

UPCEA's 2025 Online Education Benchmarking Report Provides Vital Data for University Leaders

2nd annual study provides new KPI benchmarks around enrollments, finance & budget, explores AI impact, & provides strategic recommendations for online leaders

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [UPCEA](#), the online and professional education association, today announced the release of a new research report, "Benchmarking Online Enterprises: Insights into Structures, Strategies, and Financial Models in Higher Education" (BOnES). The report offers timely insights into how online enterprises are driving institutional sustainability through new revenue streams, AI adoption, and scalable operations. The report provides key benchmarking data on structure, staffing, finances, and innovation.

This year's findings highlight continued dominance of academically decentralized models, with administrative structures split between centralized and decentralized approaches. New performance indicators offer per capita budget and revenue benchmarks, revealing wide variability and reinforcing that no single model guarantees success.

With growing investments in online enterprises, the expansion of staff, the continued diversification of program portfolios, and emerging use of AI, this report is a vital resource for institutional leaders navigating an increasingly competitive and financially pressured landscape.

"This report and its findings arrive at a critical time for postsecondary leaders," stated Julie Uranis, senior vice president for online and strategic initiatives at UPCEA. "Given the instability in higher education, the insights and benchmarking opportunities in #BOnES25 will help leaders make strategic decisions and understand the expected yield of investments in the online enterprise. This is an important resource to guide revenue diversification and portfolio alignment, and will ultimately improve opportunities for the learners we serve."

KEY FINDINGS

The report offers a nuanced view of online education, capturing areas of advancement as well as barriers that institutions must address to remain competitive:

- Investments in online enterprises are expanding capacity and driving revenue growth;
- AI integration reflects both experimentation and uneven maturity;
- New KPIs support more precise comparisons.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2025 BOnES report emphasizes the increasing need for intentional, data-driven decision-making to ensure the long-term viability of online education enterprises. While many units have grown in size and sophistication, this year's findings reveal that sustainable success depends not just on scale—but on alignment, clarity, and strategic focus.

The report offers five distinct recommendations to help online leaders guide their enterprises: interrogate financial models; benchmark for efficiency, not just scale; develop a clear AI strategy; align staffing with strategy; and invest in organizational clarity.

INSIGHTS BEYOND THE REPORT

In addition to key benchmarking data, this year's BOnES report reveals deep undercurrents shaping the role of online education within the broader institutional ecosystem. These emerging dynamics—some financial, some structural, and some market-driven—reflect how online enterprises are evolving in response to institutional pressures, resource shifts, and increased competition:

- Online as a financial engine;
- Faculty integration reflects strategic commitment;
- Smarter marketing needed to match growth ambitions.

"With increased pressure to generate revenue, institutional leadership can develop ambitious revenue targets for an online enterprise," said Bruce Etter, senior director of research and consulting at UPCEA. "While understandable, these targets are often incomplete equations. To generate X in revenue, an investment of Y is needed. The data provided in this report help to provide clarity for those variables and other essential benchmarks for online leaders."

"UPCEA's 2025 Benchmarking Report is a vital resource for online education leaders seeking to make informed, strategic decisions in a rapidly evolving environment," added Asim Ali, executive director of the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at Auburn University. "The financial benchmarks and AI adoption insights are especially timely, helping leaders like myself better evaluate where we stand, where we need to invest, and how we can scale responsibly. In a time of increased institutional pressure, having access to real, actionable data is invaluable."

REPORT AVAILABILITY & WEBINAR

For more information, visit <https://upcea.edu/2025-benchmarking-online-enterprises-study/>.

UPCEA will discuss key findings from the report during a free webinar on October 9, 2025, at 2:00 PM ET. Click for details and registration, or visit

https://upcea.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sVXWlBR-RJmpNVB3eQlAdg.

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