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# Online-course enrollment grows as program expands

About 145 more students signed up for online classes in fall 2003 than fall 2002

By Chelsea Duncan  
News Reporter

Online education is becoming increasingly popular for both students and professors as the Internet creates new learning possibilities outside the traditional classroom.

In fall 2003, about 750 students enrolled for online courses, compared to 605 in fall 2002, 520 in fall 2001 and 331 in fall 2000, Distance and Community Education Program Coordinator Sandra Gladney said. The number of course titles available has remained at 13 on average each year, but capacity has been expanded as professors feel more comfortable taking on more students and course sections are added, she said.

"I think that people are becoming more and more comfortable learning this way," Gladney said.

Online courses are available through the University Continuing Education program, and classes from arts and administration to economics and geology are available. Tuition rates depend on student status and whether students are part time or full time.

Gladney said the primary benefit of online classes is schedule flexibility.

She said the courses work well for students who work during the day and for students who have children.

"I also talk to a lot of students who are just a few credits short of graduating," she said.

Gladney said it is important for students to examine their learning styles when deciding whether or not to take an online course.

"You have to kind of know yourself

to know if it's a disadvantage or advantage," she said. "If you really like that people interaction, it can be kind of distracting to study alone."

Senior Julie Wigdzinski said she is one credit shy of graduating so she opted to take an online course to fulfill the requirement.

"I thought it would make my schedule easier," she said. "It's a good way to get some requirements without taking a lecture."

Wigdzinski is taking a linguistics course this term, and she said the curriculum is straightforward and doesn't require a professor to explain the information.

"It's not really conceptual," she said. "I can't see what benefits having a class lecture would be. I think it would be a big waste of time."

But she said not all subjects are appropriate for Internet classes. Wigdzinski said she found herself struggling to make the grade when she took an economics course online her freshman year. "Basically everybody would bomb the tests," she said, adding that the curriculum was difficult to understand without a professor's explanation.

"You have to teach yourself the information," she said, adding that the educational value isn't as high for online courses that deal with more conceptual information.

"I think the quality is jeopardized," she said.

Arts and Administration Program Senior Instructor Kassia Dellabough, who teaches online classes, said online course quality is often questioned.

"That's always a debate, across the country, across the world," she said.

Dellabough said she was originally skeptical of online courses, but now she enjoys teaching them as much as traditional classes.

"I'm surprised it's actually so effective," she said.

Since 1997, she has taught the same Art and Human Values class either online or in the classroom.

"I have very similar assignments and curriculum that run parallel with both classes," she said.

She said she can better evaluate the quality of education students are getting online because she uses both methods to teach the course.

"I can track pretty closely the end result," she said. She added that it seems some students feel more comfortable voicing their opinions online.

"I get into more in-depth dialogue with them."

Even though online courses do not always require a physical presence, Dellabough said she doesn't worry about students cheating. Her classes require personal written work and a final group project.

"I have to trust it's original work," she said, adding that students can just as easily submit plagiarized work in traditional classrooms.

Gladney said online cheating has not been a serious issue in the program.

"There has not been an official problem," she said, adding that most courses are monitored by proctors while students take online tests.

Dellabough said online courses create more possibilities for learning than traditional classrooms because students, professors and guest speakers can participate from anywhere around the world.

"They're bringing in a wide cultural experience," she said.

More information about online education and spring term class listings can be found at <http://de.uoregon.edu>.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at [chelseaduncan@dailymerald.com](mailto:chelseaduncan@dailymerald.com).

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### Nation & World News

# Iraq security officials regroup, reinforce security after attack

Saturday's violence prompts forces to add more weapons

By Bill Glauber  
Chicago Tribune (KRT)

FALLUJAH, Iraq — They battled insurgents last week, so Monday the local security forces in Iraq's most volatile city did what felt most natural. They got more weapons.

They stationed gunmen on rooftops, crammed soldiers armed with AK-47s into snipers' nests and created an unusual welcome mat for any would-be assailant: A masked trooper with a rocket launcher aimed squarely at cars, trucks and pedestrians.

Yet despite the new security arrangements, local forces remained under threat and seemingly ill-prepared to repulse fresh attacks. That wasn't just bad news for the front-line troops; it also revealed major gaps in U.S. plans to quickly return Iraq's security to local forces.

"We need weapons, cars, commu-

nication devices, food and uniforms," said Capt. Ahmad Ismael of the local Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. "And we need our headquarters rebuilt."

Security in Fallujah appeared to be in disarray Monday and the city's residents still in shock over Saturday's daring daylight attack that killed at least 27 people — 22 police, four attackers and a civilian — and injured 35.

Early last week, car bombs in Baghdad and Iskandariyah killed at least 100 police and military recruits. The attack Saturday involved about 70 insurgents who fanned out across Fallujah to attack the mayor's office, paramilitary and police headquarters. U.S. commanders said the attack appeared to be an attempt to free four men accused of firing on a civil defense corps bus. At least 50 prisoners were freed.

"Places like Fallujah are not ready for local control," said U.S. Army spokesman Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt.

Kimmitt disputed initial reports that the four insurgents killed and two others captured during the attack were foreign fighters.

At the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps building, shell casings still littered the entry. U.S. commanders lauded the defenders for reacting quickly and killing some of the insurgents.

But the local forces sometimes still need a nudge. When a report filtered in that a black BMW with a cache of weapons inside had been sighted, the local paramilitary forces looked to the U.S. troops to respond.

"Push your people out on patrol," Pullen told a local commander. "It's their job to go shoot them."

Nobody moved. Then, Pullen told others in the compound, "If anyone comes here and attacks, we're going to kill them. That's the bottom line."

Saturday's attack was particularly troubling as insurgents displayed a flair for battle, while local police retreated beneath their desks.

The guerrillas were "a very, very well-trained unit," Kimmitt said.

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