

# EducationDynamics eLearning Index<sup>SM</sup>

## 2011-2012 Executive Summary

The 2011-2012 eLearning Index<sup>SM</sup> represents the most comprehensive presentation of prospective student demand for online degrees available to institutions today. In this report, prospective student interest in over 3,400 degree programs offered by more than 200 accredited colleges and universities was examined to ascertain what the most popular degree programs were in 2010 and those that may offer colleges and universities opportunities for expansion in 2011-2012.

Three core indices drive the analyses and resulting identification of degrees with high student interest and opportunity for growth.

The **eLearning Demand Index** represents the aggregate demand for a given online degree program among prospective students.

- ▶ Among Associate's degrees, Early Childhood Education is in highest demand, followed closely by degrees in Religion and Business Administration. These three degrees represent more than 30 percent of Associate's level demand.
- ▶ Among Bachelor's degrees, Psychology, Business Administration and Early Childhood Education comprise the top three majors and represent more than 30 percent of Bachelor's level demand.
- ▶ Among Master's degrees, Counseling and Psychology are in highest demand (cumulatively representing 20 percent of demand), followed by Nursing and Special Education.
- ▶ Among Doctoral degrees, Psychology and Educational Leadership are the market leaders (cumulatively representing 30 percent of doctoral demand), followed closely by Educational Technology, which commands an additional 10 percent of Doctoral demand.

The **eLearning Supply Index** represents the number of, the "supply of," prospective students interested in various degree programs divided by the number of available/existing degree programs listed on eLearners.com.

We note that degree areas with relatively few existing online programs compared to the number of individuals searching for them earn the highest supply index scores.

- ▶ At the Associate's level, degree programs in Counseling, Religion, and Psychology comprise the top three Supply Index scores.
- ▶ At the Bachelor's level, Counseling, Special Education and Engineering comprise the top three majors in the Supply Index.
- ▶ At the Master's level, Social Work, Early Childhood Education and Counseling lead.
- ▶ At the Doctoral level, Religion, Educational Technology, and Special Education lead.

The **eLearning Growth Index** represents the positive or negative growth of online degree programs over time as indicated by the change in Demand Index scores across the four quarters of 2010.

- ▶ Sports Management was identified as having strong growth potential at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels, but not at the Associate's level.
- ▶ Business Administration demonstrated strong growth potential only at the Associate's and Doctoral levels, not at the more saturated Bachelor's and Master's levels.
- ▶ Nursing showed strong growth potential at the Bachelor's and Doctoral levels but not at the Master's level.
- ▶ Five of the top 20 Associate's programs with the strongest growth were in the Humanities/Liberal Arts area.

### Five-Year Trends:

Since the publication of our first eLearning Index in 2007, several interesting trends have emerged regarding the shape of demand for online programs:

- ▶ Associate's level Health Programs have risen from number three to being number one, replacing Business which has fallen to number two.
- ▶ Bachelor's level demand has remained relatively unchanged with Business degrees maintaining the largest percentage of market demand, followed by Humanities, Social Sciences and Health Professions.
- ▶ MBA and other Business masters degrees have seen the most precipitous decline in demand as a percentage of market share. Dropping from number one to number four. Education degrees have seen the greatest demand growth, relative to percent of market share, moving from number three in the 2007 report, to number one in 2011.
- ▶ Doctoral degrees in the field of Education have remained the largest field of study demanded by prospective students. In the same period, degrees in the Health Professions dropped from number two to number four, with Social Science jumping from number four to number two.

In short, in the five year period since our first eLearning Index (in 2007) the market for online programs has shown great consistency in terms of the levels of degrees for which people are searching. When reviewing the fields of study demanded by prospective students there has been great consistency at the Bachelor's level, while we have seen significant changes in what prospective online students seek to study at the Associate's, Master's and Doctoral levels.