

Top Stories in Top Stories



Interview: The Heartland Festival Orchestra



Interview: Bloomington-Normal Race for the Cure

News » Top Stories

Email this article Print this article Tweet Like 8 +1 0

Online classes popular for college students

By Greg Smith

September 2, 2013

Updated Sep 2, 2013 at 10:54 PM CDT

CENTRAL ILLINOIS -- Area college classrooms are filled up once again as students begin the academic year. As the years have passed, more have traded the lecture hall for the laptop.

Seeing Illinois Central College student Willow Sauder in the library on campus is a rare sight.



News Now Digital Daily - subscribe to our daily newsletter

"It's about a 45 minute drive," said Sauder, ICC student.

That's because the computer programming and database development major doesn't have to be here.

She is taking this semester's classes completely online and not stepping foot in a classroom.

"The main benefit for me is flexibility. I can work anytime, anywhere without having a schedule of classes to have to work around," said Sauder.

ICC Provost William Tammore says 2,500 to 2,700 students are enrolled in online courses.

About one third are working toward degrees that can be completed entirely online.

"We certainly don't want to force students into this type of environment if they are not comfortable. But as the demand grows, we want to be there to meet that demand," said Tammore. "It's a great way for community colleges in particular to increase access to higher education."

One drawback of all this online learning could be a lack of interaction with professors or classmates, but there is a way to combat that problem.

Dr. Dean Cantu is head of the department of teacher education at Bradley University.

Many of the online offerings at the school are deemed "blended learning classes", where professors combine technology and face-to-face communication.

"They are capturing for example, the lecture, and making those video modules available to students outside of the regular classroom so that when they come into the classroom there is more time to do authentic learning activities, engage in lab," said Cantu.

Dr. Cantu says his department works closely with professors who have the right curriculum to develop blended programs.

Willow Sauder is set to get her degree next spring.

"I think it was almost better for my education because it was very focused on the task at hand. I almost prefer the online, because when I am communicating, it's very much about what I need to learn."

Source: <http://www.cinewsnow.com/news/local/More-online-classes-for-higer-education-22209941.html>