

5357 words/ 36.9 minutes

“Beyond the Classroom Walls: International Engagement and Online Education”

Universidad San Francisco de Quito Chancellor’s Lecture Series

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President

Indiana University

Teatro Calderón de la Barca

Universidad San Francisco de Quito

Cumbayá, Ecuador

March 15, 2016

2:30 p.m.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you very much for that kind introduction and for your warm hospitality.

I am very pleased to be back in Ecuador. In 2014, my wife Laurie and I visited Manta and Montecristi and then Guayaquil as part of a voyage we hosted for Indiana University alumni to Central and South America visiting pre-Colombian archeological sites. In fact, that trip and this make me the first IU president to visit Ecuador for 75 years.

I am greatly honored to have the opportunity to deliver this year’s Chancellor’s Lecture at USFQ, Ecuador’s leading institution of higher education. I want to thank Rector Carlos Montúfar and Chancellor Santiago Gangotena for inviting me to speak. It is a privilege to join the list of distinguished leaders of institutions of higher education from around the world who have spoken in this lecture series.

2. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Those of us who lead universities know that the fundamental mission of our institutions is transformation—the transformation of the lives of individuals, families, nations, and indeed, the globe, through the power of education and research.

Indiana University will hold its Bicentennial in 2020, making it one of North America's oldest public universities, and we will celebrate the transformative impact it has had on millions of lives all over the world. And central to this mission of transformation at IU is, and has always been, its agenda of international engagement and study.

During my nearly 10 years as president of IU, this agenda has been one of my key priorities. It is an agenda of expanded study abroad programs, new and rejuvenated international partnerships and engagement, and active faculty research exchange programs.

It is also an agenda that includes our outstanding language and international studies programs. IU offers courses in more than 70 languages—no university in the United States offers more. And our students and faculty study the civilizations and cultures, both ancient and modern, of every part of the world.

As part of this agenda, we have established global centers in Beijing, in New Delhi, and in Berlin. These serve as venues for academic conferences and seminars, and as home bases for IU faculty, students, and alumni working in these countries and regions. In the next year, we plan to open two more in Bangkok and Istanbul, and in future years, one in Africa and one here in Latin America.

IU has had a long history of engagement in Latin America, and in Ecuador, and I will say a little about this before moving to my central topic which will be a brief account of the origins and evolution of online education, the impact it has had on teaching and

learning around the globe, and an examination of the potential but also the limitations of online education in 21st century higher education.

3. BACKGROUND ON INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Let me first say just a few words about Indiana University for those of you who may not be familiar with it.

Indiana University is a major, multi-campus comprehensive public research institution, and a national leader in professional, medical, and technological education, with an extensive history of research and scholarship of the highest order. This history includes nine Nobel Prizes and over 50 programs ranked in the top 20 of their disciplines nationally. We are one of the oldest of the 62 members of the prestigious Association of American Universities which comprises North America's top research universities.

IU is one of the largest public universities in the United States with a budget approaching \$3.5 billion. Our flagship campus is in the city of Bloomington, with over 45,000 students; and our urban campus in Indianapolis has over 30,000 students. We have six regional campuses around the state of Indiana, eight medical education centers (which are extension centers of our School of Medicine—the largest in the nation) as well as a number of smaller facilities. Last fall, our overall enrollment was nearly 115,000 students, and we employ over 9,000 faculty and 11,000 staff.

4. ENGAGEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

Indiana University's history of international engagement and study goes back over 100 years. But, like many other universities in the United States, the real expansion and maturing of IU's international engagement came after World War II. Then, with much of

the world in ruins, universities in the United States became magnets for professors and students from around the world.

Herman B Wells, IU's president from 1938 to 1962, led the university's effort to become a truly international university during this time. He attracted world-renowned international faculty, developed new international alliances with other governments and institutions, established area studies programs that focused on the study of particular countries and regions of the world, and greatly expanded IU's foreign languages curricula. And for Wells, these efforts began right here in Latin America.

Wells had never traveled outside of North America until 1941, when he took part in a 50-day trip to Latin America and the Caribbean sponsored by the Institute for Inter-American Affairs, an organization dedicated to fostering increased cooperation and closer ties between the United States and Latin America. Wells and a small group of educators, journalists, and business and religious leaders visited Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Trinidad, and Venezuela. Wells found Quito to be incredibly beautiful, and described his visits to the city's magnificent churches and monasteries filled with art treasures and historic manuscripts. I should add that we have had a chance to see some of these, too, and agree they are truly magnificent. During his visit to Quito, Wells met Galo Plaza, who, of course, went on to serve as Ecuador's ambassador to the United States and as president of Ecuador.

Wells later said that the trip expanded his awareness of the world scene and his vision for Indiana University. He wrote in his autobiography: "From this venture, I gained great enthusiasm for enlarging the international dimension of Indiana University, a new conception of the strength and values that international studies might offer us, and a determination to continue encouraging our foreign-student program, bolstered by the several Latin American students who came to Indiana University as a result of my contacts during the trip."¹

¹ Herman B Wells, *Being Lucky: Reminiscences and Reflections*, (Indiana University Press, 1980), 279-280.

Since that time, IU has had a strong tradition of welcoming international students, including many students from Latin America and Ecuador, all of whom have been a vital part of the life of Indiana University. Over the last five years, the number of students from Latin America studying at IU has nearly doubled, and now exceeds 400.

Across all the campuses of Indiana University, we currently have nearly 9,000 international students who come from 33 different countries. That ranks us in the top 20 out of about 1,200 universities in the United States in terms of the number of international students enrolled.

The lives of many thousands of U.S. students at IU have also been transformed by the opportunity to live and study abroad in countries all around the globe. In our increasingly interconnected world, a world in which no area is untouched by global forces and developments, international literacy—gained ideally through a period of study abroad—is an essential part of a university education. About 30 percent of the students on the Bloomington campus have studied abroad by the time they graduate. This also ranks us in the top 20, again out of about 1,200 universities, in terms of the number of students who study abroad.

Indiana University's study abroad programs also had their origins in Latin America. The first formal international study venture organized by IU was a program created by IU's School of Education in 1939, in which an IU faculty member oversaw a summer of travel in Mexico which allowed future teachers to learn more about Mexico and its culture.²

IU's first academic-year study abroad program was created in 1959 by the university's Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Under that program, IU students studied for a year at the ancient University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru, where they were totally immersed into Peruvian culture and student life. They returned to Indiana with new and

² Merle Simmons in Kathleen Sideli and Walter Nugent (eds.) *40th Anniversary Retrospective: Overseas Study at Indiana University*, (AuthorHouse, 2014), 1.

greatly broadened cultural understanding, linguistic skills that they could have acquired in no other way, and a lasting fondness and respect for the people of Peru and their way of life. This led to the modern era of study-abroad programs at Indiana University.^{3 4}

Central to international studies at IU for more than a half-century have been area studies centers that have been at the forefront of international teaching and scholarship. These centers involve faculty who are renowned scholars, researchers and experts in their areas of the world. They enable students to gain the deep knowledge, historical perspective, cultural and language competency, and the advanced research skills they need to live and work globally.

One of these centers is IU's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies that was established in 1963 now part of our School of Global and International Studies. It is focused on the politics, economies, cultures, and history of Latin America and the Caribbean.

IU's Jacobs School of Music, one of the most comprehensive and acclaimed institutions for the study of music in the U.S., is home to the Latin American Music Center, which fosters the academic study, performance, and research of Latin American art, popular, and traditional music. Its library has one of the most complete collections of Latin American art music in the world.

Indiana University also has a long history of international institutional engagement, in the form of exchanges and partnerships with foreign institutions. Such relationships are vitally important to our research and education missions. They support faculty research, provide venues for study abroad programs, and are of great advantage in our faculty and student recruitment efforts. We now have well over 200 such partnerships, and they can be found on every continent and in nearly every part of the world, including a number of countries in Latin America.

³ Walter Nugent, *Ibid.*, ix.

⁴ Merle Simmons, *Ibid.*, 9-14.

For example, in 2012, IU became the first institution in the United States to sign an agreement establishing ties with the Brazilian Academy of Letters. In 2012, I also signed an agreement that expanded student and faculty exchanges between IU and the University of São Paulo in Brazil. We have agreements in place with a number of other institutions in Brazil, with Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, with the University of Costa Rica, and with the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

5. ENGAGEMENT IN ECUADOR

Indiana University has also long been engaged in Ecuador.

For many years, IU has been sending students to study here in Quito through a program administered by the Institute for the International Education of Students—known as IES Abroad. These include a full semester program here in Quito and an Environmental Studies Summer Program in Quito and the Galapagos Islands. Our highly-ranked Kelley School of Business and our School of Dentistry also have programs in Ecuador.

Of particular note is a program established by one of our faculty members, Professor Magdalena Herdoiza-Estevez, who is from Ecuador. This program brings 15 to 20 IU students to Quito and to rural areas of Ecuador each summer to teach classes in the English language, health, and a variety of other subjects in Quito's schools, and to participate in community service projects. They arrive here in Quito in June, and live with host families. They then travel to Paquibug-San Gerardo in the Andes Mountains, where they assist in the village's classrooms and complete service learning projects.

Nearly 200 students have participated in this program over the last 15 years, and all of them found the experience to be life-changing. As one student wrote: "The lessons I

learned on this trip about acceptance, cultures, and diversity will forever impact who I am as a person and as an educator.”⁵

Last year, Professor Herdoiza-Estevez published the Spanish language version of her book, *Building Equality in Higher Education*, here in Ecuador as a Prometheus Scholar for the Ecuador Secretariat of Higher Education, SENESCYT. Her very well received book focuses on the mainstreaming of human rights in higher education for women, people with special needs, and indigenous Ecuadorians, and on strengthening the country’s commitment to the environment. She has designed an online course based on the book that is currently being implemented at universities and colleges across Ecuador.

6. TECHNOLOGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Professor Herdoiza-Estevez’s online course is an outstanding example of how information technology continues to contribute in fundamental ways to higher education. In fact, much of the recent discussion world-wide of the impact of information technology in higher education has revolved around online education. So, in the rest of my lecture I will discuss some recent developments in online education, assess the value of these and describe IU’s approach to this area.

Online education has grown rapidly in the United States and around the world, and there has been an energetic global debate surrounding the future directions in online education.

In light of this tremendous growth, some employers have asked serious questions about the added value of a traditional college degree in the face of cheaper alternatives, and

⁵ Greg Smedley, as quoted in Lynn Schoch, “IU Southeast Professor Expands Summer in Ecuador Program, Now Entering 12th Year,” *Inside IU*, March 6, 2013, Web, Accessed March 1, 2016, URL: <http://inside.iu.edu/spotlights-profiles/featured/2013-03-06-featured-spotlight-herdoiza-iuse.shtml>.

for-profit online education companies claim online education calls into question the necessity and value of traditional pedagogy and the physical campus.

However, it is very important to note that online education, defined as a way to deliver education and training in a digital form, is not new—nor are the more extravagant claims being made about it. Let me give the briefest account of its origins and history. These lie in what is called computer aided learning (CAL) or computer aided instruction (CAI), first systematically developed in the mid- to late-60s. This was delivered on terminals attached to mainframes which were then becoming much more commonly available in higher education. With the birth of the personal computer in the late 1970s, CAL and CAI were untethered from the mainframe and became widely available at work and home. This was the second phase. Then, the third phase began in the '90s with the widespread availability of Internet connectivity at work and home, and the growth of the World Wide Web. In this phase, online education was known as distributed education or distributed learning. The latest phase, the fourth phase, arose at the beginning of this decade and is associated with massive online open courses—so-called MOOCs—though this phase comprises much more than just these.

Each phase has been powered by a major technological innovation—the accessible mainframe, the PC, the Internet, and in the case of the latest phase, by a massive increase in computing power, Internet speeds, streaming technologies, the quality of display technologies, and big data. Each phase has seen early, extravagant claims made about it and its impact. All of these have given way to more sober and realistic assessments as to its real value. And all of these more exaggerated claims, I would argue, have floundered, at least to some degree, on the fact that education is fundamentally a human-centered enterprise.

As I just noted, the fourth phase of online education is most widely associated with MOOCs—courses delivered online, typically at no or minimal cost to the student, that can have enrollment numbering in the tens or even hundreds of thousands. A major

motivation for MOOCs is to reduce the cost of education in the developed world, and to make a good quality education accessible in the developing world.

In recent years, “MOOC” has become a buzzword in the United States and around the world. As Michael Nanfity, director of the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education, wrote: “the flow of media coverage hyped MOOCs as either the salvation of a beleaguered educational system or the corrosive agent that would dilute it beyond recognition and value.”⁶

The New York Times went so far as to call 2012 “The Year of the MOOC.”⁷ That same year, Sebastian Thrun, a Stanford University professor who founded the MOOC delivery platform, Udacity, predicted that in 50 years, there would only be 10 institutions in the world delivering higher education and that Udacity stood a good chance of being one of them. Ironically, Thrun was quoted just a year later as calling his own startup a “lousy product.”⁸

As an institution that does, in fact, plan to be around 50 years from now—and well beyond—Indiana University has taken a skeptical and questioning approach—as is appropriate for a university—to some of the wilder claims being made about MOOCs and, indeed, about online education.

In what follows, I will outline the approach we are taking at IU to online education, and as I do so, I will attempt to sort out the substance from the hype.

⁶ Michael Nanfity, *MOOCs: Opportunities, Impacts, and Challenges: Massive Open Online Courses in Colleges and Universities*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013).

⁷ Laura Pappano, “The Year of the MOOC,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 2012, Web. Accessed March 1, 2016, URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/massive-open-online-courses-are-multiplying-at-a-rapid-pace.html>.

⁸ “MOOCs Are a Total Bust—According to the Hype Cycle,” *Motherboard*, December 19, 2013, Web. Accessed March 9, 2016, URL: <http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/moocs-are-a-total-bustaccording-to-the-hype-cycle>.

7. MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES

Because MOOCs have been the subject of much of the media frenzy, let me begin there.

First, let me note again that—though they have often been conflated by bloggers, journalists, MOOC providers, and even, in some cases, university administrators, faculty, and trustees—MOOCs and online education are not synonymous.

MOOCs are, as I have noted, online courses that are open to anyone in the world who wants to enroll. They are typically free and typically not for college credit, although some providers have experimented with charging fees for premium services such as placement or certification, and some universities have experimented with offering MOOCs for credit.

MOOCs are a part of online education, but online education also includes all of the courses that colleges and universities, including IU, have been offering for decades—that incorporate a wide range of different digital instructional technologies. In fact, it is rare to find a course these days that does not include a digital component.

A number of online delivery platforms for MOOCs have been launched, including Udacity, Coursera, and edX, which began as a joint venture of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dozens of other major research universities in the U.S. and around the world have been eager to be involved in these ventures.

At IU, we have taken a strategic and very targeted approach as we have explored the use of MOOCs. Our approach is to be cautiously innovative because we are mindful of the many concerns that have been expressed by others and the lessons they have shared. These include issues of the verification of student identity—how do we ensure that the students who have signed up for a course are the same ones actually taking the course? And there is a deeper problem—who should “own” student identity? There are

also additional related concerns about cheating on an industrial scale, and about drop out and retention rates. While most MOOCs enroll thousands of students, only a very small percentage actually complete these courses. Indeed, very few make it beyond the first few lectures, and those that do are often already familiar with the area of study. This, of course, does not bode well for using MOOCs to complete an entire college degree, which consists of 40 or more such courses.

Of course, financial sustainability is also a paramount concern. MOOCs are far from free to produce—they take large amounts of faculty and programming time, and they require substantial IT resources to build and maintain. Even if the marginal cost of each additional student is low, the cost of building it for the first student is enormous. The costs of regular content updating and maintaining and supporting a MOOC are also very high. And that is the easy part, if you are willing to make the investment with the risk of no return. As Sir John Daniel from the United Kingdom’s Open University noted, initially offering a MOOC for free is easy, but keeping it free poses challenges, and the eventual, inevitable changes that will be made to generate income will undoubtedly affect the user experience and inevitably lead to a decline in interest and enthusiasm for such products.

I should also note that, as institutions have explored the use of MOOCs and have started wrestling with some of these issues, much of the hype surrounding MOOCs has died down. More tempered headlines have recently included:

- “Why Online Classes Won’t Replace the Classroom,”
- “Has the MOOC Bubble Already Popped?”

and

- “MOOCs Haven’t Lived Up to the Hopes and the Hype.”

The prevailing view now is that, while MOOCs may be more than a passing fad, they are not going to revolutionize higher education in the way many people predicted.

Those of you familiar with the famous Gartner Hype Cycle will recognize that MOOCs are now in the Trough of Disillusionment after having recently fallen from the Peak of Inflated Expectations, and are now slowly and painfully beginning to climb the Slope of Enlightenment.

That does not, of course, mean that they do not have value. There are some scattered examples that suggest ways in which they might be used successfully.

In Germany, refugees are being offered MOOCs for college credit as part of a new agreement between edX and Kiron, a crowd-funded university in Germany formed for the express purpose of helping refugees earn degrees.⁹

In Saudi Arabia, where the unemployment rate for people between the ages of 16 and 29 is around 29 percent, MOOCs have been used to provide technical education to 400,000 young people in just a two-year period. More than half those who enrolled in these skill-building MOOCs were women.¹⁰

And in Colombia, a young man is using the knowledge he gained through MOOCs to improve access to electricity for indigenous Colombian communities.¹¹

But, these examples are far from a trend. A report late last year from researchers at Stanford University—researchers who were at the forefront of the MOOC movement—concluded that MOOCs have not been the cure-all that many educators had hoped for. Completion rates remain low. And for students who do not already have a solid academic background, the material in high-level MOOCs offered by major universities is often too difficult to follow. As a result, the majority of MOOC students are college-

⁹ Dian Schaffhauser, "Refugees Offered MOOCs for Credit," *Campus Technology*, February 19, 2016, Web. Accessed February 24, 2016, URL: <https://campustechnology.com/articles/2016/02/19/refugees-offered-moocs-for-credit.aspx?admgarea=news>.

¹⁰ Anant Agarwal, "The Global MOOC Movement," *US News and World Report*, February 1, 2016, Web. Accessed February 24, 2016, URL: <http://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2016-02-01/the-global-mooc-moment>.

¹¹ Ibid.

educated men from industrialized countries, which, of course, means they are not expanding access to education anywhere near as widely as had been hoped.¹²

Last year, edX launched a much-publicized partnership with a university in the U.S., with the idea that students would be able to take MOOCs for college credit. Late last year, it was reported that only one percent of the nearly 35,000 students who enrolled in MOOCs as part of that initiative are eligible for credit. The remainder of the students either did not complete the coursework or did not receive a grade of C or better.

As my colleague Max Nikias, the President of the University of Southern California, recently wrote "...[T]here is scant evidence that free online classes or viral lectures produce worthy educational or career outcomes."¹³

8. IU ONLINE

Indiana University has, for many years, been one of the leading universities in the United States for the uses and application of information technology. During each of the previous phases of online education, we have endeavored to position ourselves to take full advantage of each wave of technology to support our educational mission, while ensuring we were always realistic about the limits and limitations of these technologies and did not "bet the farm" on any one approach or technology.

Our response to the opportunities of the fourth phase of online education was to establish, in 2012, a new university-wide Office of Online Education, in which we

¹² Dan Stober, "MOOCs Haven't Lived Up to the Hopes and the Hype, Stanford Participants Say," Stanford News, October 15, 2015, Web. Accessed February 25, 2016, URL: <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2015/october/moocs-no-panacea-101515.html>.

¹³ C. L. Max Nikias, "Online Education—Hype and Reality," Memorandum to the USC Community, August 27, 2012, Web. Accessed March 9, 2016, URL: http://www.immagic.com/eLibrary/ARCHIVES/GENERAL/USC_CAUS/U120827N.pdf.

announced an investment of \$8 million to establish the IU Online Initiative. Incidentally, this office replaced our more traditional School of Continuing Studies that we closed in 2011. The school had been the main way in which IU had “projected” externally its academic programs and expertise for nearly 100 years. This role has now been taken over by this office.

The office is responsible for coordinating and marketing in one central office, all of IU’s courses that are externally offered fully, or near fully, online. This ensures that we protect the academic integrity of an IU degree, avoid duplication and internal competition, ensures cooperative development of such courses, enables uniform marketing, and ensures we take advantage of IU’s scale, resources, reputation, and diversity of offerings.

IU Online had four initial goals, most of which have already been met.

First, on our research intensive campuses—the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses—with their more traditional student bodies, there was less demand for online courses or full degrees at the undergraduate level, but a considerable demand at the graduate level. Hence, we required all our 25 schools on these campuses to offer at least one online graduate degree and/or a certificate program—some, of course, already were. This has been accomplished and we expect more to be added in future years.

Second, we required that our six smaller regional campuses who have more of a non-traditional student population and who are much more resource constrained, to jointly develop and deliver online undergraduate degree programs, particularly those oriented toward supporting Indiana's regional workforce needs. There is a considerable demand for such courses and providing them helps improve degree completion rates.

Third, we are encouraging and supporting the continued development of online options for high-enrollment popular undergraduate courses with long waitlists, especially in the

social sciences, as a way of ensuring students who need these courses for academic progress in their degrees have them available online to help them to graduate on time.

Fourth, because of our concerns about the viability of MOOCs, at least as presently conceived, we have not engaged in a large-scale investment in this technology. Rather, IU Online is supporting and encouraging a series of selected experiments with MOOCs and other online innovations such as credentialing using digital badges, in order to evaluate for ourselves the viability of these technologies and how best they might be deployed, evolved, or innovated with in our environment.

Our IU Online initiative has had considerable success. In January, *U.S. News and World Report* released rankings of the best online degree programs in the United States. IU Online made one of the biggest jumps the rankings, moving more than 30 spots, from 72nd in 2015 to 39th this year. And two programs at our Kelley School of Business ranked at the top of more than 200 graduate business offerings nationwide. The Kelley Direct online MBA program was ranked Number 2 in the country, and Kelley's Master of Science program was ranked Number 1.

9. PRODUCING TRUE ACADEMIC VALUE

Decades of experience with online education in all of its forms and through waves of different technology innovations, all continue to confirm that the future of education is a blended or hybrid future where students pursue degrees with different mixes of in-person and on-campus courses or parts of courses, and full or partial online courses. Today, over 25 percent of IU students have taken at least one IU online course. And as I noted earlier, most of the rest of the courses make significant use of information technology. The percentage taking only online courses is still a relatively small seven percent, and we expect that this will grow only slowly.

Instead, IU's unique value will be found in the "in-person" experience. As Nikias also recently noted "for undergraduate students especially, life at an elite research university—with its unmatched opportunities to learn both inside and outside classrooms and laboratories—cannot easily be replicated."¹⁴ Thus, for the foreseeable future, Indiana University will continue to deliver principally on-campus programs, though in a constantly evolving technology environment.

At IU, our eight beautiful campuses, their facility and staff, their superb facilities and their traditions and heritage are our greatest assets, as they are yours. Ultimately, we want to blend these resources with opportunities afforded by new technologies to create the best possible instruction while providing more student-centered experiences and extending our reach to a greater number of students.

We envision that, in the long-term, to best serve the various needs of our students, we will need to provide three types of courses:

- fully on-campus,
- fully online,

and

- a hybrid model consisting of a combination of on-campus and online formats, where we are already seeing considerable growth.

We do not endorse online education as an end in itself. Our approach is that online education is a means to the end of serving our students in the most effective way possible. We take a considered and analytical approach to online education, based on the best available research.

In that regard, in 2010, the United States Department of Education issued a report on the quality of online education, based on an analysis of relevant research. The main

¹⁴ C.L. Max Nikias, "Attracting Foreign Students to America Offers More Advantages," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 7, 2008, Web, Accessed March 9, 2016, URL: <https://www.president.usc.edu/attracting-foreign-students-to-america-offers-more-advantages-2008/>.

conclusion of this analysis was that there is simply no definitive answer to the question of whether online or on-campus instruction is, in and of itself, a superior format.

There may, in fact, never be a definitive answer to any question that seeks to determine whether on-campus education is superior to online education (or vice versa), because such questions are inherently unanswerable. No technology is inherently “good” or “bad” for learning—rather, each technology is suitable or unsuitable for various approaches to learning.

It is our job as educators to understand which technologies are best used under which conditions. To that end, we simply see online technologies—and there are many of them, not just one—as additional tools in the toolbox of individual educators and of universities as a whole, to be used when appropriate to help achieve desired learning outcomes. Our goal at IU is to make available to our faculty and students all available technologies that will facilitate effective teaching, learning, and research.

10. RESPONDING TO STUDENT NEEDS

We are very much aware that many of our students value online education for the flexibility and convenience it provides. At the undergraduate level, many of the students who attend our Indianapolis and regional campuses work more than 20 hours a week, take courses part-time, commute to campus, and have family responsibilities. At the graduate level, many online students who pursue advanced credentials are already employed on a full-time basis and also have family responsibilities, so they must also fit classes in around work schedules and personal commitments.

All around the world, a strong economy depends on greater numbers of citizens acquiring the skills and knowledge that come with a college degree.

We are also acutely aware of the need to achieve these greater levels of degree attainment while keeping the cost of a degree as low as possible. And we realize that online education, though it is not necessarily less expensive to produce than in-person education, can play a role in helping us to continue to offer an affordable quality education by offering students more flexibility to shorten their time-to-degree and in other ways.

Ultimately as we move forward and incorporate innovations in digital technologies into online, on-campus, and hybrid learning environments, we must make our decisions guided by what is best for our students, based in turn on the belief that serving students well is the best way to ensure the university's continued success and survival.

11. CONCLUSION

Online education has been a growing part of IU's education programs for many years. Our commitment is to ensure online education remains a standard part of our university, so that online technologies strengthen and enhance the array of programs and services that serve our students.

We believe the balanced approach I have described will allow us to marshal our academic and technological resources to thoughtfully expand existing online programs and develop new offerings that are geared toward improving student learning, encouraging greater undergraduate degree completion, strengthening the state's workforce, and reaching new populations of students in Indiana, across the Midwest, nationally, and internationally.

By exposing students to the full range of human knowledge, we prepare them to thrive in an increasingly global marketplace. Our vision must be both local and global. We must serve our communities and the state while focusing on the international horizon.

The power of education is the power to change the future. As we approach our Bicentennial, our faculty, students and staff will continue to work to do just that. And we look forward to a future of continued partnership and collaboration with the people and institutions of Latin America, and, in particular, the people and institutions of the Republic of Ecuador.

Thank you very much.