-plans-online-college-adult-learners?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=d411909ba9-DNU_2019_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-d411909ba9-198467257&mc_cid=d411909ba9&mc_eid=0c2028f1a2