

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2002



Contact:
Kate M. Carey
Executive Director
614-995-3240
kcarey@oln.org

Poll Shows Ohioans Want Degrees Online

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohioans want college degrees, they want to take them on-line, and business, nursing and health care are their top degree choices, according to a poll commissioned by the Ohio Learning Network (OLN). The poll, conducted by the University of Cincinnati's Institute for Policy Research, confirms data found in a similar poll in 1999. Nearly 70 percent of Ohio citizens surveyed felt completing a degree was important to them.

"This poll reaffirms that Ohioans see the value of a college education," OLN Executive Director Kate M. Carey said. "And more importantly, we see the increasing interest in an on-line degree which tags with the rising enrollments over the past two years. That is great news for Ohio's 41 colleges and universities offering on-line courses and degrees via OhioLEARNSI."

According to the 2000 U. S. Census, only 25% of Ohioans have a bachelor's degree. More and more national studies illustrate the links between educational attainment and individual income as well as the state's economic development. Ohioans want to take courses online because they view them as convenient and flexible, and nearly 70% of them are aware of distance learning. About 60 percent (59%) are interested in taking a class via distance, according to the poll.

Nursing and health care were among the top interest areas for Ohioans surveyed. One-fifth of the respondents said they wanted degrees in nursing and the health-care field, and 17% were interested in degrees in the business field. Ohio colleges and universities offer 17 distance degrees in business-related areas and seven in health-related fields.

"The data from the poll fit with national data about interest in distance learning," said George Steele, OLN director of degree completion programs. "Our online catalog, OhioLEARNSI!, offers learners that opportunity for convenience."

The poll was administered to 520 randomly selected adults who had earned college credit but had not obtained a bachelor's degree. Questions were asked about education goals, computer technology use, and interest in distance learning among Ohioans. Forty-eight percent of respondents said that earning a college degree was "very important," and among those who placed importance on earning a degree, 39% aspired to a bachelor's degree.

Most (42%) of the respondents were aged 30-45, 60% were female, and 87% were white. The vast majority of the respondents (79%) had taken college classes for credit but had not earned an associate degree. Eighty-three percent had home computers, and 77% used them regularly. In the 1999 poll, only 70% of respondents had home computers.

- more -

OLN (www.olin.org) is a consortium of Ohio's public and private colleges and universities and is an initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents. OLN provides the state's on-line catalog of courses and degrees (www.ohiolearns.org). This catalog, called OhioLEARNS!, has grown from 500 courses in 1999 when it opened to more than 2,800 courses today. Currently more than 20,000 Ohioans are engaged in some type of distance learning, according to data obtained by OLN.

OLN helps Ohioans access higher education, assists colleges and universities in the effective use of technology, and helps build partnerships among higher education, schools, businesses, and communities. Funded by the state of Ohio, OLN was created in 1999 to help Ohio colleges and universities use technology effectively in teaching and learning.

#