



Message from the *Office of the Provost*

During a time where Universities are seeking specific mechanisms to expand course offerings while keeping costs down, Jacksonville University has decided to become a member of the Online Consortium of Independent Colleges & Universities (<http://www.ocicu.org>, which is hosted at Regis University.) This decision was reached after seeking input from both faculty leadership and our Deans. Started in 2005, OCICU is a virtual academic consortium through which university institution members collaborate in sharing fully online, credit-bearing courses and programs. Currently, over 60 institutions are members of the OCICU and more than 1,100 courses are available to users of OCICU. Membership in the OCICU is open to independent, not-for-profit, regionally accredited higher education institutions looking to strategically expand their course offerings and increase enrollments. All courses are offered by credentialed faculty at accredited institutions. Courses are examined by OCICU instructional designers prior to being offered to ensure the highest quality online environment and full accessibility for all students.

We believe this opportunity will lead to retaining students over summer sessions as we can direct them toward our member consortium courses. This combined with our own online offerings and summer discounted courses will demonstrate that JU is prepared with a large portfolio of course offerings. Likewise, it would also create an opportunity for students to examine elective offerings offered through the consortium during the academic year. Importantly, JU has the ability to select which courses are shown to our students through Self Service from OCICU and would not present any options that directly conflict with our own course offerings in a given semester. All courses taken through the consortium would transfer into JU for credit like any other transfer credit; these courses would not become part of the JU curriculum. Students would only be permitted to take **5** courses through OCICU during their time at JU. Deans would be consulted by the Registrar in ensuring no courses are offered that could cause student transfer issues. The last 30-hour requirement of JU would be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Any programs interested in offering courses through the consortium could choose to do so at any time for any semester. This request would be directed to the Registrar. As stated previously, coursework will need to be examined by OCICU Instructional Designers for quality, copyright compliance, and accessibility.

We are positioned to activate our membership immediately, which would provide an additional mechanism to minimize the number of students taking courses at other institutions. We have contacted references who have commented that their membership with OCICU has provided additional revenues, high quality instruction, and the ability for programs to select courses of the most relevance to their program as the most direct benefits.

We look forward to this partnership and will happily answer any questions. An FAQ related to the partnership is attached.